

IASSIST REGIONAL REPORT FOR CANADA 2022-2023

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Membership

As of June 1, 2023, there are 70 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.

Overview

Now that the pandemic is officially over, this past year has focused on determining how to go forward with research, whether in-person or virtual. As virtual tools have been used successfully for the past three years, many research processes are continuing to be offered virtually. The challenge comes when there are opportunities for in-person research activities, including conferences. Everyone is still trying to determine the best way forward, while at the same time dealing with shrinking budgets. Despite these challenges, there are still many new developments in the Canadian data field and the importance of networking is becoming more important with the realization that our in-person events may not occur in the same regular basis as they did pre-pandemic.

Detailed Information:

Data Liberation Initiative (DLI) <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/microdata/dli>

DLI provides Statistics Canada public use microdata files and aggregate data files to subscribing institutions across Canada. As well as access to these files, national training was provided to the DLI contacts and alternates in 2022. There are many DLI contacts who are also IASSIST members.

The DLI Training Repository contains training sessions and workshop presentations from the DLI, and from other national and international conferences over the years. It was designed as a repository for academic working papers, data sets, etc. It is a rich resource containing over 500 entries and is in the process of being put into Borealis, to follow the FAIR data principles, especially making it more discoverable to anyone interested in accessing past training sessions.

Tri-Agency Research Data Management Policy – Institutional Strategy

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

“Each postsecondary institution and research hospital eligible to administer CIHR, NSERC or SSHRC funds is required to create an institutional RDM strategy and notify the agencies when it has been completed.” “The strategy must be made publicly available on the institution’s website, with contact information to which inquiries about the strategy can be directed. Having the strategies publicly available will help the agencies and the broader research community to understand institutions’ current and planned RDM capacity, challenges and needs, and will facilitate ongoing dialogue and collaboration on the advancement of RDM in Canada.”

As of March 1, 2023, over 130 institutions now have an institutional RDM Strategy. Many of them used the [MAMIC](#) to enable them to create this strategy. This Maturity Assessment Model was created specifically for Canadian Research institutions.

Digital Research Alliance of Canada (the Alliance) <https://alliancecan.ca/en>

The Digital Research Alliance of Canada (the Alliance) was established in 2019 as a non-profit, membership-based organization mandated to coordinate and fund activities in Advanced Research Computing (ARC), Research Data Management (RDM), Research Software (RS) and Cybersecurity, and to advance the national Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) strategy. The Alliance is funded by the Government of Canada through Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED).

Under the Alliance, RDM is composed of a national coordination and service delivery team that works in conjunction with our community partners to deliver: training and outreach; support for policies and best practices in RDM; and services, tools, and infrastructure platforms

As a core activity, the Alliance coordinates the RDM Network of Experts: a grassroots community of information and data professionals comprising over 150 Experts across 70 plus Canadian academic and research institutions.

The Alliance supports RDM in Canada through a suite of national RDM services and programs delivered in coordination with service provider partners. Selected activities from the past year include:

Lunaris - <https://www.lunaris.ca/>

Lunaris launched in a public beta form on March 29, 2023 and in full production on May 17, 2023. Formerly known as the FRDR Discovery Service, the redesigned Lunaris platform features integrated text- and map-based discovery of over 85,000 datasets from nearly 100 Canadian repositories and data collections. Major project activities that took place over the past year leading up to launch included content development, usability testing, accessibility compliance testing, French language translation, and promotional campaign planning and execution. Lunaris is also planning to expand its service team by hiring a UX Specialist and Software Developer in the coming year. The expanded team capacity will allow for continued improvement of the platform and community outreach.

DMP Assistant - <https://assistant.portagenetwork.ca/>

In 2022, the DMP Assistant underwent several major platform upgrades and welcomed a new service lead to the team. The service team is in the process of implementing a new community engagement model, which will include a DMP Assistant Administrators Group to help connect with our users, gather feedback, and share updates regarding the development and delivery of the DMP Assistant. Members of the service team meet regularly with representatives from Canadian funding agencies to support the implementation of the DMP requirement as a part of their new RDM Policy.

