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International Approaches to Research Data Services in Libraries

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International approaches to research data services in libraries

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Libraries and archives around the world are acquiring new skills and applying the principles of library and archival sciences to solve challenges and provide new services related to research data management. Librarians are helping researchers address needs throughout the research data lifecycle, for example, by conducting assessments and outreach, consulting on data management plans and metadata, incorporating data into information literacy instruction and collection management, providing reference services to help patrons find and cite data, and providing data publication and preservation solutions. They are creating web guides and tutorials, training colleagues within and outside of the library, contributing to discussions related to research data including policy development and planning, and in some cases, participating directly with researchers on data-intensive projects.

The degree to which libraries are offering or planning to offer data services has been explored in detail for member organizations of the Association of College and Research Libraries in North America by Tenopir et al. (2012, 2015) and more recently for LIBER (Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche) in Europe (Tenopir et al., 2016); however, these studies only begin to paint a part of the picture in terms of the variety of services that libraries around the world are designing and deploying. And how are they creating and providing these services?

This is the central motivation for the next two special issues of *IFLA Journal*: to gather the latest theory, research, and state-of-the-art practices from libraries that are informing and innovating effective data services from an international perspective. The idea for this theme was inspired by the high level of attendance and interest in a conference program on the topic of research data and libraries that was created in collaboration with IFLA and the Research Data

Alliance for the 81st IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Cape Town in 2015. The number and quality of manuscripts submitted in response to the call for papers enjoined the expansion from one special issue to two and the allowance of some additional time for reviewing and editing.

Major themes that emerged from the submissions include the assessment of researcher needs and practices, training for librarians, examples of different data services and approaches to designing and offering them, and data information literacy. The papers are presented in this order as a sensible progression that many libraries are undertaking themselves: to identify patron needs related to research data, then learn the skills required to help meet their needs, then design and offer services, and lastly assist patrons in using the services and related resources.

In this issue, researchers were interviewed at Griffith University in Australia with the application of the A-COM-B conceptual framework to better understand researcher behaviors regarding research data and related practices. Their results suggest that attitude is the key element to be addressed in designing strategies to support researchers in data management. Librarians at two Swedish universities extended the Data Curation Profile instrument and used it in interviewing researchers from a variety of different disciplines to explore their needs for effective data management, in particular for subject control and other requirements for descriptive metadata. In the Netherlands, the 'Essentials 4 Data Support' taught

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data support skills to over 170 Dutch librarians and information technology professionals. Learning outcomes are achieved by either a six-week blended course of in-person and coached online course, or an online course that is accompanied by coaching, or a self-directed online-only course. Two papers present examples of data services: ETH-Bibliothek in Switzerland takes a data lifecycle approach that incorporates researchers working in private, shared, and public domains with corresponding levels of access control and other functionalities; the Qualitative Data Repository hosted by Syracuse University in the United States is tailored to meet the needs of qualitative and multi-method social inquiry research methods with emphases on protecting data that involve human subjects and providing the capability to relate data to published text through scholarly annotation. A literature review and discussion conducted in Hungary explores and brings attention to the relationship between data governance and data literacy. Finally, a group of American librarians examine why data information literacy should be integrated in the areas of business and public health and discuss how it can be accomplished.

A second special issue of *IFLA Journal* on research data services in libraries, forthcoming in March 2017, will continue and build upon these four themes while incorporating approaches and perspectives from a

broader range of countries and libraries. It is our hope that these two issues will add to our shared understanding of the latest developments and practices of libraries that are designing and providing research data services.

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