Expanding Canada's Research Data Eco-system: Repositories as enablers in overcoming cultural hurdles

<u>Current status of research data in Canada</u>

Public data from major producers like Statistics Canada have been available to Canadian post-secondary institutions for nearly two decades through the Data Liberation Initiative. This led to the creation of Research Data Centres to enable researchers to use confidential files, subject to Statistics Canada's oversight. Access to other publicly-produced data is gradually increasing in some sectors.

Canada has made some progress towards data management as a result of the Data Liberation Initiative. We have trained data librarians to mark up data in the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) standard. This has led to the emergence of tools for access such as odesi and equinox. While this looks like a promising start, researcher-generated data under the auspices of granting councils are largely missing in action. Why?

This presentation will focus on the missing pieces in the research data management puzzle and the role of repositories in completing the picture.

<u>What's Missing?</u>

"The thing that researchers are most short of is time". (Steve Marks, wrap up of the CARL Research Data Management Institute, January, 2013). Research data management takes time and training, both in short supply in Canada. Institutions need to step up to the plate to offer education to their data service providers, graduate student and researchers. Ethics boards also need to be part of this picture.

We will examine current efforts in all these areas and suggests ways of expanding the reach of activities beyond the institutional level.

Because of the current state of rewards and recognition for research, there is reluctance on the part of researchers to share their data. We will discuss the role of repositories as a means to ensure the data are not lost in the interim until this hurdle is overcome.

<u>How do we sell researchers on repositories?</u>

It is every researcher's nightmare to have a total data loss with no backup. Repositories offer safe storage, off-site with well-constructed procedures to ensure data are not lost.

Because of the current lack of recognition for data sharing, repositories offer researchers a way to control access to their holdings through setting limits, ranging from public to completely private and all states in between.

Canadian repositories located on Canadian servers remove the discomfort of storing research data in the cloud where they may be subject to foreign laws.

These are just some of the reasons for the courting of researchers in the use of repositories. Our presentation will expand on our arguments.

Preparing for the Future

We will look toward the future where granting councils will give explicit support for research data management by insisting on plans and budgets to ensure the data are not lost. We see repositories as essential in bridging the gap between the current state of affairs and this reality. Without bringing researchers and repositories together at this time, complete with the education on data management and how to use repositories, they will be at a disadvantage when applying for grants in the age of digital scholarship.