

Connecting the RDM Helpdesks by a shared Basic Framework

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Abstract

User support is an essential component for the success of an efficient research data infrastructure. Consequently, many consortia of the National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI) have already established or plan to set up discipline specific helpdesks to support their communities. The technical and organizational foundations of these NFDI helpdesks are diverse and not yet fully interconnected. In addition, the services of generic RDM helpdesks at institutional or state level also need to be included in a helpdesk network that aims to reach researchers at all levels.

Therefore, the working group “RDM Helpdesk Network”[1] proposes a shared framework that efficiently connects the helpdesks within the NFDI as well as with the other RDM helpdesks. In an initial joint workshop of NFDI consortia, RDM state initiatives and local RDM helpdesks[2], we discussed requirements and the potential structure of such a network of helpdesks. In its simplest form, it would provide a central point of contact with a signpost function that refers RDM support requests to the most suitable helpdesk. This is currently being tested in a decentralized approach by close collaboration and joint support cases among NFDI helpdesks of life science and the humanities consortia respectively. The next level would be to standardize the handling of crossdisciplinary requests, e.g. by developing blueprints. Such a decentralized but interconnected network of helpdesks could also efficiently balance workload and may offer first-level generic support for researchers who do not otherwise have access to RDM support. This network could also provide customer support for other NFDI basic services.

These goals require a shared ticketing system and/or interfaces between the existing helpdesks, combined with standardized workflows that build on the experiences of the helpdesks. It includes a shared knowledge base for all helpdesks that is collaboratively created and updated.

At the Base4NFDI User Conference we plan to obtain an overview of support requirements and discuss ideas for a network of helpdesks with users, NFDI consortia and the Base4NFDI basic services.

Keywords: helpdesk, support, ticketing system, consulting

[1] Working Group RDM Helpdesk Network, <https://www.nfdi.de/section-edutrain/working-group-rdm-helpdesk-network/>

[2] Community Workshop: Vernetzung der FDM-Helpdesks, 20./21.11.2023, <https://www.nfdi.de/community-workshop-helpdesk-vernetzung/>