REGIONAL REPORT FOR CANADA 2021

This regional report for the year ending May 1, 2021 has been compiled and submitted by Carol Perry, IASSIST Regional Secretary for Canada. Additional content provided by Jane Fry.

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MEMBERSHIP

As of June 1, 2021, there were 62 active IASSIST members from Canada. This represents a slight increase over last year, a possible reflection of the effects of the pandemic on an increased need for virtual collaborations and connections. The availability of the IASSIST global online conference offering this year may also be a factor in providing an opportunity to attend for those traditionally without funding to travel to conferences.

OVERVIEW

This year of the pandemic has changed everything about the way we work and has radically altered the research process and research imperatives for many researchers. In Canada, the ongoing collaborative work in the data services sector, and the RDM sector in particular, has traditionally operated primarily in a virtual environment. Two major developments in the field of research data supports and services have occurred despite the difficulties involved in working in a pandemic environment. These developments involved NDRIO and Portage and the Tri-Agency funders.

TRI-AGENCY RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT POLICY

https://www.science.gc.ca/eic/site/063.nsf/eng/h_97610.html

After many years of planning and consultations, the Tri-Agency funders have released their long-awaited research data management policy. This policy outlines the expectation that RDM be a part of research excellence and reinforces support for the FAIR principles for research data management and stewardship. As part of this policy, Data Management Plans (DMPs) are a required element of the application process. The policy does explicitly declare that it is not an open data policy, but rather encourages data preservation and sharing within ethical and legal constraints. Institutions will be responsible for providing research strategies and supports for their researchers. The policy will be rolled out incrementally over the next two years.

NEW DIGITAL RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANIZATION (NDRIO)

https://engagedri.ca/

This past year has marked the first full year of NDRIO operations. NDRIO's core mandate is to assist researchers in conducting globally competitive, leading-edge research through the development of a digital research infrastructure strategy focused on the provision of digital tools, services and infrastructure.

With a new governance structure in place including the installation of Nizar Ladak as the inaugural CEO and the establishment of a Researcher Council, NDRIO undertook a series of initiatives to move forward on its agenda. As part of a Needs Assessment, a call for white papers solicited 105 submissions, an online survey has been completed and a series of town hall meetings was undertaken. Documentation on these initiatives and preliminary findings are publicly available. From these findings, a national service delivery and funding model will be developed over the coming months.

PORTAGE (CARL)

https://portagenetwork.ca/

The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) Portage Network has recently undergone a significant change in operation. Portage was formally fully integrated into NDRIO on April 1, 2021.

Portage will continue to provide support for RDM initiatives within its new operational capacity. Recent developments include the release of the DMP Assistant 2.0 and the full production launch of the Federated Research Data Repository (FRDR) this spring. Expert and working groups have been engaged in providing information gathering on the status of RDM in Canada as well as continuing to develop RDM support materials.

Full details can be found in the Spring Update.

Portage/NDRIO has recently engaged in providing funding and support for CoreTrustSeal certification for a select number of institutions across Canada. This project will kick off summer 2021.

FEDERATED RESEARCH DATA REPOSITORY (FRDR)

https://www.frdr-dfdr.ca/repo/

The Federated Research Data Repository (FRDR) project now operates in full production mode. This joint project of CARL/NDRIO/Portage and Compute Canada provides Canadian researchers with a scalable preservation platform for digital research data offering deposit, discovery and preservation services and acts as a data repository portal providing access to research data from repositories across the country. Ninety-four collections from Canadian repositories have been indexed within the portal to date.

OCUL/SCHOLARS PORTAL
https://dataverse.scholarsportal.info/

Scholars Portal (SP) has expanded its digital data infrastructure support of research data services at higher institutions across Ontario. The Dataverse platform operated by Scholars Portal has expanded its partnerships to include 50 institutions from across Canada and is available in both English and French. Additional funding has been provided by CANARIE and Portage.

DATA LIBERATION INITIATIVE (DLI)

DLI (Data Liberation Initiative)

DLI provides Statistics Canada public use microdata files and aggregate data files to subscribing institutions across Canada. As well as access to these files, both regional and national training is provided to the DLI contacts annually. Over the past few years, more public use data have been made available for free to anyone who wants them, so this is changing the data landscape in Canada. It remains to be seen what will happen in this area. There are many DLI contacts who are also IASSIST members.

CANADIAN IASSIST MEMBERS

Many Canadian IASSIST members have been deeply involved in the work of Portage over the past year. Of note is Jeff Moon, Director, Portage. The engagement at a national and international level by these members is of benefit to both organizations as knowledge and expertise is developed and shared freely and broadly.

IASSIST Officials:

Canadian Regional Secretary:
OUTGOING – Carol Perry

It has been a great pleasure to serve as Regional Secretary for Canada on the IASSIST Administrative Committee these past six years.

INCOMING – Jane Fry

Canadian Members at Large: Dylanne Dearborn, Amber Leahy

PHOTO CREDIT

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