A Campus Partnership to Foster Compliance with Funder Mandates

Jeff R. Broadbent[a], Andrea Payant[b], Kevin Peterson[c], Betty Rozum[b,*], Liz Woolcott[b]

[a] Office of Research and Graduate Studies, Utah State University, 1450 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322-1450, USA
[b] Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, 3000 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322-3000, USA
[c] Division of Sponsored Programs, Office of Research and Graduate Studies, Utah State University, 1415 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322-1415, USA

ABSTRACT

Data from federally funded research must now be made publicly accessible and discoverable. Researchers must adhere to guidelines established by federal agencies, and universities must be prepared to demonstrate compliance with the federal mandate. At Utah State University, the Office of Research and Graduate Studies and the Merrill-Cazier Library partnered to facilitate data sharing and create an audit trail demonstrating compliance with the terms of each researcher's award. This systematic approach uses existing resources such as the grant management system, the institutional repository (IR), and the Library online catalog. This paper describes our process and the first eight months of implementation.

Introduction

A Memorandum issued by the U.S. Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) in February 2013 called for increasing openness of data and publications resulting from research funded by federal agencies receiving over $100M in federal research and development funding (Executive Office of the President, Office of Science and Technology Policy, 2013). Federal agencies produced plans describing expectations for researchers receiving funding from their agency. Typically, researchers are expected to submit a data management plan describing how research data will be generated, described, stored, and made publicly available. Agencies also stipulate timelines for when publications and data resulting from funding must be made publicly available, and in some instances, suggest or provide guidelines on choosing repositories for data deposit.

The data management plan (DMP) is part of the grant proposal submitted to an agency, and becomes part of the agreement between the agency and the university upon award approval and acceptance. Thus, if a researcher states in a DMP that certain data will be produced and publicly shared in a repository, this is the expectation for successful compliance with the grant, along with deposit of corresponding publications to the agency's publication repository. Failure to comply can carry serious consequences. For the researcher, it may result in lack of future funding from the agency. If numerous researchers fail to comply, the agency may refuse subsequent grant funding to the institution.

The new data sharing requirements raise questions about how academic institutions might demonstrate compliance to an agency.

More specifically, what resources can an institution deploy to help and encourage researchers to regularly monitor their DMPs and deposit data and publications in a timely manner, and how can those actions be recorded in case of audit?

Project conception

At Utah State University (USU) the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (RGS), the Office of Information Technology (IT), and the Merrill-Cazier Library have a strong history of collaborating to address the needs of researchers. When the question arose of how to address the challenge of monitoring and assisting researchers with complying with funder mandates, a small team from a larger campus-wide Data Task Force was formed to draft a solution. Meetings began in Fall 2015, and a solution was conceptualized, developed and formally implemented in late Fall 2016.

This project was to be completed without additional full time staff, therefore it was important that the team develop a process that was efficient and leveraged existing resources and staffing as far as possible. Working within these parameters required creative problem solving and close coordination between the staff in RGS and the Library. The framework for USU's solution was therefore built around two major software platforms already in use; Kuali Research and DigitalCommons. Kuali Research is an electronic system that USU uses to create, submit, and track grant proposals and awards. Individual researchers, academic administrators, and the RGS Division of Sponsored Programs employees have access to Kuali. DigitalCommons is a platform for institutional

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Constant Data- Fill out at time of award	
1st Author/Researcher listed (Principal Investigator)	
Title/Name assigned to grant	
Place where data originated	
Primary institution name	
Project start and stop dates	
Granting Agency, grant award	
Subject of research data	

Agency Progress and Final Report Location (URL) (for example, USDA REEport site)	

FILL THIS OUT AFTER YOUR FIRST PUBLICATIONS OR DATA ARE DEPOSITED

Publications	
Publication Citations (repeatable)	

Data Deposited (or Other Associated Data)	
Title/Name assigned to data set	
Description (100 word limit)	
URL or DOI for location of	
Year of publication/deposit	
File type (ex. Txt,XML,PDF)	
Is a special program or software needed to access this data ? If yes what is it?	
Link to associated Journal Article (repeatable)	

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Fig. 1. Primary Metadata Document (PMD).

repositories, created and sold by the company, bepress. At USU, the Merrill-Cazier Library manages a repository instance, DigitalCommons@USU, that allows for unlimited storage. This offers a solution for researchers who are otherwise unable to find a suitable repository for data, and because it was already the institutional repository, it made sense to use it in the compliance project. One additional piece of software that was leveraged is the Library's online catalog, or ILS. Currently the Library uses Sierra for the online catalog and contributes records to OCLC, a national bibliographic service.

The process

When a proposal is funded, the process of tracking compliance begins. Staff in the Division of Sponsored Programs (DSP) send the