Open and shut (or not): Conversations about data, access and openness

Author/Contributor:
Bailin, Kylie; Croucher, Joanne L.

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Open and shut (or not): Conversations about data, access and openness

Kylie Bailin[1], Joanne L. Croucher[2]

[1] University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, k.bailin@unsw.edu.au
[2] University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, j.croucher@unsw.edu.au

DESCRIPTION

Previous eResearch conferences' Birds of a Feather (BoF) sessions have covered a range of topics related to open data, access and reuse [e.g. 1,2]. The proposed BoF provides a dedicated forum for open discussion of different perspectives regarding research data management and openness. It will also explore the current and future roles for eResearch intermediaries and data librarians in this arena.

Key areas to be explored include different research communities' expectations of reciprocity, and the changing expectations of funding agencies and publishers [3,4,5]. Rather than typifying open data as an all-or-nothing dichotomy, the discussion will be framed around a continuum of openness [6,7]. This approach recognises that different types of access will be appropriate for different datasets and research materials. While some data is freely available for download, other datasets are only available on request, or after an embargo period has elapsed. Sometimes summary data or survey instruments are shared; other times the raw data and computer code is freely posted online. The continuum of openness may also be applied to the locus of storage, from local storage to dark archives or open databases. Likewise, data documentation may be limited, locally-created or employed in accordance with shared standards.

Another discussion topic is the role of eResearch intermediaries or support professionals and data librarians in this area. One of the biggest hurdles in beginning the eResearch discussion with researchers is explaining about this spectrum of open data and quelling fears that all data will have to be completely open. Previous eResearch conferences' Birds of a Feather sessions have included discussion about eResearch intermediaries and the need for communication [8]. This BoF will build on this discussion, looking at the complexities involved with supporting researchers and informing them about all the different levels of openness. Previous BoFs held annually have also looked at eResearch education and training [9] since this is such an important issue. This BoF will focus on the issue as it relates to open data and building capabilities among both support professionals and researchers.

Specific discussion topics will include:
- Researcher perspectives on open data, data sharing, and disciplinary research practice
- Roles for libraries, data librarians and eResearch intermediaries in research data management
- Privacy, confidentiality and other issues around data access and reuse

The intended audience for this session includes:
- Researchers and research partners
- eResearch intermediaries, information professionals and librarians
- Research administrators and stakeholders

OUTLINE

1. **Degrees of Openness**. Joanne Croucher
   15 minutes

2. **Education and communication strategies**. Kylie Bailin
   15 minutes

3. **Open discussion.** Open forum for discussion and questions.
   30 minutes

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ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

Kylie Bailin

Kylie Bailin is the Outreach Team Leader for the Science, Engineering and Medicine Unit at the University of New South Wales Library where she manages Faculty Outreach Librarians. It is the role of the Outreach Librarians to be the primary point of contact for the Faculties and to communicate with them on library resources and services. The Outreach Librarians have already started to act as eResearch Intermediaries and we envisage this conversation increasing in the future. Kylie has also previously worked as the Outreach Librarian to Engineering and before that, was in the Document Services Team. Kylie has a background in environmental management and her research interests include user experience and library design.

Joanne Croucher

Joanne Croucher is based at UNSW Library within the Library Repository Services team. Current projects include the UNSW ANDS-funded Seeding the Commons project and the NCHSR Clearinghouse, a subject-based repository for Australian resources related to social and policy research in HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C and related diseases. She has previously been involved in the UNSW 'Researching the Researchers' project and also tutored in Information Management at the University of Technology, Sydney. Joanne has a background in health research, through previous roles at the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Monash University and the NSW Central Cancer Registry.