Australian Government

Department of Education

NDRI Skills – Summary

Targeted Discussion Series (September 2024)

Summary

The consultation identified several key considerations and potential investment priorities for digital research infrastructure:

National Research Infrastructure (NRI) staff

Spectrum of skills and expertise: There is a need for a spectrum of skills within the NDRI facilities, ranging from bleeding-edge technologies to more mainstream/traditional digital skills. Sharing knowledge across capabilities and diffusing the knowledge and experience from successful examples is essential, as is supporting interdisciplinarity, peer mentoring, and peer learning across different research careers.

Professional accreditation: Consider a professional accreditation system similar to those in other fields, such as the Australian Computer Society or medical colleges, to ensure that individuals accessing the infrastructure are up to date with their skills. Micro-credentialing could be one pathway to provide staff with skills.

Building on international and domestic examples (e.g. MyScope in AU and RItrainPlus in EU), develop/provide training and set minimum training requirements before researchers can access expensive or scarce NRI resources.

Recognition and permanent contracts: Valuing NRI staff by offering permanent contracts at the equivalent level of certainty of an academic or general staff hire. Other forms of recognition should become part of the system, including formally recognising the contribution NRI staff make towards publication, etc.

Strategic horizon scanning: Implementing strategic horizon scanning and foresight to anticipate new research questions and the skills required to address them.

Researchers/Users of NRI

Training in the basics of FAIR and CARE: There is a need to train thousands of researchers in the basics of FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) and CARE (Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics) principles.

Discipline variability: Addressing the variability in digital literacy and maturity across different domains is crucial. A coordinated/framework approach with different tiers of training that reflect the needs of the broader community and the differing needs of domains is necessary.

Support centres: Establishing support centres along with a cohort of professionals that can help researchers understand the best options for picking up relevant skills and making choices between competing technologies and courses.

AI/ML as a tool: AI/ML is seen as just one tool in the toolkit for researchers but training will need to be in place.

In summary, these investments would aim to create a robust and future-proof research infrastructure by addressing the diverse needs of researchers and ensuring continuous NRI staff skill development.

If you'd like to provide any additional comments or feedback on the above summary, you're invited to provide these views via the online NDRI Investment Plan Consultation Survey, which can be found on the department's NDRI webpage.