

Stockholm University & Figshare – Doing it ‘Right’ or Doing it at All?

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Slide 1 - Introduction

My name is Sofie Wennström and my job at Stockholm University Library is, among other things, to manage our Figshare platform together with my three colleagues in the Research Data Management team at the Library. I’m a specialist in academic journals with a background in the academic publishing business and I’m also a pedagogue.

Slide 2 – Agenda

I’ll talk to you today about how we currently work with research data management at Stockholm University Library with help of Figshare. I’ll mention something about our strategies and goals. I’ll share some insights from working from a user perspective and a management perspective respectively, and then end with some thoughts on what we are currently doing and the lessons learned so far.

Slide 3 – Stockholm University

- Stockholm University is big and diverse. We have about 28,000 full time students (about 70,000 in total if we count part time studies as well), 87% in HSS, 13% in Science. Most popular study programs are Law, Social Work and Psychology. We issue both academic degrees as well as vocational training.
- We have just over 1,700 PhD Students (49% HSS, 51% Science)
- There are about 5,000 staff, with about 3,500 faculty (450 full professors).
- These academics produce about 3,500 research articles each year, but also a vast amount of book chapters, teaching literature, reviews, debate articles, conference papers etc.

Slide 4 – Stockholm University Library

This slide gives an overview of how Stockholm University Library sees itself as a link between the individual at the institution (the researcher, the teacher, the student), and the world. Here this relationship is simplified with two arrows representing the inbound information supply. Resources that we buy in order to provide material for further studies. But also through support for and training about publishing, which for example includes running an open access university press (which I happen to spend quite a lot of my time working on).

Slide 5 - <http://su.figshare.com>

- Stockholm University Library setup the platform in 2015, which we have started to use gradually, and more seriously from early 2016. The platform is available for all researchers at SU to post their work, with a rather free culture approach at the

moment. We are working on creating general guidelines. All users added are verified by SSO from the university (but we have a few accounts that are not incorporated in this).

- We are currently working with one bigger data project, collecting meteorological data, and some other single datasets,
- Imported data from PLoS journals, where authors are affiliated with Stockholm University
- In total around 600 items affiliated since 2010 (back dated through PLoS).
- We are currently in process of adding three more projects, one journal article archive and two platforms for working papers, based on requests from researchers, so we will work on sub-groups for them to work with.

Slide 6 - **Support the User to Expand their Horizons**

- One of the aims at the Library is to provide service that supports the users and help them expand their horizons. The university is diverse in terms of research areas, which means that some of our users are already working with data-heavy projects with built-in management plans, where others are still relying on local storage and never share data outside of their publications. The level of knowledge about Research Data is therefore varying a lot. Also, we have to serve quite a few people, which forces us to be as efficient as possible to do this with small means.
- Illustrated here is the idea that we would like to expand their horizon from what they already know, through the things they know they should know (but don't and are therefore asking for) to what they don't know they should know (but we would like them to know).
- This goal image serves as a support for us when designing our services to continue expanding their knowledge, in this case about how to best share the information based on the metadata forms provided by figshare.
- We get the opportunity to teach them more about digital research communication and also the value of sharing (connected to marketing efforts in social media) to eventually become confident to handle most of the process themselves (which is needed when we have so many users and so few people helping them).
- This goal is shared throughout the Library, where we are working with improved service design in several departments. The idea is to do this by improving our communication skills and tools and by ensuring the users know we are available to them.
- This goal image comes from the presentation on a qualitative survey and analysis carried out by a company called 'Transformator Design' (<http://transformatordesign.se/>), which we hired to get a better overview of our users' needs.

Slide 7 - <http://su.figshare.com/TRS>

- The Tarfala Research Station data is one of these user cases where we have provided a platform with its own URL to collect the items from the project in one place. This initiative came from a researcher (Peter Jansson, a professor in Physical Geography) asking for a tool that is easy to use and that could give his data the most visibility. He had already worked on a platform built and hosted by one of the research centres at

the university (The Bolin Centre for Climate Research), but their tool was not visible enough (locally developed solution managed by one guy working half time) and where he could not upload data but himself since it required programming skills. This platform did not include a coordinated metadata schema and it did not provide permanent identifiers for the shared items.

- We started working together (with help from the figshare team) to look at how we could work with the Tarfala Research Station data, which consists of meteorological observations from a glacier in the northernmost Sweden, and reports about these findings in relation to environmental change.
- Peter is still working on adding more data to his platform, and he is doing quite well at the moment, even if we do find some small things to improve from time to time. He would for example like the uploading and tagging process to be even more efficient, and we are also looking at the possibility of registering the research station as an organisation to avoid Peter getting credit for all the collected data which may often be the result of teamwork.

Slide 8 - The User Approach

- I'm calling this working method the "user approach", or the bottom-up approach, where we let the users' queries guide us through creating guiding principles and instructions. We are open to changes in work pace and service demands as these vary between disciplines and individuals. We adapt our workflow and will systematically analyse this. The service adapts in accordance with the user behaviour/needs and the nature of the data we are working on. Here, we are also keen on honouring the academic freedom, to not let the medium become the message but let the content speak for itself.
- However, this way of working is very time consuming and require lots of staff to be involved in order to address needs, so how can we manage this?

