

February 4, 2017

The following update summarizes Portage activities since the November 2016 CARL AGM and is organized around four reporting areas: contract work, Network of Expertise activities, partnership involvement, and the Portage Business Plan 2017 and 2018.

- **Contract Work.**

CARL is receiving revenue from three contracts in which Portage is involved.

- A successful capstone event completed Portage's engagement with a group of researchers in the SSHRC DMP Workshop on January 24, 2017. The recipients of eighteen SSHRC Insight and Partnership grants from a range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences participated in this Workshop. A final report summarizing the outcome will be submitted to SSHRC before March 1, 2017.

This project began on October 31, 2016 with a videoconference introducing the purpose of the Workshop and providing a tutorial on DMPs. Participating PIs and data managers were asked to complete a DMP for their project using DMP Assistant by mid-December. The name of a local library contact who could assist with preparing the DMP was provided to the researchers. Further background materials regarding DMPs were sent via email in November and December. Once a DMP was completed, the researchers were asked to complete an online questionnaire about their experience.

The in person capstone event was attended by 17 researchers and data managers from 13 projects. In addition, 18 observers from RDM stakeholder organizations joined the researchers in this event. Among the organizations represented by the observers were CARA, CAREB, LCDI, RDC, the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, SSHRC, CIHR, NSERC, IDRC, and CARL.

The capstone agenda covered three substantive discussion topics:

- A review of RDM trends nationally and internationally and results from the RDM Survey of Humanities and Social Science researchers at Queen's University;
- An analysis of the submitted DMPs and online questionnaires; and
- A discussion about SSHRC's plans to introduce a data policy that includes DMPs.

Background material was provided for each topic and then the researchers and observers participated in roundtable discussions addressing questions based on this information. A rapporteur for each roundtable provided a summary of their discussion for the full group.

Here is a sampling of the comments received from the researchers about their DMP experiences:

- *I liked the Portage Guidance that accompanies each question. I don't think people always understand why they are being asked to write a data management plan.*
- *A common mistake I have seen in NSF proposals is DMPs that focus too narrowly on how data access will be limited (for human subject protection) and don't give enough information about how data will be preserved and shared and made useful to others.*
- *I think this system can play an important role in educating researchers about all the different ways they need to think about their data management and in guiding them as they plan their research.*
- *The DMP process really helped us to plan what we want to do with our data and how we want to proceed. We found it very useful.*
- *The process of writing the DMP really pointed out the great diversity of the data we are dealing with within our project and showcased the importance of having a distinct data management approach for each type of data, and the challenges that come with it.*
- *I came to see the DMP process as about planning for the preservation and archivization of data, not about its ideal presentation or optimal accessibility.*
- *What surprised me most about the process was the extent to which our group had already developed many of the DMP elements. The process of incorporating these existing elements into a single document, however, provided us the opportunity to better appreciate the points at which those elements can be brought together more effectively. The exercise was tremendously valuable in that way.*
- *In the process of completing the DMP, I realized that there was a great deal of tacit knowledge in the data. This highlighted the challenge with metadata.*

The results of the questionnaire showed that the vast majority of the researchers found DMP Assistant easy to work with and that a DMP was useful in planning a research project. All of them thought that the guidance text helped them to understand and answer the questions in the Data Stewardship template. The final report will be shared with the researchers and be made available to the wider research community.

- The contract for CIHR Training Modules was started in November 2016 and consists of six research data management (RDM) training modules for the CIHR website. Three members of the Portage Training Expert Group were joined by three volunteers from the academic library community to make up the writing team for this project.
 - The members of this team are James Doiron (Alberta), Jane Fry (Carleton), Mayu Ishida (UBC), Janice Kung (Alberta), Jessica McEwan (Ottawa), and Laure Perrier (Toronto).
 - The topics of the six modules are:
 - Defining Research Data
 - Preparing Data Management Plans
 - Evaluating and Assessing Data Management Plans
 - Sharing Data
 - Citing Data and Providing Attribution
 - Finding Data for Reuse

Draft copies of the modules were delivered to CIHR on January 13, 2017 and feedback was received from them on January 20th. The authors are now completing revisions to their modules and have submitted draft content for case studies and FAQs to accompany their modules. The project will end on March 15, 2017.

