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Session 199: Hot topics in Academic and Research Libraries: Library support for researchers

Open Discussion at the table#1 [supplied by Judy Henning]

Following the presentations and questions posed to the audience, the following discussion was held at the table I attended too. Time did not allow to attend to all questions and it was concluded to work on those that is of importance to the participants. Therefore these notes are not structured according to the presentations / questions (copy at end of discussion).

In general the participants found the format of the session most valuable.

- The importance of the organisational infrastructure was explored. Noted that a variety of libraries represented at table (from well established, large libraries and small libraries embarking only now on research development)
- Members commented that traditional levels of liaison – need to be organised in teaching, learning and research
- Research support should be integrated in all services and support offered by the library to users.
- There is a need to focus on and to coordinate all activities in support of research.
- Noted the different levels of support required (undergraduate / post graduate) and the balance was discussed. However it is important to focus on undergraduates to engage them at an early stage in the research process and create an awareness of the role the library can play.
- Collection management remains important / or access to the research resources to support researchers
- Open Access and digitisation should feed into research support.
- The importance of ongoing staff development and training – short courses / conferences / research support was confirmed.
- Hot topics session valuable – engaging with others – learning from each others' experiences.
- Close collaboration with faculty is important to ensure that research requirements set for students in faculty will facilitate the use of library / library resources.
- Training of staff / training of students / awareness / workshops – to enhance awareness of services and support available is important.

Open Discussion at the table#2 [supplied by Mike Berrington]

- There is a gap training provision for librarians re research support, and awareness of tools/software that researchers commonly use is low in some institutions. Librarians need to upskill and be more confident of their abilities before offering support to researchers.
- Understanding fundamentals of how the library can assist with data (standards, storage, description etc) was considered to be patchy at best and non existent in some universities.
- Sidorko's '6 stages' approach was thought to be very helpful and could provide a useful framework for libraries to check their training and support offer against.
- Flexibility in how training and support was offered was regarded as highly important (timing, formal/informal, etc)
- Uziel's reflections on the need to better manage ephemera as primary materials in research collections was seen as a new concept that had been previously addressed - thought provoking!
- Heller's view that the proliferation of end user tools for researchers might lead to time being freed-up for library staff to do different things did not get much traction at my table, view was that at best it would simply allow time for basic training.