Creation of an In-House DMP Tool at The University of Houston Libraries

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Introduction:
Following the 2011 announcement by the National Science Foundation (NSF) that they would begin requiring Data Management Plans with every funding application, the University of Houston Libraries explored ways to support our campus researchers in meeting this requirement.

A small team of librarians built an online tool using a Drupal module to serve as an aid in fulfilling the funding agency’s requirement.

The tool includes informational content, an interactive questionnaire, and an extensive FAQ to meet diverse researcher needs. This easily accessible and locally maintained tool allows us to provide a high level of personalized service to our researchers.

Conclusions:
It was hoped that the tool would offer us the opportunity to start the conversation about data management activities. This effort has been a success. We have had the opportunity to discuss data management planning with researchers across the University.

Next Steps:
- Continued updating of the form to current information and guidelines as they become available.
- Retaining local administration to ensure ease in updating and close interaction with local researchers on data management needs.
- Promotion to wider campus community to increase visibility and usage of the form.

The Introduction page is informational. It explains the purpose and elements of DMP, the mechanics of the form and what the researchers can expect to get back. It also links to further information and resources and offers the ability to preview and print questions.

Building the Form
The Team: for agility and efficiency the team was made of two librarians with from the Senior Web Developer.
The Technology: built within a Drupal based library website using the webform module.
The Questions: to come up with the questions, we looked at many templates, examples and actual DMPs. We then aligned these with what we know of best practices for data management.
The FAQ: Extensive research while developing FAQ. Frequently updated and updated to ensure accuracy/currency.
The Output: The researcher receives an email containing responses with question text redacted. If filled out in short, narrative sentences, will only need to copy and paste email response. Average response is approximately 1.5 pages, under the 2 page limit for many agencies.

The FAQ serves as a companion to questionnaire with extensive details, including: Sample responses, Definitions of terms, and specific agency/directorate requirements where applicable.

Interactive, guided questionnaire includes five sections: Types of Data, Data and Metadata Standards, Policies for access/sharing and provisions for appropriate protection/privacy, Policies and provisions for reuse and redistribution, Plans for archiving and preservation of access. There are several links to the FAQ and the contact information for Head of Digital Services throughout.

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