- The Canadian Space Agency Life Science contract involved advising the Agency about the archiving of life sciences research data from projects that they fund. This contract concluded on February 3, 2017 with an in person presentation based on a priorly submitted final report. The Portage Director worked with Janet Halliwell, who was the primary contractor on this project. CARL received payment for the Director's time to conduct background research, to interview CSA-funded researchers and relevant stakeholders, such as members of the NASA data repository for life sciences, and to contribute to the writing of the report. The report and presentation were well received. The authors encouraged CSA to make the final report publicly available because of its applicability to other government funding agencies and the wider RDM community.
- An Update on Expert Groups
 - Some members of the DMPEG have written content for the Portage website that provides an introduction to RDM. Sections of the website are a year old and need refreshing. This is a first step. The EG is also revising the privacy statements associated with the use of DMP Assistant. Initially, the link on DMP Assistant has been to a U of A privacy statement. The replacement link will take users to a statement on the Portage

website. An upgrade to the DMP Assistant will encrypt the content entered by users, which is part of the privacy procedures being adopted.

- The Training Expert Group (TEG), in coordination with Shahira Khair, Portage’s Training Officer, is posting their RDM training environmental scan on the Portage website. This scan was conducted as part of the background work involved in writing their training white paper. They are also preparing terms of reference for two working groups to develop a course in RDM 101 and one on an Introduction to DMPs.
- The Discovery Expert Group (DEG) has launched two working groups: one on collection development policies for data repositories and the other on discovery metadata. These working groups are chaired by members of the EG (Berenica Vejvoda and Amber Leahey) and have 20 professionals (new to Portage) working up to six months on these specific projects.
- The Curation Expert Group (CEG) has been involved in alpha testing with the Compute Canada Federated Research Data Repository project. They are also preparing a white paper on the current Canadian context around research data curation platforms and workflow. Their white paper will provide priorities for organizing working groups.
- The Research Intelligence Expert Group (RIEG) is finalizing the website design of the clearinghouse for the RDM Survey Consortium, which will contain copies of the questionnaires and ethics applications in both official languages. RIEG contributed to the SSHRC DMP Workshop by developing the questionnaire that was administered.
- The Preservation Expert Group (PEG) is writing a white paper on the current requirements for research data preservation in Canada today. They are describing specific topics of importance to preservation, such as federated archival storage, and making recommendations that will direct Portage activities in this area. This paper is scheduled to be completed by mid-February.

Most groups meet at least biweekly and operate off a common calendar to avoid double booking the Portage conference call number that they all share.

- **Partnership Events, Discussions, and Possible Memoranda of Understanding**

- Portage participated in three events in January 2017 involving two CARL member institutions and one funding agency.
 - On January 25th, Carleton University Library hosted a half-day campus forum on research data management. Wayne Jones introduced the afternoon’s

program and was followed by presentations made by Jeremy Geelen (SSHRC), Jeff Moon (Queen's), and the Portage Director. The session concluded with a lively panel discussion consisting of two researchers (Tracey Lauriault and Fraser Taylor) and the Director of the Carleton Research Ethics Office (Kerri Nielsen). The Portage Director served as moderator. There was a good turnout from the library, research service office, ethics office, and from campus researchers and students. Each presentation was followed with good questions from the audience.

