IASSIST REGIONAL REPORT FOR CANADA, 2024-2025
Prepared by Jane Fry (Canadian Regional Secretary)
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Membership:
As of May 5, 2025, there were 72 active Canadian IASSIST members. This represents about a 20% decrease over the last year, a reflection of holding the IASSIST conference in Canada last year. Many Canadian IASSIST members continue to be deeply involved in local, provincial, national, and international organizations on a regular basis. This engagement continues to be of benefit to all involved, as knowledge and expertise are developed and shared. There are also 2 Canadian Members at Large: Dylanne Dearborn and Amber Leahey.

Overview:
The excitement and challenge of 'doing data' continues with the fast pace of constant changes and updates in the field. While some researchers are on the cutting edge, there are many researchers that still want and require the traditional methods of 'doing data'. AI has become more prominent, requiring more knowledge exchange on our part to remain current. And research data management continues to explode, with more detail being needed for all of the various parts of the data life cycle. The latest development for us has been a concern around 'rescuing' data that is in danger of being lost. Maintaining data on websites, and even some portals, is no longer a guarantee that the data will be archived, so we are looking into alternate ways to keep it available for researchers.

I would like to give a big 'Thank you' to all those who so generously give of their time repeatedly when they receive my email asking for a contribution to this report. I could not complete it without their input. They are so helpful that my biggest challenge is figuring out how to trim their reports so my report is not overly long! We truly are a collaborative data community here in Canada.

Detailed Information:

Data Liberation Initiative (DLI):
The DLI is a membership-based partnership between Canadian postsecondary institutions and Statistics Canada (STC). There are over 80 institutional member organizations. Select files are also available free of charge from the STC website through the RDS (Rich Data Services) analytical platform. Recently, over 50 colleagues working at various colleges and universities in Canada signed a formal letter to Statistics Canada highlighting the importance of microdata to their academic communities and urging Statistics Canada to release more microdata.

Canadian Research Data Centre Network (CRDCN):
The CRDCN just celebrated its 25th anniversary and is currently in the midst of implementing the virtual Research Data Centre platform. Once the project is fully completed it will be a definite game changer, opening up the doors for easier (virtual) and more equitable access to the unique data available, not just for those institutions with physical RDC spaces, but beyond.

Digital Research Alliance of Canada (the Alliance):
The Alliance plays a pivotal role in advancing Research Data Management (RDM) across the country by coordinating and delivering national data services in partnership with research organizations and service providers. The Alliance also coordinates the RDM Network of Experts: a grassroots community of information and data professionals comprising over 150 experts across 70 plus Canadian academic and research institutions. Here is an overview of key

RDM services provided or supported by the Alliance and a summary of some of the activities undertaken in 2024/25.

- [Federated Research Data Repository](#) (FRDR) is a national, bilingual platform that enables the sharing, curation, and long-term preservation of Canadian research data across all disciplines. In 2024/25, FRDR has seen several major feature releases that have improved the experience of researchers using the service and that allow the Alliance to more readily make Canadian research data findable and accessible for future reuse. FRDR also refreshed its storage hardware and took steps to integrate its infrastructure into the Alliance's National Host Sites.

- [Lunaris](#) is Canada's national discovery service for multidisciplinary research data, offering a bilingual platform that aggregates metadata from over 150 academic, government, and research repositories. In 2024/25, the team expanded Lunaris' coverage of the Canadian research data landscape, with a particular focus on disciplinary and government data repositories. Lunaris' User Community Group has grown, providing its community with regular opportunities to guide the development of the service. An improvement of Lunaris' metadata harvesting process was also completed, ensuring that metadata records are correct and complete, allowing researchers to discover the datasets that are most relevant to them.

- [DMP Assistant](#) is a national, online, bilingual tool developed to assist researchers in creating data management plans (DMPs). In 2024/25, DMP Assistant has achieved significant gains in platform stability. Development concluded on single sign-on, allowing users to sign in with institutional and social IDs, as well as significant enhancements to security on the platform. A project is currently underway to migrate the DMP Assistant from legacy infrastructure at its inaugural host, the University of Alberta Library, to a newer, national infrastructure, the Arbutus Research Cloud, located at the University of Victoria. This platform migration will provide greater capacity for supporting the evolving platform for years to come. The service team, along with the DMP Expert Group, also continues to engage its stakeholder community through the DMP Assistant Administrators Group, and they are pleased to further engage with international partners at the Digital Curation Centre to deliver this important service to Canadian researchers and their institutions.

- [DMP Expert Group](#) (DMPEG) has continued to support the development of DMP-related resources, and with support from the DMP Specialist. The most notable resource developed in the past year is a DMP rubric that is designed to provide a general framework for assisting researchers with the development of good quality DMPs, and is targeted for release Summer 2025. The rubric is ideally intended for use alongside the [Alliance Simplified Template (Funding Application Stage)](#) that is intended specifically to help researchers in meeting DMP requirements imposed by funders, including those mandated by the Tri-Agencies. The Simplified Template can also be found and utilized within the DMP Assistant tool.

- National Persistent Identifiers (PIDs) Program: In partnership with the [Canadian Research Knowledge Network](#) (CRKN), the Alliance supports a national initiative to advance the adoption and integration of persistent identifiers (PIDs) within Canada's research ecosystem. In 2024/25, in addition to continued support and ongoing operations of the national PID consortia, the team advanced the national PIDs strategy, launched new web resources for it and the national PID consortia, and helped to coordinate the activities and meetings of the Canadian PIDs Advisory Committee.

- [Controlled Access Management (CAM) for Research Data](#) is a national pilot project aimed at enabling research organizations and data repositories to meet researcher needs related to the long-term storage, security, sharing, and re-use of restricted-access

research data. In 2024/25, CAM Partner Organizations, through several thematic working groups, completed a draft of a Roadmap document that provides recommendations for a wide variety of ecosystem stakeholders on advancing controlled access management for research data. The team also completed testing on the FRDR Sensitive Data Pilot project with partners at Université de Montréal.

- RDM Jumpstart: Data Management for Reproducible Research: This weeklong pilot virtual workshop (May 2025) introduced attendees to best practices in RDM using common tools to support research transparency and reproducibility. It was a resounding success evidenced by the fact that there were many more people interested in attending it than there were available spots in the program. It was largely a volunteer initiative so will need substantial funding to continue it in the future.

Regional Information:

Ontario Data Community:
The Ontario Data Community (ODC), under the umbrella of OCUL (Ontario Consortium of University Libraries) facilitates the exchange of ideas and fosters discussion amongst data professionals to encourage collaborative initiatives, the development of new ideas, increased access, and more efficient use of resources. The members meet bi-monthly over Zoom to exchange updates. Regular knowledge sharing, where one of the members discusses a data related service or activity, continues to be quite popular. Networking with colleagues is an important component of this group, so team building activities are always enjoyed.

Atlantic Data Contacts group:
The Atlantic Data Contacts group met four times in the 2024/25 academic year. They discussed various topics of regional interest, held a debrief to discuss the DLI's National Training Event and other data conferences, enjoyed an overview of NVivo given by a member of the group, and teamed up to offer region-wide online webinars for ICPSR's "Love Data Week".

Having fun in the Winter! (Photo credit: Jane Fry)