Lessons learned from implementing the Data Audit Framework

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Overview

- Edinburgh DAF implementation
  - GeoSciences Pilot
  - Further data audits
- General issues
- Common data management issues
- Lessons learned
Edinburgh implementation

- GeoSciences pilot audit
- Further data audits across three colleges:
  - Science and Engineering: The Institute for Astronomy
  - Humanities and Social Science: The School of Divinity, Economic and Social History
  - Medicine and Veterinary Science: The Centre for Integrative Physiology, Brain Imaging Research Group
GeoSciences pilot audit

- A leading international centre for research into GeoSciences
  - 80 academics, 70 research fellows, 130 PhD students
- Five main research groups
  - Earth Subsurface Science
  - Global Change
  - Human Geography
  - Edinburgh Earth Observatory
  - Centre for Environmental Change and Sustainability
1. Planning the audit

- Desk research
  - School website, staff home pages, publications, technical documents etc.
  - Identifying key research staff and projects they are responsible for
- Initial meeting with IT Managers
- Setting up interviews with staff
2. Identifying & classifying

- Conducting semi structured interviews with 35 staff mainly in Human Geography and Global Change research groups
  - Interview duration varied between 30 mins and 2 hrs
- Creating an inventory of 25 data assets
- Classifying these data assets
3. Assessing management

- Assessing the most significant assets in detail, collecting a basic set of data elements based on Dublin Core
- Checking the accuracy of the information collected via emails
4. Reporting back

- A draft report that feeds back on the results of each stage of the audit
- Draft recommendations to the school to improve data management
- Draft recommendations to Information Services to further improve their support to the research community
Further data audits

College of Humanities & Social Science

- The School of Divinity
  - 30+ academic staff
  - Interviews with 6 staff

- Economic & Social History
  - 18 academic staff
  - Interviews with 5 staff
Further data audits

College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine
• The Centre for Integrative Physiology
  ● 30+ academic staff
  ● Online questionnaire: 50% response rate
  ● Interviews with 2 staff
• Brain Imaging Research Group
  ● Online questionnaire: 3% response rate
Further data audits

College of Science & Engineering

- Institute for Astronomy
  - 20+ academic staff
  - Online questionnaire: 30% response rate
  - Interview with one staff
General issues

- Restricted or no access to the shared or personal drives
- Little or no documentation / knowledge of what exists
- Time required to arrange meetings and conduct interviews
- Low rate of response to the questionnaire
Data management issues

- Inadequate storage: data stored on personal PCs, laptops, external storage devices
- Lack of formal policies for creating and managing data
- Lack of training and guidance on best practice in data management
Lessons learned

- A good starting point to recognise and address data management issues
- Outcomes preliminary but positive
- Inventory doesn't always have to be comprehensive but could be a representative sample
- Defining the scope and granularity carefully is crucial
Lessons learned

- Planning well in advance helps
- Time needed is longer than initially anticipated but still manageable
- Support from senior management speeds up the process
- Collecting as much information as possible in the interviews/surveys saves time later
Further information

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Thank you! Any questions?