

Keeping up with the pride : new LIS roles supporting researchers with proficient research data management

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Libraries and staff roles within the research ecosystem are expanding rapidly. Globally, there is a rise in mandates and policies from funders and publishers calling for research and associated research data to be made openly available in a FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) way. Researchers bear the brunt of these policies - according to the annual State of Open Data 2022 survey, 72% of researchers said they would rely on an internal resource for help with managing their data or making it openly available. Globally, LIS professionals are mobilising and working towards implementing support structures and workflows that will help their researchers in the years to come as they tackle the open research tide. As African librarianship enters the digital era, the role of library and information (LIS) professionals keeps expanding. There is a golden opportunity to redefine its parameters, especially considering the growing momentum towards Open Data and Open Science more generally. This paper shares examples of the ways in which librarianship has evolved to meet growing research demands and where we see it heading in the short- and long-term future - from our experience of working with institutions and research funders worldwide. It will highlight some emerging LIS roles in the digital era and explain why African LIS professionals should be prepared, educated, and empowered to support their researchers with proficient research data management as this momentum intensifies.

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