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Book Review
Engaging Researchers with Data Management: The Cookbook

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BOOK REVIEW

Engaging Researchers with Data Management: The Cookbook

Edited by Connie Clare, Maria Cruz, Elli Papadopoulou, James Savage, Marta Teperek, Yan Wang, Iza Witkowska, and Joanne Yeomans

Engaging Researchers with Data Management: The Cookbook is a timely read. As an increasing number of funders, government agencies and research institutions are stressing or mandating that data be shared—whether for issues of accountability, reproducibility, or impact—this book presents a series of case studies that shows how institutions of various sizes have increased research data management (RDM) awareness and practice among their members. The authors know that many discussions about the importance of RDM and open science are undertaken by those who are already familiar with the concept: librarians, data professionals, and a growing number of researchers. Those in this community know that the types of changes needed to broaden the practice of good RDM will need to be part of a cultural shift, and they know that "effective engagement with researchers… is essential for this shift to happen" (p. 1).

Engaging Researchers with Data Management: The Cookbook (hereafter referred to as The Cookbook), provides 24 examples of the ways in which various types of institutions have worked to increase RDM engagement. The book will be of interest to anyone working with data researchers, staff of all types at libraries and universities, support staff and researchers, and will also find a good audience at any institution or project that is looking to increase RDM awareness and practice.

The authors of the book are from the Research Data Alliance (RDA), an organization that promotes data-sharing and data-driven research, and provides a growing data community that works across all types of boundaries, including domain, research, national, geographical and generational. Both RDA and the case studies in the book represent diverse types

of institutions and researchers. The book is a refreshing addition to the RDM literature, which has a strong body of work from well-funded, large institutions, and less from small or emerging groups.

The book is available in many different formats, including an open access version available for free in PDF or other formats. A paper or hardback copy is also available for a reasonable cost.

Twenty-four case studies were chosen from around the world from organizations "that focus on how to engage with the research community about research data management" (p. 6). Following up on a survey by RDA in 2019, the case studies were selected by a small group of volunteers based on knowledge and experience, innovation, inspiration, and applicability to research institutions worldwide. The resulting case studies are the result of hour-long interviews.

The case studies are organized into eight thematic sections that represent the main focus of the activity, for example "Research Data Management Policy," "Engagement Through Training," and "Networks of Data Champions," with a few representative case studies in each section. The studies themselves are succinct, almost like a blog post, with examples, interviews, and descriptions of how a particular service, partnership, or workshop was developed or received. The studies come from institutions of all sizes, from all over the globe, showing that increased engagement can happen at any level, with staff of varying sizes: awareness and an increase in practice don't necessarily depend on having a large staff and big budget, but instead, innovative ideas with the right champions and outreach can have a strong impact on RDM practices.

At Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (item 7.1), for example, individual researchers at all levels were interviewed about their research, including disciplinary norms, use of specific software, and best practices for data management. Interviews were shared online with the research community. This case study provides a "recipe" for how to prepare for and conduct interviews and explains how this activity has created more engagement and drawn additional customers to the RDM Support Office.

The chapter "Data Champions" (Chapter 5) includes case studies from three institutions with small, medium and large RDM staffs. Each study focuses on a different concept: how to establish a data champions community, how to reward and recognize data champions, and how to launch a similar program. By providing case studies from varied institutions, there is something in here that is applicable to almost any organization looking to broaden RDM engagement.

In organizing the studies, the authors developed an ingenious coding tool that makes it easy to jump to case studies that fit a particular profile. A series of graphics indicate things like number of researchers, RDM staffing level, target audience, cost, and ease of implementation of each study: the "ingredients" for a cookbook recipe, as it were. The graphics are presented at the beginning of each study. There is also a table providing an overview of every recipe in the book, and the ingredients necessary to implement them. This allows a reader to jump directly to case studies that match their own institution's characteristics, or to browse through what others were able to do with different resources.

That said, the whole book is a quick and informative read, and there's something to be learned in each case study. Each one has something that could be useful to institutions and staffs of all sizes, from small workshop-style events developed for a small audience, to university-wide partnerships and collaborations intended for campuswide impact. Anyone working with RDM engagement and education will find something useful and inspiring in these stories.

BIOGRAPHY

Jenny Muilenburg is Research Data Services Librarian at the UW Libraries and Visiting Program Officer for Research Data with the Association of Research Libraries. She educates researchers on research data management, curation and archiving, repositories, and data management plans. Working with the campus-wide eScience Institute to advance data-intensive discovery in all fields, she is focused on the increase in data science across the university and its implications for library service and campus collaborations.