

Felicity Tayler

## **Librarians are the dream unconscious of the research enterprise (as are all other support staff)**



I am going to speak about this graphic image that you see behind us. It is a landscape, with a winding river and here we see a moon hanging in the sky with its reflection in the water. There are stars sparkling in the firmament.

The image is a metaphor for how I think about Research Data Management Services

You can see by the title James Doiron gave this round table panel, the Canadian RDM Landscape, it is an accepted metaphor to describe RDM as a space created through a set of practices, and relationships between people, institutions, legal and ethical guidelines, funding agencies, and technological platforms. As we will see throughout the presentations today, RDM is not a singular area of expertise, nor a definable area of user services, it is a complex ecology – it even has an environmental footprint if you think about the server farms behind cloud storage and movements such as Green AI.

When I first showed this image to Martin Bernier, our CIO at uOttawa, the river was drawn as a straight line. But he pointed out that the journey ahead of us through this landscape would be unpredictable and full of unexpected curves and exploratory meanderings. This is why the river in the image is now a winding river - but we are all headed in the same direction of the flow nonetheless.

Last year the horizon in this graphic was a daytime horizon, this year, we see a night-time scene. This is because we are focusing on the world of RDM support services. This is not to say that Librarians, Research Facilitators, IT Representatives, or other research administrators and support staff work at night. Perhaps we do, but we try not to. **Rather, I think of our work, metaphorically speaking, as the dream subconscious of the research enterprise.**

Whereas the faculty researchers, affiliates, and their graduate research assistants are the conscious and visible work of a competitive university, our work often goes undetected. We support the researchers as we mediate the underlying structures and economies of the funding cycles, document lifecycles, enabling knowledge mobilization and digital scholarship infrastructures – we do this in subtle ways that nonetheless have significant influence on successful research outcomes.

It is my hope today that we have come together to gain awareness of our different spheres of influence, to gain a greater appreciation of how we can inhabit this RDM landscape together. Although the majority of our participants are affiliated with the Library, the diversity of representation from different faculties and departments across uOttawa (and beyond) speaks to how wide-ranging these RDM services really have to be.

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<https://biblio.uottawa.ca/en/news/shifting-horizons-ii-realities-research-data-management-services>