Towards a community of Open Research Champions: insight from the Cambridge Data Champion Programme

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Who are the Data Champions?
Cambridge’s Data Champions (DCs) are a community of volunteers from varied roles and from across the University.

What do the DCs do?
Advise other researchers on good RDM and promote the FAIR principles.

Who runs the DC Programme?
The Research Data Management Facility (RDMF) team at the Office of Scholarly Communication (OSC).

Why was it created?
To help support the University’s community of c.10,000 researchers.

What are the major goals?
Improve RDM across the University
Increase open research practices
Contribute to changing research culture
Reward DCs for their efforts

https://www.data.cam.ac.uk/intro-data-champions
### Data Champion Programme

**Programme timeline**

- **Programme launched with 1st call (September)**
  - 2016
- **2nd call (February)**
  - 2017
- **3rd call (January)**
  - 2018
- **Future timeline**
  - 2019

For more information, see:


OSC’s *Unlocking Research* blogs, for example: ‘Creating a research data community’ [https://unlockingresearch-blog.lib.cam.ac.uk/?p=1213](https://unlockingresearch-blog.lib.cam.ac.uk/?p=1213)
Data Champion Programme | Data Champions | Challenges | Future

Role of RDMF team at OSC
• Maintaining community
• Organisational support
• Flexibility with how DCs want to engage
• Training opportunities
• Facilitate networking
• Develop alumni community

Annual cycle
• Call for new Data Champions
• Inductions
• Six bi-monthly forums
• Needs-derived DC projects involving subsets of DCs
How to sell the benefits of getting involved?

Benefits we highlight

• Enhancing networks within own communities
• Expanding networks beyond own field
• Learning new skills
• Boost CV with transferable skills
• Increase impact

Data Champion Programme | Data Champions | Challenges | Future

facts & figures

80 current DCs
(plus 7 programme supporters)
Data Champion Programme | Data Champions | Challenges | Future

facts & figures

'other' includes:
- research assistants
- research governance
- research manager
- technical manager
- scholarly communication support
- research development
- project administrator
- grants administrator
- publishing manager
What is your main motivation for becoming a Data Champion?
“The Data Champion Programme consists of volunteers and so we take a flexible approach towards what we expect our Data Champions to do. We would like you to support your local research community in ways that you feel comfortable with. There is no prerequisite for Data Champions to be experts in all aspects of RDM. The overall aim is for the Data Champions to provide advice, support and advocacy for good RDM practice to their respective audiences.”

DATA CHAMPIONS
Welcome Pack 2019
In their own research communities, DCs are to

- Raise awareness of RDM
- Promote benefits of data sharing
- Provide discipline-specific advice

Minimum expectations

- Attend induction
- Attend min. 2 forums per year
- Respond to surveys & info. requests
- Provide info. on DC activities
- Inform on changes in circumstances
Documented Data Champion activities as of January 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshops &amp; Presentations</th>
<th>Other Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>File management</td>
<td>Open Data FAQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data sharing</td>
<td>Bite-size emails</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoiding data disasters</td>
<td>Training needs analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing data management plans</td>
<td>1:1 RDM and data analysis support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repositories</td>
<td>Data Policy</td>
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<td>Code management</td>
<td>Data Audit</td>
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<td>GitHub introduction</td>
<td>Outreach materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Bring your own data’ workshop</td>
<td>Electronic Lab Notebook trial</td>
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Challenges
Data Champion Programme | Data Champions | Challenges | Future

Challenge
• Ongoing financial support for a growing programme
• Ongoing University support

Resolved?
• University backing secure
• Financial support secure for now
• Seeking additional funds, especially opportunities for DC grants
There are 41 alumni DCs (25 gave reasons for leaving)

Lack of time (32%)

Left Cambridge (68%)

Solutions:
- Communicate time commitment
- Mentor support
- Clear exit process – advance planning for successor
- Facilitate community networking

Time DC alumni spent in the programme
- 37% 2 to 3 years
- 39% < 1 year
- 24% 1 to 2 years
Data Champion Programme | Data Champions | Challenges | Future

% = DCs as a proportion of no. of researchers in each School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Current no. of DCs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Sciences</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-School institutions</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Solution: targeted approach (rather than general call)
Challenge: to measure the programme’s effectiveness

- Is it working?
- Is it contributing to a change in research culture?

Working towards some solutions

- Good communications between DCs and OSC
- Establish annual survey
- DCs to discern impact of activities
Future

- Evaluate programme and explore viable solutions to challenges
- Implement appropriate methods to measure programme’s effectiveness
- Focus on community aspect
- Preparation for expansion in advance
Thank you to …

- RDMF team at OSC, particularly Lauren Cadwallader and Maria Angelaki
- Members of the Cambridge RDM Outreach and Support Group
- Marta Teperek, Rosie Higman and Danny Kingsley
- All the University of Cambridge Data Champions, past and present
- Ralitsa Madsen