Data Audit Framework exercise: defining the benefits of data audit

Each group was provided with a fictitious scenario for background context and a role to assume. The Principal, Research Centre, and IR groups were asked to consider what they would like to get from a data audit i.e. what expectations they had, and the tool developers were asked to sell the benefits of data audit and the DAF tool to these groups.

The University of Bristol is considering how to deal with all the data that is being created by its researchers. The institution recently won several large research grants, so will be creating larger amounts of data than usual. Management want to ensure this data is created and managed appropriately, as Bristol recently failed to secure the follow-on award of one project due to data being lost in the first stage. The University is considering running an institution wide data audit, the results of which could provide the basis of a University data policy. A £500,000 grant has also recently been awarded to develop the Institutional Repository. Management would like some of this money to be used to extend the repository's services so it can accept research data.

To decide on the best course of action the University is considering running a pilot audit in the Centre for Creative and Performing Arts. This should provide a clearer sense of the benefits of data audit and give some indication of the investment needed for an institution-wide survey. The Data Audit Framework is being considered as a potential audit tool.

Some contextual details for the University, Centre for Creative and Performing Arts and the Institutional Repository are below.

University of Bristol
The University of Bristol is a major force in the life and economy of South West England. It employs over 8,000 staff and supports over 15,000 students, 20% of whom are postgraduate. Across its six faculties the University has around 3,000 academic staff. Research is a key driver for the institution and staff have an impressive record of attracting research council funding. 78 per cent of Bristol University's departments were judged to be world class or internationally excellent in the latest RAE assessment and the University is committed to improving on this excellent track record in the future.

Centre for Creative and Performing Arts
As one of 20 UK arts centres of excellence, CCPA is renowned internationally. It supports three cutting edge research teams, specialising in visualisation, e-Dance and netart. Moreover Bristol University Library is the home to one of the most significant theatre collections in the UK. It has extensive women's theatre, live art, local studies and theatre design collections. These are regularly used in teaching, postgraduate research and are sources for large research grants, for example the National Review of Live Art video digitisation project.

Institutional Repository
Bristol University currently runs an e-Prints repository to preserve and promote access to its publications. Deposit has been varied across departments. Investment has been secured to conduct a user needs survey to identify why more researchers aren't depositing their material and to make refinements to service provision. The repository staff are also keen that a fair proportion of the money be invested in promotion as they believe lack of awareness of the benefits to depositing is hindering collections development.

Group 1: Principal of the University
Imagine you are the Principal of the University of Bristol. You need to decide whether the Data Audit Framework is the best model to adopt. You are particularly concerned about getting a good return on the investment. Potential concerns are:

- what do you want the Data Audit Framework to do for you?
- investment of time & resources the Centre / University is willing to commit?
- how do you want to use the results?
- what level of support do you need with the audit?
- what you want restrictions imposed on how the results could be reused?

Group 2: Centre for Creative and Performing Arts
Imagine you are the head of the Centre for Creative and Performing Arts. All of the research assets created and used by staff in the Centre need to be audited. You've been invited by the Principal to attend a talk with the developers of the Data Audit Framework. You'd like to find out how the audit will affect the Centre. Points to consider could be:

- would you want the audit to be run by Centre staff or an external auditor?
- what level of access would you grant to Centre records?
- what coverage of the Centre would you want?
- how much time could Centre staff provide for the audit?
- what information would you want collected?
- what would you like the audit to do for the Centre?

Group 3: Institutional Repository
Imagine you lead the institutional repository. You're very interested in the potential to audit research data as it should give an indication of the extent and type of material you may be asked to deal with in the future. Points to consider could be:

- what information would you want collected?
- how do you see the audit supporting the repository in future data management, curation, preservation planning and costing activities?
- what role would you like to play in the audit?
- what outputs would you like to see?

Group 4: Data Audit Framework Developers
Imagine you are the developers of the Data Audit Framework. Outline the benefits for the University of Bristol of conducting an audit of research data and specifically of adopting your framework. You should think in terms of all stakeholders – the University management, the Institutional Repository and individual Faculties, Schools, Departments and researchers. You may want to consider:

- the benefits of data audit – how it could help the University of Bristol
- what the audit process entails
- how user-friendly the tool is – is training needed to use it / who uses it?
- how long an institution wide audit might take?
- how you can counter criticisms to sell the audit
- how to meet everyone's needs – where you place the emphasis