



Portage Progress Report

For the period of April - June 2019

The following report summarizes Portage activities and accomplishments in the second quarter of 2019 and provides an update on Portage operations and communications undertaken in this period.

Reporting areas include work undertaken towards:

1. Fostering a community of practice for research data management (RDM);
2. Facilitating and providing leadership in the development of RDM infrastructure;
3. Engaging and advocating for RDM with stakeholder communities; and
4. Developing Portage operations and communications.

The mission of Portage is to contribute actively to RDM in Canada through a sustainable network of library-based services and collaborative infrastructure. The following report aims to communicate our progress towards the development of this envisioned national community of practice.

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1. Fostering a community of practice for RDM

A primary objective of Portage is to build a network of expertise for RDM. Critical aspects of this objective are to coordinate and expand on expertise and services within Canadian academic libraries and to build capacity in specific areas of RDM.

Activities and Accomplishments

The following update is centered around the work of the Portage Network of Experts, but it is important to note at this time the ongoing and determined work of both the Portage Secretariat and CARL in securing funding for both data management (DM) and the broader digital research infrastructure (DRI) ecosystems. While no official announcements have or can be made at the time of this writing, we are very hopeful that these will come soon. CARL and Portage have been very effective in this space, both in seeking transitional funding for DM and through involvement in the larger DRI funding push. In all of this, our Network of Experts and Community of Practice have provided the foundational credibility and productivity that has opened doors and garnered support from a wide range of RDM stakeholder groups.

Portage Council of Chairs:

- The Portage Council of Chairs held a full-day in-person meeting on May 10, 2019, at the University of Toronto. Chairs heard and discussed updates from the Portage Secretariat and provided updates on their progress to date and future work plans. Other points of discussion included a debrief on the ISED application for the new organization, updates on CANARIE-funded RDM software development projects, priorities for the 2019/20 transition period, and training initiatives.

Curation Expert Group (CEG):

- The objective of CEG is to identify, evaluate, and promote best practices, resources, and workflows that support data sharing and reusability for researchers within projects, as well as data within repositories.
- CEG is in the process of drafting a data curation survival guide, which will be made available online through GitHub and the Portage website.
- CEG worked with the Portage Secretariat to develop a draft position description for a Curation Coordinator position, in anticipation of possible funding developments for DRI.
- CEG continues to work with the FRDR team on curation workflow and tool development.
- CEG is working closely with Portage and McMaster University Library as members of the program committee for the Canadian Data Curation Forum: a three-day event that will consist of data curation training and a Data Curation Community-Building forum.

- CEG, in partnership with TEG and other community members represented on the program committee, are helping to plan, set the agenda, and develop content for the event.
- A Call for Applications will be sent out in July 2019, with the event itself taking place October 16 to 18, 2019 at McMaster University.

Data Discovery Expert Group (DDEG):

- DDEG contributes expertise to the Portage Network around the discovery of Canadian research data and the development of a national data discovery service.
- DDEG's FRDR Discovery Service WG continues its work in developing a national discovery layer for Canadian research data including:
 - A new working group undertaking a project to map harvested subject keywords to the Faceted Application of Subject Terminology (FAST) schema using OpenRefine.
 - Maintaining and expanding upon the list of [Canadian repositories](#) discoverable in Re3data.org.
 - Identifying repositories for addition to the national discovery layer. The full list of collaborating repositories can be found [here](#).
- In coordination with the CANARIE-funded Geodisy project, DDEG and the FRDR development team are exploring how to integrate geospatial search into FRDR's discovery interface.
- Members of the DDEG have met with representatives from Europe's OpenAIRE project (<https://www.openaire.eu/>) to discuss making Canadian research data repositories discoverable in their international platform.

Data Management Planning Expert Group (DMPEG):

- DMPEG continues to oversee development of the Portage national data management planning platform, the DMP Assistant. They are gathering DMP 'exemplars' from different disciplines to assist researchers in drafting DMPs.
- DMPEG and Portage continue to work closely with the University of Alberta on the DMP Assistant 2.0 update/migration. The University of Alberta has started preparations to initiate this project in anticipation of funding support from Portage. It is hoped that DMP Assistant 2.0 will be launched in late 2019/early 2020.
- DMPEG has written new Terms of Reference that address future priorities for this group.
- The co-Chairs of DMPEG, Maggie Neilson (Acadia University) and James Doiron (UofA), have confirmed that they will be delivering a full day of DMP focused information and training at McMaster University on September 13, 2019. This event is being supported by a successful SSHRC Connections Grant application submitted by researchers at McMaster.

