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WHY BUILDING EXCITEMENT FOR DATA SHARING CAN HELP RESEARCHERS - AND THEIR LIBRARY - TO RAISE VISIBILITY

Erasmus University Rotterdam has used the issue of open access as an opportunity to engage with researchers, finding new ways of helping them to share their work with the world.

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Erasmus University Rotterdam

Erasmus — ranked globally among the top 100 universities — is among a growing number of institutions worldwide that is committed to data sharing and open access (OA) research. Erasmus's policy is that all short scientific work must be published in an OA journal or deposited in an institutional repository. As an important part of that commitment — and to cope with the growing amount of research content — the Dutch university established the EUR Data Repository (EDR).

Powered by Figshare, the data repository was a project led by Erasmus University Library and implemented in early 2020. Unfortunately, its rollout coincided with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, presenting challenges to the library in engaging with their researchers.

> *Most researchers haven't even heard of a repository because they're not used to publishing data...*
>
> Liz Guzman-Ramirez

"We had planned to visit each faculty and put up posters and have regular walk-in workshops to talk to researchers about the EDR," said Nynke de Groot, Research Data Management Specialist within the university library. But when everyone started working remotely, they had to switch to a different, more creative approach. "We contacted the research directors and deans to ask them if we could do an announcement in their faculty newsletters, put some information on their faculty websites, and allow us a speaking slot during their faculty meetings. We also made a video with them about open science and how their staff can use the EDR," said Nynke.

Their efforts proved to be a success. Fast forward to mid-2022: engagement and outreach activities are moving back towards more in-person initiatives, and data management and sharing has become business-as-usual for researchers at Erasmus. To date, they've published over 150 items into the repository, which have been viewed more than 175,000 times and downloaded over 54,000 times. Erasmus researchers are also developing data management plans using DMPOnline's template tool at the start of research projects and PhD students publishing their theses will be required to publish their data, code, and outputs in addition.

Delivering outreach on data management is also now a team effort. Nynke works with the data stewards from various faculties to create bespoke workshops based on the needs of individual research groups. These workshops were developed during general information sessions where Nynke and her colleagues noticed that researchers were frequently asking how data management and data sharing applied to them specifically. The EDR provided a platform for support staff to put data management into practice and raised the profile of the library within the researcher community as a resource for data management support.

Liz Guzman-Ramirez, the data steward at the Erasmus Institute of Management (ERIM), began her role in January 2021 focusing on the whole research lifecycle. Part of Liz's role is to guide researchers on best practices for data storing and sharing, which may be a subject-specific repository or the EDR. "Most researchers haven't even heard of a repository because they're not used to publishing data," said Liz.

Data management is now a major part of Liz's role and has created opportunities to engage with researchers and raise the profile of the library within the university community:

- Researchers within the institute are required to meet certain criteria each year in order to be members and take advantage of funding opportunities. These criteria are being updated in 2023 to include open science practices, which includes publishing data.

- The institute created an Open Science Initiative on which Open Science events are being organized twice a year, for 3 years. An example of this was the October DataFest in 2021 and the Research Transparency Campaign in March 2022, aimed at raising awareness of open data and promoting the EDR.

- There's also a project underway to provide rewards and recognition to researchers who share their data openly, including having open data recognition as part of their tenure track. And they're not stopping there: data stewards and librarian staff who help researchers in open data practices are also being rewarded for their contributions. "A lot of support staff are already pushing for open science practices, so I want to make sure that we all get recognized and rewarded for doing that," said Liz.
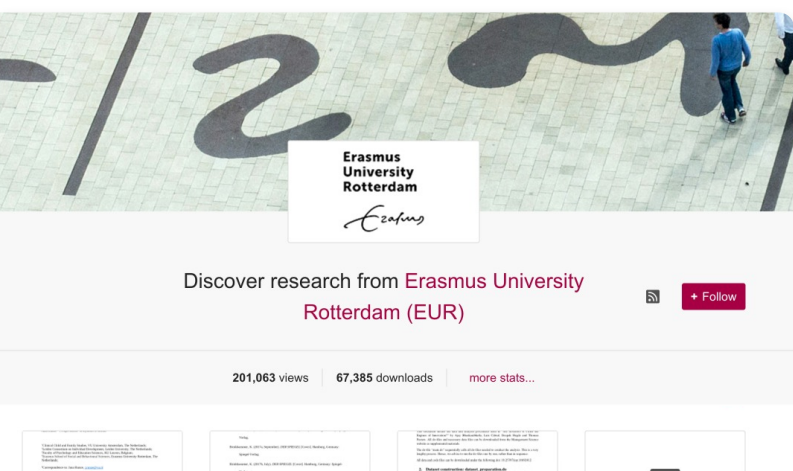
There's a strategic focus now on making a societal impact and the EDR opens up conversations...

Nynke de Groot

Having data management and open data as part of Liz's remit has started conversations around the biases, misunderstandings, and challenges researchers have toward sharing their data. These conversations have allowed Liz to develop solutions and to promote FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) data for researchers who are unable to make all their data and metadata available due to ethical or commercial reasons.

The data repository has also sparked questions about data quality and Erasmus's strategy for opening up research. "There's a strategic focus now on making a societal impact and the EDR opens up conversations about how to use the repository for progressing that focus," said Nynke.

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