Bridging the Curation Gap between Research and Libraries – A Case Study

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Posted by: Ana Sesartic

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In the last decades, research has more and more become a digital enterprise, which led to new challenges regarding the management and curation of its assets.

Towards narrowing the curation gap

Although recent years have witnessed substantial progress towards robust preservation tools and strategies, there is still a discrepancy between the researcher's needs and practices and what the digital curation offers.

A recently published article written in collaboration by Prof. Andreas Fischlin (ETH Environmental Systems Science department), Matthias Töwe and Ana Sesartic (ETH-Bibliothek, Digital Curation office), discusses this gap between the needs and actions taken on the side of researchers and curators.
Argumentation

In the article, the authors argue that the gap can be narrowed if

- on the one hand, curators provide attractive support catering to researchers’ needs,
- on the other hand, researchers consistently manage their work according to generic concepts from the beginning of the research life-cycle.

The authors demonstrate on a case study how such concepts have helped to pragmatically implement a research practice that facilitated sustained, self-contained archiving since 1989. This is what makes this contribution special: it is informed by a researcher’s real life experience.

Findings

The article’s focus is on clear concepts which can be implemented using rather simple tools. Instead of delegating tasks to complex software, the paper encourages researchers to stay in control of their data and act accordingly. However, the authors are fully aware that the same approach can lead to very different solutions for other users and their needs, even though the basic principles remain the same.
Figure 2: Flowchart from the article illustrating processes in literature management. It contains simple rules researcher x should observe when adding new scientific works to the system proposed by the authors (See article for further explanations).

Where to find the article


More questions?

If you are curious to learn more about data management and digital curation in general, please feel free to contact the team of the Digital Curation Office.

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