-

A curriculum for data management practitioners? - EUDAT@DigCurV 2013

A couple of weeks ago, a group of experts in the field of digital curation education met in Florence, Italy for the DigCurV International Conference. I had the pleasure of attending this event on behalf of EUDAT to take part in a round-table discussion entitled *Creating a common vision for digital curation education: building alliances*. Attending this meeting had two benefits. Firstly, it allowed us to spread the word about the work that is being done in EUDAT to build a common data infastructure and secondly, it provided an opportunity to hear what is being done in the closely-related field of digital curation, in particular, with regard to training.

We (EUDAT) obviously have important similarities with the Digital Curation community: we're both in the business of looking after other people's data, and trying to ensure its usefulness beyond the lifetime of the projects for which the data was originally collected. We are, however, generally coming at the problem from slightly different angles. Most of the attendees at DigCurV are employed by institutional libraries and academic departments who teach degrees in digital curation. EUDAT, on the other hand, has to date mostly been focused on subject-area "communities" and data that is currently being looked after in subject-specific repositories.

Another thing that became clear at the conference is that the training and education in the field of digital curation is really starting to mature. A message that came across from several of the talks at this conference was the idea that *training* teaches people to *do* things, whereas *education*
teaches people to *be* things. In other words, along with the fact that you can now undertake a Masters course in digital curation comes the fact that you can now find a job as a professional digital curator. In practice, at the moment, this is likely to be a role that you might take on as part of a more general post within a University library or similar institution.

The thirty-month DigCurV project is coming to an end of June. An important output of the project is a useful Curriculum Framework for Digital Curation. I think that this can serve as a goodexample of where we in the

overlapping field of data management should be headed.

Europe's common data infrastructure is still being built, but EUDAT's initial services are already rolled out and of course the communities within EUDAT have already for some time been managing their data internally. There are people already doing the important work of building and managing data infrastructures and these people have between them a great body of expertise, but I would argue that this has not yet been consolidated into a role or profession in the same way that has happened in the digital curation community. Whilst building a curriculum framework is clearly out-of-scope for the current EUDAT project, I hope that in the course of putting together and delivering EUDAT's training courses, that we will be able to start to define the mindset, skillset, and toolset required to be a "(research) data management professional".

[Read more](#)

- May 28, 2013
- adam.carter
- 0 comments