- DMPEG working groups have been busy as well:
 - Exemplars WG - The DMPEG Exemplars Group, Chaired by Carla Graebner (Simon Fraser), completed four exemplar DMPs in collaboration with researchers. The result of this work was showcased at the IASSIST conference in Sydney, Australia, through a poster presentation. The next steps for the group include creating a one-page document outlining exemplar criteria to be used for both the development and assessment of DMPs, and continuing to help researchers craft DMPs.
 - Policy WG - The Policy Working Group, chaired by Ted Strauss (McGill), is working to complete the environmental scan of practices regarding DMP assessment in other jurisdictions and draft a summary document, continuing on from last year's mandate. The intention is to distill the information into a functional document which could be used, for example, as part of the Portage "Institutional RDM Strategy template" to help institutions in developing and adopting RDM policies. The Policy WG has also reached out to the DMPEG Training WG, chaired by Li Zhang, to propose a collaboration on a functional document and the training practices associated with it.
 - Training WG - The DMPEG Training Working Group, Chaired by Li Zhang (USask), had its first meeting at the end of June. During this call the group reviewed training materials and guidance documents provided by the Training Expert Group (TEG). The group is now in the process of developing content for high level DMP training materials.
 - Repositories WG - This group, chaired by Adrienne Cobourne (Dalhousie), has selected Dataverse as the platform for the DMP repository - and will be meeting soon to discuss next steps for its setup.

Preservation Expert Group (PEG):

- PEG continues to provide Portage with advice and guidance on RDM infrastructure developments supporting the long-term stewardship of research data, metadata, and code.
- Recent outputs include a high-level [work plan](#), which provides an overview of proposed priorities and related tasks for the PEG over the next 2 years and a draft position description for a 'Preservation Coordinator' position in anticipation of possible transition funding for data management.
- The PEG will be selectively seeking new members to expand capacity and to address turnover in membership.

Research Intelligence Expert Group (RIEG):

- RIEG provides Portage with intelligence on RDM in Canada and is responsible for managing materials and outputs of the Canadian RDM Survey Consortium.
- RIEG Working Groups have been active, deploying a national survey of institutional readiness for the Tri-Agencies' proposed Institutional RDM Strategies policy requirement. This survey, deployed in June 2019, will provide an excellent snapshot of the current situation as we anticipate launch of the policy in late 2019 or early 2020.
- Another larger survey is being developed to evaluate broader institutional-readiness to meet RDM requirements (as opposed to researcher-readiness).

Training Expert Group (TEG):

- The primary objective of TEG is the development and maintenance of a high-level 'continuum of training' program to support researchers and RDM specialists across Canada.
- Completed and in-progress outputs and activities include:
 - English and French versions of Dataverse North Metadata Best Practices Guide V 1.1
 - French versions of the Dataverse Primer and the FRDR Discovery Primer are also now available.
 - [English](#) and [French](#) versions of the "Repository Options in Canada: A Portage Guide" publication are available in on the Portage website under '[Training Resources](#)'.
- All of these outputs and activities feed into the 'continuum of training' model TEG is developing to assist Expert and Working groups with the creation of training materials in support of the larger national community of practice around RDM. An emerging part of this is the new 'National Data Training Working Group' (also mentioned below).

Data Repositories Expert Group (DREG)

- The next meeting of this group is scheduled for July 19th, 2019, to build on progress made at the inaugural meeting in June -- finalizing the draft Terms of Reference and membership and thinking about how to provide value to existing platform-specific working groups (e.g. FRDR and Dataverse) as well addressing needs in specific domains.

2. Facilitating and providing leadership in the development of RDM infrastructure

Portage seeks to advance the development of national platforms for planning, curating, preserving and discovering research data. This will require working with infrastructure providers - both in the library community and elsewhere - to develop new tools where gaps exist and to bridge systems where interoperability is needed.

Activities and Accomplishments

DMP Assistant:

- Planning continues for the migration of the Portage DMP Assistant to a new merged codebase. Progress is dependent on funding that Portage is actively seeking to support this important national platform.

