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Book review: Managing Research Data, ed. Graham Pryor

At the recent Open Repositories 2012 conference, held in Edinburgh in July 2012, it was apparent that Research Data Management (RDM) is increasingly becoming a hot topic, if it wasn't already. The conference, interested in all aspects of open scholarship but historically focussed on the areas of Open Access and Digital Archives, had no less than three separate sessions devoted to the various aspects of RDM. *Managing Research Data*, edited by Graham Pryor, is therefore a timely publication. It provides a broad overview of various aspects of RDM, focussing on the UK scene with some contextual perspectives from overseas (primarily the US and Australia, two countries with well-developed but very different RDM infrastructures).

The book is arranged in ten chapters, each one looking at a particular facet of RDM. The first half of the book is focussed upon RDM in terms of preservation- how to create RDM policies, then how to ensure these policies are put into place to ensure research data is effectively managed, curated and (where appropriate) made available. This part of the book draws heavily upon the work of the Digital Curation Centre (DCC)[1], the UK's centre of expertise in RDM. Repeated reference is made to the DCC's Curation Lifecycle Model[2], an excellent piece of information visualisation which sums up much of what one should consider when considering all matters relating to RDM.

The latter half of the book is more disparate, looking at a number of high-level strategic issues. In what is for me the most interesting chapter, Sheila Corrall outlines how librarians can become involved in RDM. She notes that librarians have the correct skill set with which to take on RDM, but that the area is a challenging area to break in to. This is because of the often proprietary relationship between researchers and data they create during the research process. Corrall emphasises the necessity of building trusting relationships with researchers, which over time will demonstrate that library staff are well placed to be involved in RDM.

The final chapters examine national-level infrastructure. The UK's data centres warrant a whole chapter, which seems more than justified, since they play a vital role in both the preservation and the discoverability of research data. They also create complexity, in that there is no clear dividing line between where institutional RDM should stop, and that of the national centres should start. A chapter looks at the contrasting approaches to RDM in Australia and the US- the former using a centralised approach, the latter a devolved one. The UK probably sits somewhere between these two poles. Finally, a chapter looks at future developments in RDM, in particular the pressure thought likely to come to bear from research funding agencies in ensuring RDM is properly executed.

The book provides a good introduction to RDM, but would also be of use to those readers very experienced in all matters to do with research data curation and management. I was impressed by the clarity and liveliness of the prose- inevitably any book on a relatively "dry" topic will have stretches of unexciting or technical prose, but this book's style of writing is in general mercifully free from this problem. I would recommend it for middle to senior library managers who are looking to dip their toe into the murky waters of RDM (such as myself); senior university managers wanting a

[1] http://www.dcc.ac.uk/
[2] http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/curation-lifecycle-model

broad overview of RDM policy and practice; and to those already well-versed in RDM matters but wanting to know about recent developments in RDM, as well as its future.