OPEN SCIENCE SKILLING AND TRAINING INITIATIVES IN EUROPE

SWITZERLAND

Interview with Isabelle Kratz and Mathilde Panes, EPFL Library

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How did your Open Science skilling initiative begin?

The EPFL Library is the centre for knowledge and expertise for scientific and technical information for use in the context of EPFL teaching and research. With state-of-the-art facilities, it provides wide and simple access, both locally and remotely, to scientific information acquired or produced by EPFL. The EPFL Library supports its users in the evaluation, use, production, sharing and diffusion of this scientific information.

Furthermore, it provides a space for working and studying, and a privileged access to information in both virtual and material form.

Our Open Science skilling initiative for EPFL Library staff started to witness changes in practices of researchers, namely in their methods. The library needed to develop specific Open Science skills of its staff to give tailored support to the needs of its research community. At that time, we didn't use the expression "Open Science". Then, with the emergence of Open Science practices as a requirement by research funders, we started to use the same terminology.

When did the general initiative start?

The development of skills related to Open Science started with the creation of our institutional repository in 2005 where support around Open Access was developed. Later, in 2012, a unified skilling initiative of liaison librarians about Open Access and copyright was launched. Copyright literacy was then generalised for all library staff in 2013. Data management became a hot topic in 2014. The question of research data licensing appeared in 2017 and finally, we developed expertise around open code in 2018.

From 2012 on, the library organised conferences and workshops for the research community and library professionals on topics related to Open Science.

Please describe the context and aims of the initiative.

The skilling happens in two ways: by staff development with tailored training and by recruiting highly-skilled additional staff. Staff can be trained by peers, by other institutions, external experts or by self-teaching. The library encourages this training allocating time, space and financial resources, and makes sure those skills continue to be updated. A collaboration culture enables knowledge sharing.

Additionally, several new recruits were selected for their relevant background in order to strengthen the profile of existing teams – this was mostly done around data management and code.

The goal of the initiative is for library staff to be as knowledgeable as possible regarding scholarly communication, data and code management. More specifically, our goals are that:

- research data should be considered as an informational object, as other types of publications and documents;

- the scientific "production" of our institution should receive as much support from the library as the traditional "acquisitions".

How is the initiative managed and coordinated?

The library board, along with the team coordinators, defines the staff development strategy according to an annual roadmap. Since a few years now, this strategy is strongly linked to OS. The Steering and Innovation team handles monitoring of training offers for the staff, organization of training for the staff and reporting. Library staff can also express their needs for new training.

Team members roles and responsibilities.

- Library board and team coordinators: vision and strategy

- Steering and Innovation team head: monitoring, organization, reporting

- Library staff: suggestions and self-training

Resources used for skilling/training participants.

- Space

- Time

- Money

- Internal and external expertise

Choices and policies relating to this initiative.

- Choice to encourage skill transfer and internal training

- Choice to invest a not negligible amount of annual budget in training initiatives

- Annual formalized training program

- No formal policy

Who are your target audiences?

Library Staff (see other EPFL Library answer for Researchers' skilling and training).

Which skills are prioritised?

TOP PRIORITY	STRONG PRIORITY	MODERATE PRIORITY	NOT A PRIORITY
• Open Science Skills • Scholarly Publishing	• FAIR Data • Open Code	• Research Infra-structures and the EOSC • Research Integrity	• Citizen Science • Metrics & Rewards

Why did you prioritise some skills and exclude others?

Our decisions are strongly linked with the EPFL research context. As a Swiss institution, for example, the EOSC is not a priority. The main national funder, the SNSF, strongly advocates for open access and data publication. In addition, the library manages the institutional publication repository and will manage the data repository. It is crucial for the library to be able to provide support for the EPFL research community in this context.

Citizen Science has been excluded because our institution doesn't consider this a priority.

How do participants acquire these skills?

Self-teaching: during work hours, depending on new identified needs and in accordance with individual annual goals set by the direction.

Peer-training: during work hours, when skills need to be shared among team members, in a dedicated format. Organization is handled by the Steering and innovation team.

Training by other institutions or external experts: during work hours, staff is encouraged to attend training sessions. This includes conferences.

