

## TITLE OF PAPER:

Research Data Management: Exploring the Role of the Data Librarian in New Zealand Research Organisations.

## ABSTRACT:

Modern research practice has been affected by disruptive developments involving technological advancements, for example e-Research and Open Access. These developments imply changes both in the way research is conducted as well as the way research outcomes are communicated. This has huge benefits as well as challenges. The need for researchers to understand how to undertake high quality research in the digital era and how to manage voluminous research data has become critical. To this end, academic librarians, as longstanding custodians of memory institutions and stakeholders to learning and teaching, may play a role in developing this understanding.

This PhD research-in-progress, guided by Abbott's (1988) Theory, The System of Professions, uses a constructivist philosophy and combined with case research to investigate the role dimensions of the data librarian in the selected New Zealand research organisations including four universities and five Crown Research Institutes. Data from an exploratory study of information professionals in two Australian universities as well as some fifty selected research data job positions from relevant websites provides a filter to help interpret interview data from participants employed by New Zealand research organisations. The interviewees included library managers, library practitioners/information centre specialists, repository managers and researchers.

Preliminary findings show three important things. First, there are national and organisational factors that may influence the data librarian role. Secondly, the profile of the data librarian represents both the responsibilities and competences expected of them. Thirdly, the profile highlights the training needs of these librarians in the data librarian role.

These findings highlight the training needs of library practitioners/information centre specialists as they gain the skills needed to step up to these new roles. Second, besides being beneficial to the library and e-Research communities, they will enable library schools to modernise their curriculum towards ensuring that relevant graduates are produced. Finally, the study will extend Abbott's Theory, The System of Professions by foregrounding the role within national and organisational contexts and including the component 'treatment' from Fine and Cronshaw's (1999) job analysis role dimensions. These modifications will enhance understanding the data librarian role theoretically within the background of professional requirements. However, as the study adopted a single case research design, the findings may not be generalised beyond the case institutions used in the study. But, they may provide insight into research data management efforts in places where supporting e-Research and research data management does not enjoy yet any national focus by way of policy, infrastructure and funding. Also, that research data management is a big space means narrowing it to the dominant data librarian role may appear to either too skewed or misleading.

Keywords: E-Research; Research data; Research data management; Data librarian

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