Slide 9-13 - Map of User Behaviour

- These user behaviours were identified in the qualitative study made by Transformator Design (<http://transformatordesign.se/>). This is a generalised picture of how of students and researchers behave when they approach the library. The behaviours range on a scale from managing on their own to seeking a lot of detailed support, usually depending on previous knowledge about the Library and its services. The other axis ranges from being proactive (asking before doing) to reactive (addressing the problem after the fact) based on the situation, timing and the circumstances.
- In order to make our services related to Research Data Management sustainable in the long run, we need to design the future services to gently nudge people to become more self-reliant, and not needing too much day-to-day support from us. We would also like to get the reactive users to become more proactive, so that we don't have to clean up things after the fact and to reduce the need for problem-solving over driving development.
- According to the study by Transformator Design, we can accomplish this through clearer communication about how to help users help themselves, providing easy-to-

use guides that are general but specific enough for them to relate to it. The material should preferably strive towards eventually even pushing them into being proactive. We should also reward the behaviour we want, with for example providing support to create better tools, or to send regular reports on how their data is doing. Making the solution more available to them.

Slide 14 - Current Organisational Structure of Research Data Management at Stockholm University

- The Library has been assigned by the Director of Administration to co-ordinate the organisation forming the future strategy of Research Data Management at Stockholm University. This includes a Steering Committee including the Research Support Office, the Strategic planning office, The Legal advisors, the IT services, the Offices of the two main academic areas, the Library and the Archive department.
- There's also a more practically oriented working group, where a report and analysis with recommendations of future action is created to be put forward to the Director of Administration is prepared on December 15th.
- Final decisions of roadmap and plans are not expected until Jan/Feb 2017 at best. On top of this we have reference groups of researchers we are working with in projects and elsewhere.
- The approach at the moment is aiming to provide a basis for a management decision to form the guiding principles for sharing and storing research data at Stockholm University. In the meantime, we have setup the figshare platform, at the same time we are working with the Swedish National Data Service (SND) in a national university network on another platform (Nesstar).
- Our researchers are of course also using other open repositories, as they find useful in their everyday practice. This diversity of tools is probably something we will have to take into account in the future as well. It might not be possible to streamline everything related to research data into one single platform.

Slide 15 - The Management Approach

- Stockholm University is a state institution, which means that we have to comply with a number of laws, rules and regulations. All contracts with commercial partners have to go through a documented procurement procedure with an open call. We have an archive law stating that all research done at our university have to be documented and saved for the future (at least for 10 years, but sometimes longer).
- We are also a big university with a very diverse range of subject areas where research is going on (16 focus areas within HSS & Science), but also a lot of fundamental research which may not be internationally awarded or aim to create academic superstars.
- Our assignment as an administrative support include to balance the various needs of the departments and other administrative units. We have to work together to make this happen. At an information-heavy, decentralised and somewhat hierarchical working culture this is not an easy task.
- But, what if these authoritative rules and regulations and requirements clashes with what the users need? What if it becomes too difficult to follow all these rules?

Slide 16 - **Doing it 'right' or doing it at all?**

- The Director of Administration at Stockholm University, Joakim Malmström, recently said at an assembly of the administrative staff that our job is to: '...make it easy to do the "right" thing, not making it hard to do something "wrong" ...'. The question we ask ourselves at the moment is if we are currently living up to these standards?
- There are a number of challenges at hand, that we need to figure out how to deal with:
 - The legal department are getting worried that researchers will share data that are sensitive.
 - The librarians are worried that the shared data will not comply with the recommended metadata standard and other guidelines.
 - The data and archive experts are worried that the researchers will share data that is not following the recommended standard and that will not be reusable.
 - The researchers are worried that this is just another task that does not give any value back to their list of merits.
- So, is it worth sharing data if the rules are not followed exactly?
- Or, will people start or continue to share their data at all if it is made too complicated?
- In relation to tools like Figshare, we (i.e. the Stockholm University administration) have to be careful before buying the whole package as there are both procurement rules but also a culture that prevents from choosing commercial options – they considered to be non-sustainable as companies have different drivers or may change their governing principles.
- So, for us the project of creating a platform to share data has been more like: 'to boldly go where no one else have ever gone', rather than putting together a set structure from the beginning as we have had to be flexible until we have a common policy and understanding of the task at hand.
- This of course has both pros and cons. However, in our case it has turned out to be fruitful as we are learning a lot in the process at the same time as we are creating good examples with help of the pioneers that dare to follow us on this journey.

Slide 17 – **Current activities**

- This is a list of activities related to Research Data Management going on at the moment, where you can see that the Figshare platform is only one piece of the puzzle.
- We are also looking slightly into the future, with continued discussions on a national level and also towards the Research Proposition from the Government, giving the Swedish Research Council responsibility to coordinate work with RDM with a 10-year perspective.

Slide 18 – Thank you and questions