Seminar Overview

Introduction

In Spring 2019, we began piloting a new data management seminar series designed for faculty and graduate students. The series consists of five 50-minute workshops, each of which addresses one or more of the components of the National Science Foundation’s requirement for data management plans (DMPs). We presented the seminar series twice in Spring 2019 – that is, each of them was presented twice, once in the beginning of the semester and once at the end. They were generally scheduled in conference rooms in the Kolligian Library for about 50-60 minutes in the afternoon on varying days of the week, avoiding Mondays and Fridays (in an attempt to increase convenience for faculty members). In future semesters, the seminar series probably should not be repeated more than twice unless it is shortened somehow or unless demand drastically increases. It might be worthwhile to consider an extra presentation of the series over the summer or over winter break, depending upon interest levels.

In future, we should take care to schedule and reserve rooms for every seminar in the series at the start of the semester or earlier, if possible. We keep the Workshops web page (http://library.ucmerced.edu/node/66481) updated with current versions of the seminar flyers, slides, and handouts to send to those who are interested but unable to attend for any reason. We also send information on the time, date, and location of each seminar to the library communications department after reserving rooms so that advertisements can be sent via Happenings emails, and request that Happenings announcements be made two weeks before each seminar and one week before each seminar.

For each semester, the goal is to create a general flyer for the entire seminar series (with the two dates and locations where each seminar will be presented), along with an individual flyer for each of the five seminars (or more if more are added, etc.). The individual flyer should contain more specific information about that seminar’s content, along with information about the speaker(s). The UC Merced Office of Research and Economic Development has been very helpful in advertising the seminars to faculty members. If interest is low for a given seminar, it may be worthwhile to print copies of the individual flyer(s) and ask library student employees to hang them in primary research areas (SSM, S&E1, SE&2, etc.).

Demographic Information

At the beginning and end of each seminar, all attendees are asked to complete brief entry and exit slips. Here is a bar graph of attendees’ primary roles on campus:
The majority of attendees were graduate students, along with a considerable number of faculty and staff. We can also assess the distribution of affiliations, as below:

We had approximately equal numbers of attendees from each of the three schools on campus (Engineering, Natural Sciences, and Humanities and the Arts).

**Participants’ Goals**

As part of the entry slip, attendees are asked to write down something that they hope to gain from the seminar. We can create a table of the most commonly used words used:

```r
## A tibble: 88 x 2
##    word    n
##    <chr> <int>
## 1     data  19
## 2  management  8
## 3   metadata  8
## 4     learn  7
## 5    share  4
```
And we can make a word cloud using their responses:

We can see a lot of words like “learn,” “effective,” “insight,” “deeper,” “manage,” etc. Overall, attendees seem to want to learn more about effective data management, et cetera.

Seminar Effectiveness

Finally, we ask attendees about the effectiveness of the seminar.
Attendees overwhelmingly rank the seminars as “useful” or “very useful.”
We also ask whether attendees are interested in attending similar seminars in future:

Over 30 attendees indicated that they wanted to attend future seminars. About 7 attendees responded, “Maybe.” No attendees who responded were unwilling to attend future seminars.

**Testimonials**

I sincerely believe the seminar gave a lot of insight that I was unfamiliar or never really thought about metadata.

This is great!
Very helpful and thank you for answering all the questions.

Wish it was a little longer! . . . Very informative! Thanks for posting slides online! And letting us know about so many options & resources!

Good intro to some of the resources available

It was a good introduction

Conclusions

Based on the positive feedback from participants and the overall levels of attendance and interest, I believe it is worthwhile to continue teaching seminars on data management aspects in the future. The seminars cost very little, since they can be taught by a librarian or staff member; the primary cost for these seminars is catering (coffee, water, and/or pastries), which is not required and can be omitted if necessary, and they appear to benefit attendees substantially. In addition, the materials are prepared.