Demystifying the Data Interview

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Abstract: What would an archivist need to know before conducting an interview with a researcher regarding his/her data and associated needs in curating or preserving this data? The Purdue University Libraries and the Library School at the University of Illinois conducted research on "Which researchers are willing to share data, when, with whom, and under what conditions?" The results led to the creation of the Data Curation Profiles (DCP) Toolkit, a semi-structured interview designed to assist librarians, archivists and other information professionals in identifying the data curation and preservation needs of researchers. The authors analyzed the components of the DCP Toolkit to determine specific concepts, definitions, resources, and examples needed to provide a base level of knowledge for information professionals to use the toolkit effectively.

The authors found that data concepts and terminology varied across, or even within, fields of study. Other concepts did not have an easily understandable example that could be readily referenced by information professionals. Feedback collected from information professionals about the DCP toolkit and working with data generally guided the selection process. The results informed the development of a workshop curriculum for training information professionals in the use of the DCP Toolkit. The results of this project will be further analyzed through assessing the impact of the training delivered in the DCP workshops, the effect of the workshop and DCP toolkit in enabling information professionals to conduct data interviews, and from the community forums on the DCP Toolkit website.

About the authors:

Jake Carlson is a Data Services Specialist and Associate Professor at the Purdue University Libraries, where he explores the application of the theories, principles, and practices of library science beyond the domain of traditional "library work." In particular, Carlson seeks to increase the Libraries' capabilities and opportunities to work in data-related research. Much of his work is done through direct collaborations and partnerships with research faculty. Carlson is one of the architects of the Data Curation Profiles Toolkit developed at Purdue and the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois.

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