

Summary Report on the University of Lethbridge Research Data Management Survey, Oct. 2018

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SUMMARY of SURVEY AND REPORT

In October 2018, the University of Lethbridge Library conducted a Research Data Management (RDM) survey of faculty, post-docs and graduate students in collaboration with the University's Office of Research and Innovation Services (ORIS). The survey is a local customization of three generic instruments provided by the Portage Canadian RDM Survey Consortium covering engineering and science, health and medical sciences, and humanities and social sciences.

The survey was conducted to explore:

- How researchers manage and share their data
- Differences in RDM practices and needs across disciplines and sub-disciplines
- How the University of Lethbridge Library and ORIS can help researchers in this process

The research team created three separate but substantially similar surveys that were distributed in a manner that matched each potential respondent to their particular area of study, allowing them to give more nuanced responses. The survey was divided into three categories: **sciences, social sciences, and humanities**.

This survey reached academic staff, adjuncts, post-docs and graduate students from across all disciplines at the University of Lethbridge. Out of a potential 1,215 responses, 102 were received, equaling 8.4% of those invited to participate. While this response is smaller than some other universities received, there is value in the information gathered. In particular the graduate student response rate was quite high, composing 55% of the responses. Participants were eligible to enter a draw to win one of five prizes sponsored by the University Library.

For the full report and the accompanying data, visit "[Research Data Management Survey, University of Lethbridge](#)".

FINDINGS

How researchers manage their data

The majority of participants (63.4%, n=52) were involved in one to two projects. The storage needs of all projects ranged across the disciplines with 45.1% (n=37) using under 50 GB, 9.8% using between 50GB – 500 GB (n=8), and 12.2% (n=10) using between 500 GB – 1000GB. In addition, 14.6% (n=12) used over 1 TB. The University of Lethbridge Information Technology (IT) Services provides 200 GB of research file storage. Projects requiring over this amount of storage are required to undergo assessment and approval (<http://www.uleth.ca/information-technology/services/research-file-storage>). With 26.8% of respondents to the survey indicating they use over 500 GB of data storage, this may need to be addressed.

Social Sciences and Humanities researchers were split almost evenly between currently sharing research data (n=25) and not currently sharing (n=26). A similar split was observed in Health Sciences with five participants not currently sharing data and six currently sharing. A larger difference was evident in the Sciences, where 24 participants were currently sharing data and 16 were not. The most common

methods of sharing data across all disciplines included sharing by personal request only (38.2%), sharing as part of publisher supplementary material (14.7%), sharing on a personal website (12.7%) and sharing online with restricted access (11.7%).

Reasons that prevented researchers from sharing their data included data that was incomplete (29.4%), improper citation or acknowledgment (23.5%) and researchers not holding the rights for their research data (17.6%). Only four respondents (3.9%) indicated that they believed their data should not be shared.

A majority of participants indicated they would prefer or need more information and guidance in understanding the requirements of the Tri-Council regarding research data management as well as instruction in research data management best practices (87.5%, n=83).

How the University of Lethbridge can help

In previous years the Library has offered workshops on creating data management plans. Feedback has indicated that the sessions were appreciated though the reach of these workshops has been limited. Focusing on offering more targeted workshops and online options is expected to increase the effectiveness of these workshops.

Additionally, an institutional strategy regarding research data management will raise the profile of RDM on campus while identifying how the University can better support its researchers.

Recommendations

- Ensure that relevant stakeholders on campus are aware of developments in Canadian RDM and have access to national training resources such as Portage
- Work with stakeholders such as ORIS, Grad Studies, and Information Technology Services to meet the needs identified in the survey, such as:
 - Arranging targeted introductory workshops for faculty and graduate students
 - Meeting the various data storage needs of researchers
 - Informing researchers of upcoming Tri-Council requirements
 - Providing access to online tutorials or guides for all researchers both on campus and off campus

CONCLUSIONS

Though the way researchers' data management needs vary across disciplines, especially in terms of storage needs and the desire to share their data openly, similar needs for training and guidance exist in each research area. Eighty-three respondents (87.5%) indicated that they would prefer or need more information and guidance in understanding research data management (RDM) best practices to navigate the requirements of the draft [Tri-Council Research Data Management Policy](#). The Library and other partners in research, such as ORIS, have an opportunity to increase RDM engagement for faculty and graduate students across the University of Lethbridge by creating opportunities for communication and training as well as understanding the storage and privacy needs of different faculties.

The responses gathered from the University of Lethbridge RDM Survey have been submitted to the National dataset. We look forward to consulting with University of Lethbridge researchers regarding available options and best practices for managing, preserving and sharing their research data.