Dataverse North Working Group (DVN):

- DVN was formed to contribute to a community of practice for libraries using or interested in using the Dataverse repository platform for research data in Canada. Work is being advanced by three sub-groups investigating gaps and opportunities that could be addressed by nationally coordinated strategies and services for Dataverse; including, the Policy Sub-Group, the Training Sub-Group, and the Metadata Sub-Group.
- The DVN Metadata Subgroup has released the DVN Metadata Best Practices Guide available on the Portage website in French and English. The group is now working on a one-pager guide for metadata in Dataverse.
- DVN continues to work with the Training Expert Group (TEG) to develop repository-related training materials. James Doiron has stepped down as training chair to focus on his new role as chair of DMPEG. Carrie Breton (Guelph) and Siobhan Hanratty (UNB) have agreed to co-chair the training group until Dec 2019.
- Following the completion of their recommendations report, the DVN Business Models Sub-Group has concluded and re-formed into the Policy Sub-Group which will draft policy recommendations that can be adopted in whole or in part by Canadian Dataverse providers. The sub-group has been constituted and work is currently underway.
- A Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Scholars Portal/U of Toronto and BCI member institutions has been reached which will allow Québec institutions to develop Dataverse repositories through Scholars Portal. This is a big step toward the vision of a national instance of Dataverse as proposed by the Portage Business Models Sub-Group. Portage and the Portage Dataverse North Working Group continue to monitor these developments and maintain channels of communication with the stakeholders involved.

Federated Research Data Repository (FRDR):

- FRDR is a joint project between CARL Portage and Compute Canada to create a national discovery layer for Canadian research data and a scalable repository platform capable of handling large data files easily.
- FRDR is currently operational in a “limited production” capacity, which means that:
 - Anyone may use the service to search for and download data from the FRDR repository or from a growing catalogue of Canadian data repositories.
 - FRDR’s repository services are being offered to a growing list of Canadian researchers.
 - Discussions are underway with several new research groups who could join FRDR as limited production partners in 2019-2020.
- The Portage Service Manager and FRDR Development team created a ‘FRDR Production Launch Project Plan’ to transition FRDR from limited to full production to better support the Canadian research community. It is expected that FRDR will move to full production in advance of the new national Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) organization articulated in the response to the Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development’s (ISED) DRI Contribution Program (<http://engagedri.ca/>).
- FRDR in full production is expected to have managed repository storage spread across multiple Compute Canada Federation hosting sites. Discussions are underway with two possible FRDR host sites. The Cedar system at Simon Fraser University has been identified as the likely first FRDR host site. The second host site is still to be determined at this time.
- Targeted outreach and training activities are planned for the transitional year leading up to FRDR launch.

FRDR Service Model Working Group (FRDR-SM):

- The FRDR-SM WG was formed to draw on community expertise in the development of service and business models, policies, and user experience and operational workflows for a federated research data repository platform.
- The **Policy Working Group** has completed the development of several policies in support of operating a national-scale data repository service. Drafted policies have been reviewed by the CARL Director’s Portage Steering Committee, and are expected to receive legal review before being finalized. In 2019, the group will work on Service Level Agreements between FRDR and Compute Canada Federation hosting sites, as well as other storage providers.
- The **User Experience and Training Working Group** underwent a membership renewal, with four new members being added. As a part of its onboarding activities, the group completed a round of feature testing and is now in the process of developing a script

for future user testing. Work has also begun on developing onsite training materials for FRDR, including a screencast for using Globus File Transfer. It is expected that the group will work closely with the TEG on other training developments, such as a possible online training module for FRDR.

Repository Landscape Coordination Efforts:

- Portage has collaborated with Scholars Portal to develop primers and use-case documents for FRDR and Dataverse, but which also acknowledge the broader repository landscape in Canada. Among these is a recently-published document: “**Repository Options in Canada: A Portage Guide**”, available in [English](#) and [French](#) on the Portage website under [‘Training Resources’](#).

3. Engaging and advocating for RDM with stakeholder communities

Portage seeks to advance the development of national platforms for planning, curating, preserving and discovering research data. This will require working with infrastructure providers - both in the library community and elsewhere - to develop new tools where gaps exist and to bridge systems where interoperability is needed.

Activities and Accomplishments

Collaboration with Regional Library Councils:

- The Director continues to meet monthly with representatives of the four Regional Library Consortia. In addition, regional representatives have been invited to add regional updates to Portage Updates released periodically to the community.

