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How to implement the LEARN Toolkit and Executive Briefing: report from the Breakout groups

Breakout Tutorial Group 3 on implementing the LEARN Toolkit and Executive Briefing

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Overview

This purpose of the session was to introduce the LEARN Toolkit and allow participants to reflect on how they might implement it at their home institutions. The session had 3 parts:

1. Presentation
2. Discussion
3. Conclusions

1. Presentation

PA gave an overview of LEARN and the Toolkit, comprising in full

- Model Research Data Management Policy, fed by a study of RDM policies and input from Workshop attendees
- Toolkit of case studies to support implementation, responding to issues identified in Workshops and in literature
- Surveys and self-assessment tools
- Executive Briefing (in six languages)

The Toolkit is designed to help to address the question: **How prepared are you and your institution for RDM?**

Examples given from a survey carried out at PA's own institution, UCL, showed that researchers were not storing data effectively, and had identified a need for better RDM support.

PA gave an overview of a selection of case studies from the Toolkit, the Model Policy and Executive Briefing.

A question was raised about the currency of the Toolkit: would it change or become out of date?

The answer was that the principles of the Toolkit will persist, although the practical examples in the published edition may become dated over time. The principles captured in the Toolkit may need to be adapted to new situations. It was also noted that the LEARN Model RDM Policy specifically

recommends an annual review, which will encourage institutions to take stock of changing circumstances.

2. Discussion

PA asked delegates to reflect on how they would take up the Toolkit at their institution, inviting colleagues to share two things that they might do differently or better as a result of attending the LEARN Conference.

A variety of contributions were put forward, each summarised below.

- There is a need for buy-in from PIs and researchers. Talk to PIs to raise awareness. Hold information sessions for researchers – missing metadata is particularly problematic. Policies are required to help adoption; these need to come from the top.
- Need to work with people rather than technology. Take a survey. Find 'success case' to show that application of RDM could even save money.
- Seek to understand the meaning of Research Data and RDM in an art & design context. This arts institution has a repository, but engagement has arrived at plateau. The challenge is how to embed RDM in culture? Speak to Library, speak to IT.
- Faculty-level policies required, will draw on Toolkit for this.
- FAIR data principles - will investigate further. RDM in this institution is relatively well-developed, but even so it is based mainly on storage services, with support structures around them. How to incentivise researchers? Be conscious that there are already a lot of pressures on researchers, so keep life simple for them; don't dwell on the risks, make concrete benefits understood.
- Science Europe is working on a framework for discipline-specific protocols – there will be no need to reinvent the wheel every time a DMP is needed.

3. Conclusions

There is no single answer to the successful adoption of RDM. LEARN has produced a set of tools and guidance. They should help the reader to identify the key issues for their organisation define their organisation's needs, and allow them to draw on strategies to meet them.

PA suggested four concurrent areas of activity for research-intensive universities, drawing on his experience as Co-chair of the LERU (League of European Research Universities) INFO community, as follows:

- i. Use the LEARN Executive Briefing. Take it to a decision-maker - somebody who can allocate money.
- ii. Ensure there is a RDM Policy, and get this right. Use the guidance provided by UNIVIE as part of LEARN.
- iii. Advocate to researchers. Support from the academic body is essential.
- iv. Training for early-career researchers. This can be converted for the rest of their research lives; they will help to change the culture.

LEARN case studies and other outputs can help with all aspects of this package for research-intensive universities.