- On January 26th, the University of Ottawa Library hosted two research data management events. A public session, which was held in the morning, included an introduction by Leslie Weir about the uOttawa Library's engagement in research data management. Jeremy Geelen spoke on the Tri-Agency data management policy directions; Melissa Cheung and Catie Sahadath presented preliminary results from a survey of uOttawa researchers about their research data management requirements; Inma Aleixos Borrás, who is conducting her PhD research at uOttawa, spoke about factors contributing to the reuse of data; Patrick McCurdy discussed the complexity of managing his data in communications research; and the Portage Director spoke about issues in research data management and how the library community in Canada is supporting the research community in this area. An afternoon session was held with uOttawa librarians and invited campus colleagues to discuss local support for research data. Jeff Moon spoke about curation services provided by Queen's Library. The Director spoke about how Portage's Network of Expertise and platforms for research data infrastructure can support librarians in their local context.
- On January 27th, Dugan O'Neil (Chief Scientist for Compute Canada) and the Portage Director were invited to speak at an NSERC session about the partnership between their two organizations in developing the Federated Research Data Repository and about Portage's next phase of service development to support data repository and discovery platforms. Kevin Fitzgibbons (NSERC) welcomed the speakers and provided some context. This session arose because of a Compute Canada briefing that Kevin had attended earlier in January. Shannon Cobb (NSERC), who coordinated the event, sent an email after the event saying: *Many of my colleagues approached me this afternoon to say it was an excellent presentation and that they now have a better understanding of your organizations and RDM. One person commented how impressive it was to hear about the collaboration between CC and CARL – "a real example of unexpected partnerships making real progress."*

- The Portage Director served as an advisor to the IDRC Data Sharing Pilot that was conducted between March and December 2016. This pilot introduced DMPs, using DMP Assistant, in several IDRC-funded projects. A wrap-up meeting was held on December 1st and 2nd in Ottawa allowing the researchers to describe their experiences with DMPs and the management of the data in their projects. While some of the researchers were in countries where Internet connectivity presented a problem in using DMP Assistant, a document version of the Data Stewardship template was provided as an alternative to online access. The researchers all found the structure and logic of this DMP template helpful in planning their research. The Portage Director was included as a speaker in the wrap-up program.
- Martha Whitehead, Susan Haigh, and the Portage Director participated in an LCDI meeting on January 6, 2017 organized by Robbin Tourangeau. A small group of eight worked to define the functional components of research data management that policy makers need to understand when funding this area of digital research infrastructure. A second meeting of this group has been scheduled for February 16th.
- Discussions are currently being held with a number potential partners about new MOUs.
 - This includes three MOUs with regional library consortia: OCUL, BCI, CAUL. COPPUL has already signed an MOU.
 - Discussions are also underway with a group of universities providing Dataverse services. This group is looking to form a Dataverse North affiliation under a Portage umbrella.
 - Discussions have also been held with the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences (PIMS). As a Institute supporting data science, they are interested in integrating their Jupyter Notebooks (an analytic and visualization platform) with Portage data repository services. PIMS currently has an MOU with Compute Canada to provide cloud computer services for this platform.
 - Cybera expressed interest in working together with Portage. It is a little early to have a sense about what this MOU might involve, but one possibility is around a joint partnership including PIMS and Jupyter Notebooks.
- **Portage Business Plan 2017 and 2018**
 - Modifications were made to the Portage Business Plan following the November CARL AGM to incorporate the suggestions made during the consultation session with the Directors and the actions arising from the annual business meeting. This revised Plan was presented to the CARL Board on January 30, 2017 and with the Board making a few

more changes to clarify the intent of AGM suggestions, the Plan has been approved and will soon be circulated.

- Candidates were interviewed in December 2017 for the 0.5FTE position of Training Officer that was approved in the Portage budget. Shahira Khair was offered and accepted this position along with a 0.5FTE appointment in CARL assessment activities. Shahira has a Masters degree in Biology and is in her final term completing a Masters degree with the uOttawa School of Information Studies. We are excited with the talent and enthusiasm that she brings to Portage and CARL.

Submitted by Chuck Humphrey