

Keeping Up With Perpetual Motion: Research Lifecycle Support Services in Academic Libraries

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Scholarly communication librarian, institutional repository manager, data management librarian, digital humanities librarian, copyright advisor—these are familiar specialist roles in many academic libraries, introduced in response to an increasingly complex research and publishing landscape. The services they provide may be best described as “research lifecycle support,” because these specialists interact with researchers at all stages of their process: seeking grant funding, organizing their data, negotiating author contracts and permissions, sharing their output in traditional or novel formats, and beginning again.

But how should we best organize the services these staff provide into a cohesive set of offerings for researchers on campus? Often researchers may approach one of these specialists for help without being aware of the other services available to them at the library. And how should libraries even describe these services? These specialists work alongside librarians in departmental liaison roles, who traditionally support teaching and learning as well as collection development in their assigned subject areas—how does their work intersect, and are there areas where collaboration could be improved?

This session will begin by briefly describing the process of developing a research lifecycle team at Northeastern University’s Snell Library, a process that is still very much a work in progress. However, the majority of the session will be highly interactive, guided both by the questions above and audience members’ interests.

Our hope is that the audience will include not only librarians but researchers, funders, and publishers. Each of these stakeholder groups will bring different perspectives to the conversation and help determine how libraries shape their services in this sector. In the international setting of the FORCE2017 conference, we anticipate that answers will be variable depending on respondents’ local environments—we welcome international perspectives as well and hope they will take the conversation in directions we might not otherwise have considered.