The Regionally Engaged Researcher: A case study in supporting early career humanities researchers through the research cycle

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Humanities scholars from regional universities often ground their research in the current concerns of the surrounding rural community. They document and investigate solutions to problems in areas which would be of interest to that community. However communication of that research to the surrounding community can be problematic. University researchers publish in journals which members of the regional community may find difficult to access, for example Toowoomba Regional Library does not offer access to online databases such as ScienceDirect. This equity of access issue establishes a barrier between the community and the university researcher working in the problem domain. The move toward the idea that research data whose collection was funded by public money should remain a public good available to others helps to remove this problem.

There is a culture of self-reliance around research, where researchers are expected to be able to learn the required skills with minimal effort (Lyon 2007). However humanities scholars have been identified as lagging in incorporating research data management practices into their research projects (Borgman 2009; McKay 2010). For this case study we investigated how early career (beginning postgraduate research) humanities researchers can be supported in their decision making around the management of research data. Rather than starting the discussion around a myriad of research data concepts such as sharing research data and issues of privacy, the chosen approach was to discuss matters of immediate concern to the researchers. This discussion started with project management questions which had been identified as barriers.

It is planned that future discussions with this cohort of researchers should follow the path of the researchers' projects. Future discussions include preparing ethics applications with data sharing as one project outcome, the maintenance (or curating) of publication datasets, disposal and retention schedules for the university sector and research data sharing. It is postulated that driving change through early career researchers will help push change through to supervisors, while proving a support to early career researchers. The community gains through access to open access regionally focused digital research.

Borgman, C. L. 2009. "The digital future is now: A call to action for the humanities," *Digital Humanities Quarterly* (3:4).

Lyon, L. 2007. "Dealing with data: Roles, rights responsibilities and relationships. Consultancy report. UKOLN," University of Bath.

McKay, D. 2010. "Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit: An Institutional Case Study Demonstrating Why Data Digital Libraries Are Not the Whole Answer to E-Research," in *The Role of Digital Libraries in a Time of Global Change,* G. Chowdhury, C. Koo and J. Hunter (eds.), Springer Berlin / Heidelberg, pp. 236-249.