

Case Statement for the Archives and Records Professionals for Research Data IG

Introduction

The objective of this group is to explore the areas where the principles and practices in the information disciplines of archives, records management, and research data curation overlap and where they diverge. Archives and records professionals serve in a range of critical roles: as experts in ensuring access, preservation, and reuse of records and archival collections; as provocateurs for good records curation practices; and as advocates for the construction of sustainable infrastructures for information sharing. Examining alignments in theoretical frameworks, practical implementations, and goals among archivists, records managers and data curators will lead to the development of a vibrant community of information professionals working in a more interoperable way across different domains.

The proposed IG is explicitly aligned with RDA's goal to build social bridges that enable the open sharing of data. Specifically, the IG will build relationships among professionals who are committed to developing data sharing frameworks and practices that are able to withstand the various challenges introduced by the passage of time: technological obsolescence, loss of contextual understanding of data, and resource constraints that make it impractical to commit to preserving all data forever. By creating a space for archivists, records management professionals, and data curators to come together, this IG has the potential to act as a launching pad for RDA Working Groups that will produce recommendations addressing these challenges by bringing preservation, arrangement and description, and appraisal methodologies from the archives and records professions to the RDA community. This IG also aims to bring the skills and competencies which have long existed in the archives and records management communities to the wider RDA community - many of whom will not be aware of this existing expertise.

User scenario(s) or use case(s) the IG wishes to address

- Broadly, the research data community has concerns related to the vital, foundational questions about which data should be kept, by whom, for whom and for what period of time. Archives and recordkeeping professionals already have long-standing theoretical frameworks and successful practical implementations of appraisal and retention methodologies that could serve the RDA community well in this area.
- Participation in conversations about data curation that are already taking place in archives communities - for example, at the [Society of American Archivists' 2015 meeting](#) - has generated desire to formalize these discussions with our colleagues in archives and records management via a forum endorsed by RDA.

Objectives

- to provide a forum for discussion of how archives/records management principles can apply to data curation.
- to communicate and coordinate with archives/records management professionals who may be outside of RDA to foster synergies, bring them into RDA, and bring the IG and relevant WG activities to the attention of the archives/records management field.
- to advocate for record professionals within the RDA community.

This group will complement the activities of existing groups such as the Libraries for Research Data IG, the Data Rescue Interest Group, and the Education and Training on Handling of Research Data, acknowledging and supporting the role that recordkeeping professionals currently play in research data management.

Participation

The group is aimed at recordkeeping professionals, that is trained archivists and records managers, who may have responsibility for research data management in their organisation. We intend to engage with this community via their specific professional communication platforms, for example archives- or research data curation-specific listservs.

We also intend to bring relevant archival methods and expertise to the attention of research data sharing and preservation communities.

The group is supported by the Education and Training for Research Data IG and the Libraries for Research Data IG, and there will be coordination of relevant activities.

Outcomes

- Increased participation in RDA by recordkeeping professionals
- Practical recommendations to the RDA community for addressing at least the following issues:
 - appraising data
 - developing and implementing retention schedules for data
 - strategies for improving access to research data collections
 - education in good data creation practices, preservation, and reuse

Mechanism

The IG will use the RDA-provided email list to share news and generate conversation, and will connect where relevant with existing professional mailing lists where already in existence. In addition, we will meet via teleconference on at least a quarterly basis to discuss projects and report on relevant initiatives taking place at our own institutions.

Timeline

March 2016: IG meeting at Tokyo Plenary

Increase group membership through dissemination via Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland), JISC Research Data Management Group, Society of American Archivists, etc

Develop bibliography/resource list relating to recordkeeping and research data management

Potential Group Members

See list of over 50 group members on the IG page:

<https://rd-alliance.org/groups/archives-records-professionals-for-research-data.html>