



OPEN SCIENCE SKILLING AND TRAINING INITIATIVES IN EUROPE

NORWAY

Interview with Hanne Graver Møvig and Elin Stangeland, University of Oslo Library, Norway

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How did your Open Science skilling initiative begin?

We have several initiatives:

- In 2015, University of Oslo (UiO) academics initiated the startup of Software Carpentry courses facilitated by the Library;
- The Skills development project for research data was initiated in 2017, based on findings in a 2015 institution survey of the status of research data management;
- Open Access introductions have been offered on demand since 2010.

Please describe the context and aims of the initiative.

The skills development project for research data involves developing, piloting and establishing courses within the institution for researchers and research support staff. Details about activities etc. can be found [online](#) (in Norwegian).

Carpentry courses are for researchers who needs to learn to use new technologies for their research. Details about Carpentry can be found [here](#) and information about University of Oslo activity can be found [here](#). Three years ago, we also started running an annual event called Research Bazaar where we open up course provision for other UiO communities to run other technology courses. Details and examples of courses can be found [here](#).

How is the initiative managed and coordinated?

Skills development for research data is currently linked to the UiO policy and guidelines for research data management. Details of the policy [here](#) are governed by the Vice Rector at UiO, the Research Infrastructure Board and the Advisory Council for eInfrastructure. The work executed is done by the Group for research data, an interdepartmental team consisting of members from the University Library, the University Center for Information Technology and Department of Research Administration.





Carpentry initiatives are managed in collaboration with academics involved and library representatives, and UiO are in the process of establishing a governing board for this activity.

The work is financed as a strategic initiative by the university, via the initiatives described above.

Who are your target audiences?

Library Staff. Researchers. PhD. Postdocs. Students. Also, IT and data management experts (data scientists, bioinformaticians, data stewards) at a departmental and faculty level.

Which skills are prioritised?

TOP PRIORITY	STRONG PRIORITY	MODERATE PRIORITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Open Science Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">FAIR DataScholarly PublishingResearch Infrastructures and the EOSCResearch IntegrityComputational Research Skills (Carpentry related)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Metrics and rewardsCitizen ScienceDigital Humanities Skills

Why did you prioritise some skills and exclude others?

Decisions are based on where we have ongoing activity and strategic focus. These are linked to institutional priorities, in addition to national policies from the Ministry of Education and Research, Research Council Norway and EU.

How do participants acquire these skills?

Skills are acquired through courses developed and delivered by library staff and carpentry instructors.

Which channels and learning types are used?

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

For Carpentry courses the Carpentry methodology are used. This pedagogy is focused on active learning, with a lot of support being provided to participants by instructors and helpers. Details about this can be found [here](#).

Which formats are used?

Slideshows. Github for Carpentry courses. Courses are active and hands-on. We try to avoid traditional lectures.

Is there formal recognition?

We use a Badge / alternative recognition system. For Carpentry, enthusiasts can choose to engage in course delivery by first becoming helpers, and then to become approved Carpentry instructors. Details can be found [here](#).



What impact do you expect from this initiative?

Improved research skills within the UiO academic community leading to more efficient research leading to high quality research outputs, further research opportunities and collaborative opportunities.

How do you train the trainers?

For RDM skills courses the trainers are self-taught, having attended some courses in pedagogy as provided by the University. For Carpentry, details can be found [here](#).

How do you recruit the trainers?

Trainers are library staff; for Carpentry, instructors are recruited from enthusiastic participants, research support staff and library staff.

What have you learnt so far?

The research community sees the value of the training provided.

What's next on your skilling/training calendar?

The RDM skills courses will continue in autumn 2019. We will start looking at involving subject librarians and departments to adapt courses to disciplinary needs. At the same time, we plan to coordinate training activities better.

For Carpentry new courses will be announced in August on [this web page](#).

What about the budget and the costs?

The skills project budget and Carpentry activities are pretty tightly joined.

For the skills project we have been funded with 0.5 million NOK per year for 2017 and 2018. This allowed us to hire a person in 0.5 FTE to follow up project activities. For 2019 this was increased to 1 million allowing us to hire a full-time staff member. In addition, 20% of the project manager post was covered by these funds. For the last two years we have spent 20.000 NOK on the Research Bazaar, and in 2019 we were able to add 10.000 from supporters met.no and UiO Doc.

For Carpentry, most work is done within existing human resources. Instructors from UiO and beyond take time out of their normal jobs to contribute. UiO is a silver member of the Carpentries, this involves a cost of USD7500. One benefit this membership is that UiO gets to train course instructors.

Other activities are financed within the Library's regular budget.

Which challenges have you encountered?

For the skills project, the main issue we've had is staffing. We lost our project member in January. Recruitment is slow, so the project is now somewhat delayed. A new person will be in place in August, so then we should be able to proceed according to plan.

In terms of practical aspects, deciding on course content has been quite challenging, as the area of research data management is quite extensive. Also, we are debating to what degree to adapt to disciplinary needs or not, what we decide will have implications for library resourcing and how UiO as an institution can organise data management locally.



For Carpentry, coordinating the various instructors and contributors from various parts of the library can be a challenge. As many instructors are PhD or postdocs, we find that they move on when their contracts come to an end. We have to continually recruiting new ones. However, it should be mentioned that the experience they bring with them to their next job is seen to be very valuable.

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

If possible, make sure to have a generous budget.

Keep stakeholders informed and collaborate with them to make sure that the project is well embedded and supported within the institution. Stakeholders are also an excellent source of feedback on, for example, course materials.

Has your initiative had an impact so far?

We have not been able to run the Research data management courses many times yet but feedback on initial runs has been fairly positive. In general, there is a lot of interest in research data management training within UiO. Many people, also at a senior level recognise a need to improve researchers' competencies in this field. Further courses are asked for regularly and the faculty where we did our pilot has already invited us back.

As for Carpentry, our evaluation feedback is always very positive. Attendees confirm the content is useful to them in their own academic work, and would recommend the courses to their colleagues. Some courses (R and Python) fill up very quickly. We often have waiting lists, which is also a good sign. We also have seen, for example, PhDs come in, moving from attending courses, to join as instructors and then getting work opportunities partly due to their experience with Carpentry. We also see young researchers, struggling to find their next contract using Carpentry as a way to extend their skills and build on their network at UiO with a hope that this will be useful when looking for new work opportunities.

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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