

I am just starting to provide data management support at my institution and wanted to attend a conference that would help me learn from others' experiences and to build a network to connect with experts engaged in data management. The AASHL Data Management Scholarship enabled me to attend the Research Data Access & Preservation Summit (RDAP) along with the associated Data Carpentry Workshop.

The RDAP Conference was a very good match for my needs. It was formatted a series of panels that were purposefully composed to represent a broad range of experience and work environments. Most of the presenters were librarians, some were full-time research data specialists and some, like myself, were doing research data support as part of a liaison position. The presentations were pragmatic, helpful and illustrated with many examples successful programs as well as cautionary tales of best-laid plans that inadvertently went awry.

I learned a lot at this conference and will describe a few highlights. I learned about a workflow developed for subject liaisons to begin exploring the data landscape in their particular discipline. It included identifying discipline-specific stakeholder requirements, repositories, metadata standards, and the data culture of the discipline. I will use this framework to learn about the disciplines that I support and share the framework with my colleagues.

I learned about finding collaborators. The poster, "It Takes Teamwork to Make the Dream Work" laid out steps: getting started, identifying key stakeholders, marketing and outreach, tools and next steps. I had an in-depth conversation with the presenter that extended beyond the poster to glean even more ideas. I am now in the process of identifying and meeting with key stakeholders at my own institution. Our goal is to break down the silos that separate us so that we can collaborate with each other and build a referral network.

We heard insider's views from individuals working at the US Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health about data management plans, their evolution to data as well as future projections.

In addition to useful content, the conference provided abundant networking opportunities. I connected with librarians from Vermont who are starting up programs in their institutions. We decided to form a support group to share materials, ideas and feedback. This is particularly important in the geographically isolated area where we work. I was also bombarded with offers for support from other attendees with more experience than myself. This is clearly a group that wants to help others succeed.

Finally, I attended the two-day Data Carpentry Workshop that followed the conference. This was an immersive experience in learning about data organization in spreadsheets and Open Refine, an introduction to R (including basic data analysis and visualization) and SQL for data management. The introduction to these tools was very useful and gives me a base from which to do self-directed learning. Possibly even more important was that the instructors (both librarians) modelled the Data Carpentry way of teaching, which is supportive and immersive. Both instructors were happy to talk about the philosophy of teaching this way and how they've implemented it. It has added to my teaching toolkit. Data Carpentry welcomes use of their materials (with attribution) and I will be teaching a workshop in a few weeks on data organization in spreadsheets based on their content.

I am grateful for the opportunity that the AAHS Data Management Training Scholarship gave me to attend this very useful conference and workshop. As I've outlined, it gave me guidance in starting work in this area as well as a network to draw on for future support.