

Harnessing Canada's collective research data investment during national and organizational transformation

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The National Research Council of Canada (NRC) has been the Canadian government's premier organization for research and development since 1916. This past year has been one of continued change for NRC as it refocuses into a unified, industry-driven organization addressing areas of national importance such as health care, natural resources and climate change. Such focus on industry needs and on supporting the Canadian economy and innovation community has involved significant restructuring and adjustment of organizational resources, including the centralization of the organization's information (including research data) management activities. NRC-CISTI, Canada's national science library, continues to provide national leadership in these areas and has several milestones to report regarding stewardship of Canada's collective research data investment.

On the national front, NRC-CISTI coordinated the successful 2011 Canadian Research Data Summit "Mapping the Data Landscape" on behalf of the Research Data Strategy Working Group. This collaborative group of Canadian universities, libraries, granting agencies and individual researchers is looking at ways to address the issues surrounding research data access, preservation and management. The Summit's final report identifies critical next steps toward a national approach to managing Canada's research data. In a parallel effort, another significant NRC-CISTI success is the launch of DataCite Canada, a data registration service that enables data producers to register their Canadian datasets and assign digital object identifiers (DOIs) to them.

Making data available to other researchers increases the value of research and extends benefits nationally and internationally. NRC itself has extensive data stores, ranging in subject and substance from its internationally consulted Canadian Astronomy Data Centre (CADDC) to its extensive genetics sequencing data. NRC-CISTI's collaboration in managing these stores will positively impact both NRC itself as well as the communities which also use this data to fuel their research. NRC-CISTI has also seen benefits from its national initiatives within peripheral communities, including academia (through its direct connection with Canada's newest graduate program in Information Science at the University of Ottawa), and Canada's public service and the IT/IM community as a whole (through its involvement in open data initiatives).

Canada has been recognized as an international leader in the field of research data management throughout CODATA's existence. Many of NRC's initiatives, strategically aligned with CODATA (as NRC coordinates Canada's membership in CODATA), have strengthened and supported similar successes in other countries. NRC-CISTI will continue to draw from the momentum of its national successes as it supports excellence in data management for the benefit of all countries.