Inter-organizational Working Group on Responsible RDM Practices for Sensitive Data:

- The focus of this working group is to provide practical guidance in managing sensitive data by identifying best practices from both the international community and Canadian experiences.
- Subgroup 1: This group continues to work on its mandate of developing deposit-friendly text for ethics applications & informed consent, data access agreements, and training materials. The subgroup has developed a Work Plan Grid to identify and prioritize objectives. This grid also includes a section with definitions to ensure common understanding in the group and among consumers of this group's outputs. Continued thanks to Brenda Gagné and Rachel Zand for continuing to co-chair this subgroup.
- Subgroup 2: This group has made good progress looking at questions and guidance elements that could be folded into an 'Indigenous data'-specific DMP template. This work has been flagged to the DMP Expert Group as well, who will be involved in rendering the new template.

National Data Training Working Group

- Following initial discussions in January, 2019, a new National Data Training Working Group is poised to start with membership from across the data management ecosystem, including RDC, CARL Portage, CODATA Canada, World Data Systems, College and Institutes Canada, Centre de documentation collégiale, SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR, and ISED. An inaugural meeting is scheduled for mid July. The exact mandate of this group has yet to be established, but Portage will be represented on this group through the Director and the Chair of the Training Expert Group (TEG).

Service-Level Agreement between OCUL Scholars Portal and BCI

- SP-BCI have developed a service level agreement for the expansion of the SP Dataverse service beyond OCUL institutions. A copy of the SLA can be made available upon request.

ISED Funding update

- The community-led and community-supported application to ISED for DRI funding was submitted by the May 6th deadline. While no formal agreement has been reached and no announcement made, work continues toward establishing a new DRI organization, incorporating Data Management (DM), Advanced Research Computing (ARC), and Research Software (RS). The initial 'signatory board' will establish an 'applicant board' of four people who will carry negotiations forward with ISED with the goal of establishing the new organization as soon as possible. Interim funding is in place or being discussed for each of the three pillars, to ensure service to researchers is uninterrupted.

Transition Funding for DM

- No announcements have been made regarding transition funding to support DM initiatives, including potential support for advancing national DM stewardship, platforms and services. Work toward this goal is ongoing.

SSHRC RDM Connection Grants

- In addition to the successful Portage/McMaster application for funding to support a national Curation Workshop, Portage is involved in and/or supportive of a number of other SSHRC RDM Connection Grant applications, including:
 - Emily Carr University of Art + Design
 - University of Ottawa
 - University of Alberta
 - University of Laval
 - Portage Sensitive Data Working Group
 - Fanshawe College

Other Engagements

- Lee Wilson attended THATcamp@X at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, April 8, 2019
- Jeff Moon gave the closing keynote address at the 2019 NADDI Conference in Ottawa, April 24-26, 2019
- Lee Wilson presented on national RDM initiatives with colleagues from the University of New Brunswick at an ACENET Researcher Session in Fredericton, April 29-30, 2019

- Jeff Moon provided a Portage Update on training and DRI Funding to the CARL Board and another presentation to Directors at the CARL Spring General Meeting in Victoria, April 30 - May 2, 2019
- Jeff Moon co-presented at BCNet in Vancouver (with Mark Leggott from RDC)
- Jeff Moon presented at IASSIST 2019, Sydney, Australia, May 27-31
- Jeff Moon attended the Université de Montreal RDM and Ethics meetings in Montreal, June 10-11
- Lee Wilson delivered a training workshop at Dalhousie's Research Bootcamp in Halifax, June 12, 2019
- Lee Wilson attended and presented at CANHEIT-ARC 2019 in Winnipeg, June 17-21
- Jeff Moon delivered the keynote speech at the Université de Quebec RDM Day, Montreal, June 18, 2019

4. Developing Portage operations and communications

Portage is a CARL initiative and is currently supported through its membership. The goal is to develop a sustainable network built upon the support of the wider research data management ecosystem.

Activities and Accomplishments

CARL Directors Portage Steering Committee (CDPSC):

- The CDPSC met on April 4th to review draft FRDR policies and use case scenarios for FRDR and Dataverse.

Portage Advisory Committee (PAC):

- The next meeting of the Portage Advisory Committee will be held in September.