## Lightning talk IDCC16 conference, April 19, 2021

# A community consultation on career tracks for data stewards

Recruitment, profiles, training requirements and incentives

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## Content

- Background: data steward career tracks
- Case studies: Germany and the Netherlands
- Career tracks: topics and categories
- Data analysis
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## Background: data steward career tracks

- Need for clarification
  - Data stewardship is not yet recognised as a career
  - In most organisations, responsibilities and tasks of data stewards differ
  - Not many examples of what a career track could look like due to insufficient experience
- Start: Dutch-German collaboration on exploring the topic of career tracks for data stewards in our organisations
- Turned into: small-scaled community consultation on career tracks for data stewards ε International FAIR Convergence Symposium 2020.
  - o Online, interactive, World Cafe style session with around 45 participants



- Based on these earlier conference outcomes:
  - Overview of motivations, challenges and changes in the topic of career tracks
  - Focusing on recruitment, profiles, training requirements and incentives
- We expect that the outcomes may help local research organisations and national initiatives to raise awareness, and start or further develop their data stewardship programs



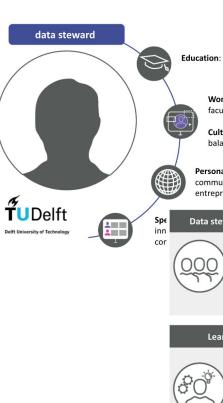
## Case studies: the Netherlands

#### **National Programme Open Science** (NPOS), the Netherlands

Landscape analysis for professionalising data stewardship

#### https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4320504

- 2 cases: Universities (Delft, Radboud)
- 3 cases: University Medical Centers (Utrecht, Erasmus, Maastricht)
- 3 cases: Universities of Applied Sciences (Avans, Leiden, HAN)



Education: PhD or equivalent

Work experience: research experience in the faculty domain

Cultural background: international, gender

balance

Personality traits: independent, collaborative, communicative, easygoing, enthusiastic,

entrepreneurial



#### Data steward in the organisation

- Appointment explicit part of RDM policy Positioned at the research
- Additional RDM support for centralised tasks at library
  - No formal central coordination. library is informal linking pin

#### Training for data stewards



Training organised by the coordinator Formal RDM training Training on TUD research support

#### Learning on the job



- Structured mentoring Internal peer support (data stewards team) External peer networks Soft skills development:
- training and on the job Gaining relevant research

#### Strengths and challenges



- Strength: well-organised (coordination) Strength: institutional buy-in Strength: sustainable
- Strength: team-feeling among the data stewards
- Challenge: expensive (9 FTE)

## **Case studies: Germany**

#### **TU9 - RDM working Group Position Paper, Germany**

- GERMAN UNIVERSITIES OF TECHNOLOGY
- Joint approach for central coordination of data stewards differing in models, local integration and communication structure
- Common ground is the highly qualified personnel which a specialisation in engineering and natural sciences



Project level Faculty level Central institution level



Monthly meeting of the data stewards

Involvement and cooperation in the general support team

support of the data stewards through 2- to 4-weekly meetings with an FDM expert

Support

Skills & competences

Communication skills Coordination skills

Open-minded

Networking

Solution-orientedExpertise in (research) data management

IT knowledge/expertise in software development

Disciplinary expertise

Knowledge of institutional structures

Expertise in information science Expertise in project management



activitie

Coordination)

Policy development

IT infrastructure development / management

Coordination of

- Coordination o
- Research Software
   DMP
- Data publication
- Data organization
   Data sharing

Communication infrastructure

Creating best practice

Looking for the data quality (control)

Tool development

Consulting -> contact person

Onto logy development

Gitsupport

Development of training courses together with the central institution

Data steward in the organisation



## Career tracks: topics and categories

Challenges From which group should/could data stewards be recruited?
How to write and post a job offer that attracts best candidates?

Motivations What is the motivation to hire a data steward from the HR /organisation's perspective?
What is the motivation to become a data steward from a data steward perspective?

Changes What is the recruitment process at the moment?
How could the recruitment procedure work more effectively?

World cafe style
Break out sessions

**Step 1:** participants wrote down their answers to the questions

**Step 2:** participants voted for the answer someone else gave

**Step 3:** as group, discuss the top most voted answers

Category	Topic: profile			
Challenges	Which background to bring along? Master or bachelor degree, scientific background, information specialist? Could a team of data stewards work? What are the tasks of teams with different backgrounds?			
Motivations	Which competences data stewards should add to their background knowledge?  If the role of the data steward was more clearly defined, could it help better integrate between data stewards and infrastructure?			
Changes What to do to make the job profiles more clear and attractive? Any important aspects missing in current data steward profile?				

## Career tracks: topics and categories

Category	Topic: training requirements	
Challenges	Which (soft) skills are required? If you are a data steward, do you get proper training?	
Motivations	How could the data stewards be motivated for trainings (train themselves and train the trainer)? How the university/institute could be motivated to offer structured training for (new) data stewards?	
Changes	How do we get to know special training needs and how to adapt to those needs? What is missing in current training? Any nice training you recommend?	

Category	Topic: incentives			
Challenges	What are incentives for a University when establishing data steward jobs?			
Motivations	Which incentives/advantages could data stewards motivate to become a data steward and keep on working motivated?			
Changes	What are best practice examples on career tracks for data stewards? What rewards can we offer to make data stewardship more appreciated?			

## **Data analysis**

Topics	Challenges	Motivation	Changes
Recruitment	Expertise (~ 74 %)	Organisation (~ 64 %)	Organisation (100 %)
Profiles	Skills (~ 56 %)	Expertise (~ 50 %)/ Organisation (~ 34 %)	/
Training requirements	Skills (~ 92 %)	Skills (~ 57 %)/ Organisation (~ 43 %)	/
Incentives	Skills (~ 56 %)	Skills (~ 62 %)/ Organisation (~ 38 %)	Organisation (~ 77 %)/ Skills (~ 23 %)

- Challenges: difficulties of getting people with adequate skills and expertise are mentioned
- Motivation: personally (being skilled makes data stewards and researchers feel more secure) and organisational (it helps if data stewardship is recognised and rewarded)
- Changes: organisations have the power to change their structure

### **Outcome**



#### Useful skills for data stewards

- Data skills (e.g., understanding the FAIR principles)
- · Collaboration and coordination skills
- Communication and 'language' skills: translate and mediate between management, researchers, information specialist and IT support
- · Networking skills
- · Attention for detail



#### Background expertise of data stewards

- · Recruitment from early carrer stage or PhD candidates
- · Recruitment from postdoctoral researchers
- Recruitment from Professionals with RDM experience



#### Required organisational support for data stewards

- · Permanent positions
- · Recognition by HR and management
- Sufficient budgets for RDM support services
- · Both generic and domain-specific support
- Efficiency of RDM support (instead of an 'additional' task by researchers)
- · Grant proposals that include RDM expertise
- · Credits for quality of research and research transparency

## We need your help!

We like to collect more community insights into the challenges, motivations and changes currently taking place on the topic of career track for data stewards. Therefore, we ask you to complete the follow-up **survey**, which will running until **May 15**.

http://bit.ly/CareerTrackDS

## **More information**

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