

Research Data Services in Veterinary Medicine Libraries

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Introduction

Many academic libraries are spearheading the development of a research data service (RDS) at their institution. Typically, these services provide support for needs common to many disciplines, but data management can be highly discipline-specific. Understanding disciplinary needs will contribute to the evolution of research data services.

Aim

This study focuses on the experiences and perceptions of veterinary medicine librarians and information professionals with research data services to identify any distinguishing trends and topics that could benefit from further investigation.

Method

An online survey was administered to librarians and information professionals working in veterinary medicine libraries across North America.

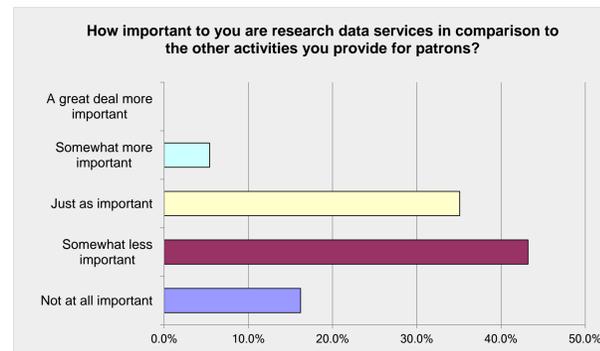
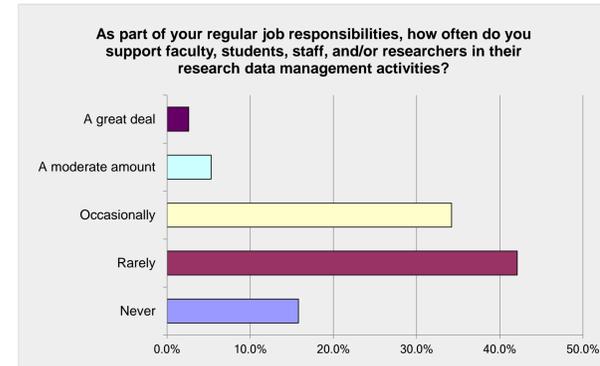
Potential participants were identified by consulting the online directory maintained by the Veterinary Medical Libraries Section of the Medical Library Association.



Results

There were 44 usable responses to the survey, out of 94 invitations issued.

A subset of questions asked participants about their personal experience with research data services...



Revealing comments

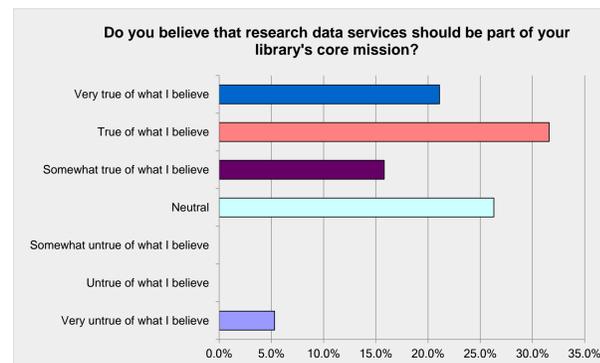
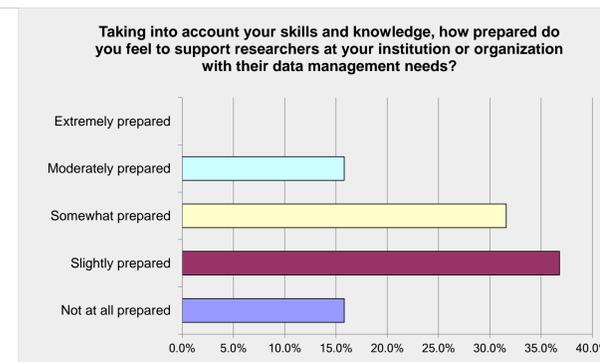
"I'm here to support my researchers -- funder mandates affect my faculty, so therefore they affect me."

"Low volume of faculty research makes this a correspondingly low concern."

Revealing comments

"This is an area where I'm trying to ramp up my knowledge, and I rely on our Data Services Librarian for consultation and collaboration."

"Personally I am prepared to talk about our services, but ultimately I connect people to our data services librarian."



Revealing comments

"Data services is an important component, but defining it, or many other important services, as 'core' is a difficult proposition."

"This is on a bucket list, but other core missions (access to information, collections, education) have taken precedence up to this point."

Conclusions

- No clear definition of "research data services" makes it difficult to have a dialogue, both within and without the library.
- Research data services are generally a priority for veterinary medicine libraries and librarians, but no more so than other services.
- Vet med librarians are already providing data management services but do not feel completely prepared to do so.
- RDS is not an official job responsibility for most vet med librarians but professional interest has sparked initial involvement.
- RDS are important to the advancement of veterinary research but demand from constituents has been low.
- Barriers to providing research data services in veterinary medicine:
 - Lack of time
 - Lack of skill and/or knowledge
 - Lack of ownership

Next Steps

More detailed analysis of the survey data to look for commonalities and differences amongst the different types of vet med libraries.

Further exploration into the potential for RDS training specific to veterinary medicine librarians and/or veterinary researchers. A starting point might be the intersection of clinical and basic science data management.