The DMP Expert Group has continued to support the development of DMP-related resources, including a comprehensive Administrator Guide that was released in August 2022 and that provides detailed support both to existing and new DMP Assistant Administrators situated at institutions and organizations. They have also participated in a range of information sharing and learning opportunities, including webinars and workshops. Currently, DMPEG is working on the

development of a new DMP template that will be specific for supporting researchers with meeting DMP requirements at the funding proposal stage.

Borealis: the Canadian Dataverse Repository <https://borealisdata.ca/>

The Borealis team continues to actively participate in RDM software development to support and respond to the needs of Canadian researchers. The latest upgrade was done May 24, 2023 to version 5.13. Some of the new features added in this upgrade included contributions from the Borealis team, These included: new DDI import scripts; and improved French translations for menus and hover text. In 2022, this is how Borealis was being used: 5,028 datasets published; 228,762 data files deposited from over 12,855 datasets across 1,077 collections covering multiple disciplines; and 1,439 datasets that have direct links to publications and other scholarly outputs.

Regional Information:

Western Region: <https://abacus.library.ubc.ca/>

Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, the University of Northern British Columbia and the University of Victoria have collaborated for decades in making available licensed datasets through a shared repository hosted by UBC called Abacus. This collaboration has now extended beyond Abacus to include shared programming and advocacy. Most recently the four university libraries co-developed a very successful program of workshops and panel discussions for ‘Love Data Week’. It included bringing in speakers from Statistics Canada, the Province of British Columbia and Faculty from the host institutions. Current initiatives by the four universities include providing access to Provincial assessment data and hosting CBC British Columbia's Covid-19 data.

Ontario Data Community:

The Ontario Data Community (ODC), under the umbrella of OCUL (Ontario Consortium of University Libraries) facilitates the exchange of ideas and fosters discussion amongst data professionals to encourage collaborative initiatives, the development of new ideas, increased access, and more efficient use of resources. The members meet bi-monthly to exchange updates. A recent and popular addition to the agenda includes a knowledge sharing component, where one of the members discusses their data services.

Compute Ontario: <https://www.computeontario.ca/>

Compute Ontario, a regional HPC coordination and support organization, now has an expanded mandate that includes RDM and RS, making it a full DRI (Digital Research Infrastructure) organization. RDM is being supported through a 0.6 FTE position focused on leadership and vision, relationship building, training & services, and representation across jurisdictions. Immediate successes include two successful RDM funding calls, expanded RDM training offerings, and creation of DRI Training and RDM Advisory Committees.

Atlantic Data Contacts group:

An Atlantic Data Contacts group now operates in Atlantic Canada, mostly counting in its membership Atlantic Canada DLI contacts, but open to anyone offering data support in the

region. The group shares training material with many examples focused on Atlantic Canada for reuse across institutions, recently teamed up to offer region-wide online webinars for ICPSR’s “Love Data Week”. It meets most months of the year for informal “drop-in chats” in which they discuss regional concerns.

IASSIST Membership:

Many Canadian IASSIST members are deeply involved in the work of the DLI and the Alliance (DRAC) on a regular basis. The engagement at a national and international level by these members is of benefit to these three organizations, as knowledge and expertise is developed and shared. The information above does not contain information about the many webinars, workshops and presentations that are given by the members, to be used on local, provincial, national and international levels.

Canadian members appreciate having a choice of attending the IASSIST annual conference in person or virtually this year, especially those for whom funding is an issue, as virtual attendance is more affordable than attending in person.

IASSIST Officials:

Canadian Regional Secretary: Jane Fry (photo credits belong to Jane)

Canadian Members at Large: Dylanne Dearborn, Amber Leahey

