An Investigation into Journal Research Data Policies:

Lessons from the JoRD Project

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The Centre for Research Communications (CRC), based at the University of Nottingham, has the remit to inform the scholarly communication community about significant changes and new ideas, and to support the community with the implementation of current developments. The CRC hosts open-access services such as Sherpa/RoMEO, Sherpa /Juliet and *Open*DOAR. There is a strong movement in contemporary society which believes that public funds spent on research should result in openly accessible, accountable data and information. Representative organisations of the academic community such as the Royal Society, and funding bodies such as Research Councils United Kingdom (RCUK) are encouraging data to be made openly available for use, reuse and reproduction (RCUK, [ny] and Royal Society, 2012) Similarly, the European Commission has stated that “open access to publications and data from publically funded research should be promoted” (European Union, 2012). The facilitation of the ongoing development of the open data and data sharing environment is therefore a role which matches the remit of CRC and therefore led to a recent project which was undertaken by the CRC.

The Journal Research Data (JoRD) Policy Bank Service was a feasibility study carried out by CRC which was commissioned by the UK’s Joint Information Services Committee (JISC). The JoRD Project investigated the possible shape of a central service on journal research data policies with the following objectives:

* Identify the current state of journal data sharing policies
* Investigate the views and practices of stakeholders
* Develop an overall view of stakeholder requirements and possible service specifications
* Explore the market base for a JoRD Policy Bank Service
* Investigate and recommend sustainable business models for the development of a JoRD Policy Bank Service.

The project reviewed existing academic literature on the subject of journal data sharing policies. The criteria of the aspects of a strong data policy and of a weak data policy which were identified during the literature review were then applied to a thorough assessment and survey of 400 journal policies in order to discover which journals provide statements concerning the depositing of data. A cross-section of all stakeholders was interviewed and questionnaires about data sharing habits were conducted. Stakeholders were asked to contribute their requirements for a Journal Data Policy Bank. A range of four possible business models were put to stakeholders for their comment.

The project confirmed that a large percentage of journals do not have a policy on the use, reuse and reproduction of data which was the basis of author’s published articles, and that there are inconsistencies between the traceable journal data sharing policies. Overall, the project found that approximately 50% of journals have a policy about data deposits and that there are no consistent policy standards. Publishers demonstrated very disparate responses to the situation, from working towards solving the problems of archiving large quantities of data to that of merely monitoring the situation. The study found concerns about the practicalities of depositing data although generally the academics and researchers who were consulted believed in the concept of open research data and were not averse to allowing their data to be shared. The data sharing environment is currently confused and complex with little guidance for researchers.

All the stakeholders who were approached considered that a tool that interpreted and displayed journal research data policies would not only be of practical use, but would encourage journals to develop firm policies which require authors to openly deposit data and be a guide to researchers on the choice of an appropriate journal in which to publish, which would encourage the use, reuse and reproduction of their data. Stakeholders identified benefits to each of the four possible business models suggested; however, none of the business models appeared to be an outstanding candidate for implementation. In consequence, an exploratory two phase implementation of a service was proposed; the initial phase would develop a database of data sharing policies; increase engagement with stakeholders, and encourage third party API development. Then the second phase would be implemented, once a self sustaining model can be identified with certainty.

A 24/7 presentation will provide an overall view of the project, outlining the current state of:

* Journal Research Data Policies, a review of their current state and recommendations for improvement
* Researchers, Publisher’s, Librarians and other stakeholder attitudes to open data and repositories
* Proposed service and business model for the JoRD Policy Bank Service
* Researchers data sharing and depositing habits

The presentation reflects the conference theme of Use, Reuse and Reproduce, because the study examined the current situation in the data sharing environment, gathering journal instructions for the deposit of data used in articles and supplementary to articles, and comparing those with the perceptions of researchers on how and where to deposit their data to enable its further reuse. It will also cover the conference areas of interest in the effective reuse of research data, facilitation of reproducible research through access to data.

**Bibliography**

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