OPEN SCIENCE SKILLING AND TRAINING INITIATIVES IN EUROPE

AUSTRIA

Interview with Katharina Rieck of Austrian Science Fund (FWF), Daniel Dörler of University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences in Vienna (BOKU) and Benjamin Missbach of Ludwig Boltzmann Society (LBG)

Katharina is Open Science Manager at FWF, Daniel is Senior Scientist at BOKU and Benjamin is Project Manager at the Open Innovation in Science Center of the Ludwig Boltzmann Society. They are all members of the Open Science Network Austria (OANA)

Website

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How did your Open Science skilling initiative begin?

At the OANA network meeting in January 2018, a clear wish to establish a dedicated working group on Open Science training was expressed. Therefore the Open Science Information Working Group was established. The sub-group Open Science Training focuses on concrete Open Science tools that are used throughout the entire research life cycle, and organises workshops on how to use these tools. Furthermore, information on Open Science training events at Austrian and international institutions is collected and presented on the OANA website (www.oana.at).

Please describe the context and aims of the initiative.

OANA is an Open Science think tank, with an open structure. Our goals are 1) the exchange of ideas; 2) the coordination and connection of initiatives; and 3) the development of recommendations on Open Science. OANA acts as a contact point and source of information for researchers, research institutions, and (research) policy makers.

The "Open Science Training" sub-working group focuses on concrete Open Science tools and their discipline-specific applications. Tools that are used throughout the entire research cycle are collected in regular meetings. The identified tools form the basis for training workshops in which the handling of individual tools is taught. To this end, experts are invited to lead the training workshops. The results are collected, processed, and made available free of charge (online). In addition, information on Open Science training events at Austrian and international institutions is collected and presented on the OANA website. The aim is to inform as broad a research community as possible about Open Science tools.

What organisational framework did you use for this initiative?

Sub-group leaders of the Open Science Information working group are responsible for coordination, being the contact points and providing infrastructure support.

Mainly in-kind resources of the organizations (where the group coordinators are located) are used. For each event/training, potential partners - such as research organisations - are contacted to build upon synergies and common interests for cost-efficient organization.

The group organises events and workshops to showcase Open Science tools and practices to broaden the knowledge about Open Science tools in the Austrian research community. This is in line with the mission of OANA.

How is the initiative managed and coordinated?

Daniel Dörler, a senior scientist at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, and Benjamin Missbach, project manager at the Ludwig Boltzmann Society in Vienna, act as group coordinators on a voluntary basis.

Who are your target audiences?

Library staff, researchers, PhD, PostDoc, and students.

Which skills are prioritised?

TOP PRIORITY	STRONG PRIORITY	MODERATE PRIORITY
• Open Science Skills	• Scholarly Publishing • FAIR Data • Metrics & Rewards • Research Integrity • Citizen Science	• Research Infrastructures and the EOSC

Why did you prioritise some skills and exclude others?

Each training/event has its own priorities, which are defined by the working group coordinators and the partnering institution/organisation. Since both coordinators have a background in Citizen Science (Daniel Dörler is a founder and coordinator of the Citizen Science Network Austria) and Open Innovation in Science (Benjamin Missbach is project manager at the Open Innovation in Science Center at the Ludwig Boltzmann Society), the priorities were initially always connected somehow to these research approaches.

How do participants acquire and stay updated on these skills?

Participants acquire skills via hands-on training. We consider our training efforts a first push into the world of Open Science tools, giving the interested audience basic training and contacts for these tools, if possible. We encourage them to use these contacts and to explore the topic themselves.

How do you recruit and train the trainers?

We generally rely on already-trained trainers. We recruit them by using our network to find new trainers and then contact them directly.

Which channels, learning types and formats are used?

Face-to-face, self-training activities, group learning and individual learning.

Which channels and formats have been most useful?

It depends on the workshop. The most useful channels to inform the interested audiences about the trainings have been newsletters and communication channels of existing (formalized) networks and institutions that work with or for Open Science, Citizen Science etc.

Is there formal recognition?

There is no formal recognition.

What impact do you expect from this initiative?

Fostering the use of Open Science tools in Austria in general. People usually are aware of Open Science and are also willing to integrate Open Science methods in their research, but a lot of them don't know how to use specific tools. Therefore, these training initatives should make the use of specific tools easier.

Have you seen any impact of your initiative so far?

Yes! Trained participants are more likely to use the tools in their everyday work. Due to our past activities we were also invited to join a proposal to organize trainings and the proposal was approved.

What have you learnt so far?

The Austrian research community is very eager to use Open Science tools and to learn. Generally, a hands-on approach where training participants learn how they can integrate a tool in their daily research is much more interesting for participants than general introductions.

What about the budget and costs?

There was no fixed budget but we were able to get some funding through the University of Vienna and the Ludwig Boltzmann Society that helped us with providing money for the trainers fees. The fees were around €150 for the trainers.

Which challenges have you encountered?

The biggest challenge was to organize the events without dedicated time or a financial budget. Everything was organized on a voluntary basis.

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

Try to build a network of ambitious people who help to set up such events, if you don't have any funding. Use your already existing network to identify potential partners.

Which resources helped you to develop this initiative?

https://www.fosteropenscience.eu

https://101innovations.wordpress.com

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.3701370