Trained staff are always invited to share and report on their new skills so that they:

• take the time to reflect on their new set of skills

• are identified as knowledgeable on a specific topic

• "just" share part of the new skills acquired as not all the staff can go to all training initiatives.

Which channels and learning types are used?

Face-to-face. Distant learning. Self-training activities. Group learning. Individual learning.

Which formats are used?

MOOC and slides. We run workshops with actual exercises.

Is there formal recognition?

An annual list of training sessions attended by each staff member is established. In case of external training, we sometimes deliver certificates of attendance.

What impact do you expect from this initiative?

Multipurpose team that is able to take on new challenges as they come up. High ability to adapt in each individual. The expected outcome is to have a library known for its professional excellence and for being up to date with the general evolution of research practices/requirements.

The annual training program is updated every year, leading to offering new training, this is how trainees are kept up-to-date with these skills. Additionally, a lot can be done with peer-to-peer skill transfer.

How do you train the trainers?

Those who agree to share and train their peers can always rely on the training team to help them create their training sessions.

How do you recruit the trainers?

Internal recruitment and well-known experts are identified by the staff and the Steering and Innovation team.

What have you learnt so far?

Knowledge sharing amongst library staff creates a livelier and more efficient skill development within the library than only individual external training outside the institution.

It seems important to have topic experts within the library who update their knowledge regularly and share with colleagues.

What's next on your skilling/training calendar?

- Annual meat grilling party with Openly accessible BBQ facilities :-)

- TDM

- Library Carpentry maybe?

- Open Science video (for academics but also for staff)

What about the budget and costs?

There was no specific budget for developing Open Science skills within the library team, but in the last years our annual training budget was mainly dedicated to Open Science related topics.

Here below you can see the global training budgets for these last years which include all training subjects, not only Open Science related ones - they include neither the internal training actions, neither the human worktime.

- 2016: €23.000

- 2017: €41.400

- 2018: €23.422

- 2019 (to date 06/19): €18.000

These budgets represent 16-24% of our annual operating budget (i.e. not considering acquisitions, IT expenses, and so on).

Which challenges have you encountered?

Change management:

- Delivering within the team the message that Open Science is a direction to follow, that Open Science Skills have to be acquired by (almost) all information specialists, that all this is still relevant to our "core business": "let's move forward (in continuity)!"

- Supporting those who were afraid of this change by convincing them not only of the necessity, but also of the interest to be Open Science skilled: "it's fun".

- Trying to not induce (too big) gaps within the team: those going at fast speed in direction Open Access, Data management, and those feeling underestimated because doing more traditional library work: "libraries have now a wider spectrum then ever".

Time management: a lot to learn (and then to consolidate), and a lot to do in the daily work… how do we manage both?

Convincing our hierarchy that librarians:

- had to develop Open Science skills

- have Open Science skills and have an expertise to value on the topic

What would you tell others looking to do a similar program?

- Say and repeat that all this Open Science "stuff" is in total continuity and coherence with what librarians had to do since years (centuries).

- Training, and especially internal (peer to peer) training/knowledge sharing is a good way to lower barriers of fear addressing Open Science issues.

- Give time for training; give responsibility to share new knowledge/skills; make it a team challenge.

Which channels and formats have been most useful?

- Conference participation

- Internal skills and knowledge sharing

- Visits of other libraries and discussion with colleagues of these libraries: helps to get aware there is a general movement where librarians have to take/find a place

Have you seen any impact of your initiative so far?

Yes, in the sense that:

- Open Science is now a fully integrated topic in the professional culture of the library team;

- Our "back-office" team is considering to get involved in the work on institutional scientific outputs, mostly in an Open Science perspective (book cataloguers becoming EPFL papers cataloguers, possibly research data cataloguers…);

- More and more colleagues are willing, and often in a very enthusiastic way, to get involved in our data management support and our publishing support, and to be trained on these topics;

- The image of the library continues to change because we are identified as having Open Science support skills;

- Open Science orientated training developed and offered to our institutional community, and beyond.

This case study has been produced by LIBER's Digital Skills for Library Staff & Researchers Working Group. For more case studies, and the original version of this one, please see: https://doi.org/10.5281/ zenodo.3251731

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