

Research data management practices of emerging researchers at a South African Research Council

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Abstract:

The study aimed at answering several research questions. The main research question was: How can an organisation like the CSIR ensure that future researchers apply best practices when managing the CSIR's research data? Five research sub-questions were identified: 1. What are the international RDM requirements, standards, best practices and expectations that are being developed? 2. What data practices need more formalised support: at CSIR, nationally, internationally? 3. What data are collected and held by emerging researchers in the CSIR? 4. What are the current RDM practices and themes among emerging researchers in the CSIR? 5. What are the RDM-related challenges, issues and concerns facing emerging researchers at the CSIR? A total of 48 emerging researchers from the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), South Africa completed an online survey investigating their RDM practices. RDM practices investigated included the use of data management plans, data storage and backup locations, creation of metadata, metadata standard adherence, and data sharing practices. Challenges faced when managing research data, as well as RDM needs and requirements, also formed part of the survey. Results of the online questionnaire revealed that the RDM practices of the group studied do not show to differ significantly from experienced CSIR researchers, or from researchers studied elsewhere on the globe. Findings enabled this researcher to put forward several recommendations which would assist in the implementing of a formalised RDM structure at the CSIR. Recommendations addressed, but were not limited to: formalization of RDM procedures, RDM marketing, and RDM training.

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