

Facilitated/Focused Group Discussion on Digital/Data Management/Curation (April 2013)

Brief Introduction:

Recently, we've seen heightened awareness and increased interest related to concerns and possible opportunities regarding data/digital research material management and curation. Our collaborative group is the Data Management/Curation Task Force, with representatives from among the libraries, research computing, and the office of research. The group was created to support investigating how to support new needs related to data/digital research material management and curation. We also want to take this opportunity to learn about related needs and opportunities to better support your research in the digital age.

We'll soon send out a campus-wide survey. We're talking to groups of faculty and graduate students to find out what you're currently doing and what's needed for organization, storage, and sharing of your digital research materials. The purpose of our discussions is to find out about those needs as well as possible opportunities to improve existing services and add new services to support research in the digital age. Our goals are to find areas where you need support where one or more of the groups on the task force can provide that help, and to then develop plans to take the next steps for that help to be put in place.

Goal for Today:

Today, we're interested in having an informal conversation to find out more about how you're dealing with your digital research materials. This includes all digital materials used in and created from research. We're also happy to learn about other things that we may not even have considered yet. For instance, for non-digital data, are there computer magnetic tapes with important information for your work? Do you have precious photocopies where you made a copy of a rare or unique item that is important for your research, and where it's one of only a few to exist in the world (and where you then get called upon to share copies)? Do you have digital research materials that are housed with a colleague at another institution who you rely on for access and support, and where they support the materials personally and don't have institutional support?

We envision this as being a pretty informal conversation. As long as everyone is okay with it, we'll be doing an audio-recording. This is to only to make sure we capture the conversation to make sure we hear your concerns and don't miss anything. We won't share the recording with anyone outside our group. We won't report any of the information from the conversation in a way that would identify you individually (unless we first follow-up and request and you grant permissions for us to do so).

We're also happy to send all notes and draft reports to all of you for approvals before anything is distributed with others, and then only distributed with your permissions.

This whole process is to support your work. We need you to be comfortable with the process for this to be successful. Please let us know any concerns or requirements: datamgmt-l@lists.ufl.edu (Also, Laurie: work: laurien@ufl.edu, 352-273-2902; and personal: laurientaylor@gmail.com, 352-871-5113).

Please Note: We're interested in campus-wide research data support. Research "data" is thus used inclusively for all digital files you create (e.g., quantitative and qualitative information collected, software and tools developed, published research, digitized primary sources, etc.).

Discussion Questions

1-2: Research Overview; and, Research Materials Used and Created

1. First, we'd like to get a sense of what research each of you do, and a sense of the materials you use and consult in doing your research.
2. What do you create for your finished research products (book, journal articles, essays, videos, websites, databases, etc.)? What other research forms/things do or might you create and utilize in the research process? Ex. annotating texts and using the annotated text versions to write essays?

Potential follow-up questions:

- What research question are you trying to answer? What process/methods do you use?
- After publication, do you have research materials that should be or that need to be preserved?
 - Part of this is to see what types of support are needed For instance: short-term additional storage space; permanent archiving; something else? Example?
- What are your core research resources that are not held by or accessible via UF's libraries?
 - What are they? How do you get access? Are you comfortable with how this works?
 - What work are you and others doing work that's invisible and that needs a means for recognition? (e.g., being the source and sharing precious photocopies)
- Scenario...

3. Sharing Research Materials: Please tell us about how you work with colleagues, collaborators, and peers in terms of accessing research materials held by individual researchers?

Potential follow-up questions:

- Have you been asked to share your research materials with others? Outside of your immediate collaborators? Do you request this from others for your work? How commonly?
- Would you characterize your field as having a culture of openly sharing research materials or not, and why?
- Scenario...

4. Current Problems: What issues have come up in your work related to your research materials?

Potential follow-up questions:

- Are there things that work well, or don't? Can you think of any examples?
- Have you run into problems with: storage space; backing up stored files; accessing/organizing stored files; other problems?
- If you share unpublished research files with others, can you explain how that works for sharing with others locally and/or non-UF people?
- Scenario...

5. Known Solutions: What would make managing your research files easier for you?

Potential follow-up questions:

- What could we do? Are there ways we could assist with your work?
- Are there things that you'd want to have training/workshops for that could help?
- Scenario...

6. Conclusion & General Discussion: Is there anything else we should know about dealing with your research materials? How about for your research, your workflows, and your needs?