



Researcher Engagement & Data Group

2023 Annual Report

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July 2024

Annual Report

2023



1185

People engaged with us at events/inductions



154

People attended either a drop-in or 1:1 session

Introduction

The Researcher Engagement and Data Group (REDG) is comprised of 3.0FTE posts and engages with researchers across the University, from postgraduate level to senior academics, to ensure that they are aware of all the advanced computing facilities available to them through [BEAR services](#), as well as supporting their use through training workshops, 1:1 sessions and online learning materials. The team members are:

- Dr Stephanie Thompson – Researcher Engagement & Data Group Leader
- Aslam Ghumra – Research Data Management Specialist
- Debbie Carter – Research Training and Engagement Officer
- Yajie Zhang – Training Coordinator (joined in December)

Highlights of 2023

- For the second year running, doubling the number of people we engaged with compared to 2022
- Expanding the over-subscribed [BEAR Challenge](#) event to 50 taught students and seeing increased participation by women
- Coordinating [two successful HPC Wire Award](#)
- We were joined by a PhD student intern – Kirsty McCready – who ran a [Digital Research Conversation on Sustainable Computing](#)

Collaborations within UoB

- [Six new BEAR Champions were recruited in 2023](#) and the group met regularly, providing feedback on BEAR services and helping with training and outreach in their area and beyond
- A new R User Group was launched and is being run by a Committee of R users, with the PGR Coding Club also meeting regularly
- The 2-day [BEAR Conference](#) successfully ran in-person, introduced by Professor Stephen Jarvis and featuring keynote speakers and PGRs describing a wide variety of research enabled by use of our HPC-system, BlueBEAR
- REDG regularly met with the Library, Graduate School and other researcher developer support staff, with Stephanie participating in the Open Research Board Operational Group
- A paper on [Guidance on Licences for Software](#) compiled by Aslam was approved by the Open Research Board

Outreach

- We held 13 bespoke sessions to raise awareness and encourage use of services, such as [‘Love your data’](#) in collaboration with the Library, and help with [software licencing](#)
- REDG attended 26 university events, engaging with 1185 people. We also met with >154 people on a 1:1 basis to support them with using BEAR services – see Appendix

311

People attended our training workshops

1,740

Enrolments on our Canvas courses

7,422

Unique page views of our blog posts



Training

- 24 training workshops were held (3 online) with 311 attendees – see the [BEAR Training webpages](#) for workshop details
- Funded training work packages are in place to deliver new workshops throughout 2024 using time from RSEs and Data Scientists, including Image Processing with Python
- The NVIDIA Ambassador programme was suspended for part of the year, but 3 different NVIDIA workshops were delivered at least once
- We successfully recruited to the 0.4FTE post of Training Coordinator to help run the new workshops
- Aslam ran tailored introductory sessions to coding for a small group

Communications

- Webpages were reviewed and moved to the University website from the intranet. [Monthly newsletters](#) were moved to the blog.
- We wrote 46 blog posts and the number of unique page views nearly doubled since 2022, with the most popular post being about [recruiting 6 RSEs](#)
- We were featured in the University Briefing email to all staff about HPC Wire Awards in December
- 23 case studies on use of BEAR services were compiled into a publication deposited in [ePapers](#)
- Debbie visited 10 research groups around the University to feature their research using BEAR in the '[BEAR on Tour](#)'

External outreach

- Two teams from the BEAR Challenge represented UoB at the [CIUK Cluster Challenge](#)
- Stephanie attended various conferences and events:
 - RSECon Satellite Training event to learn about training programmes at other institutions
 - Computing Insight UK
 - Supported the [Digital Skills Day](#) for young people in her role as a STEM Ambassador for Birmingham Digital Futures

Conclusion

This year has seen us increase our reach at the University, with the BEAR Champion group expanding into new areas, and University events returning to pre-Covid levels. The next year will be busy with expanding our training workshops to provide additional support to meet demand and raising awareness of the new workshops. It has been great to offer new opportunities to PhD students to develop their skills, such as through an internship, and we hope to further encourage young people to pursue a career in High Performance Computing by offering work experience. Work in research data management and the open research area continues, and advocacy will be required around new UoB policies, such as the [Open Research Statement](#).

Appendix

Figure 1 The types of queries dealt with per college via 154 1:1 sessions held in 2023. Researchers from the college of EPS had the most 1:1 queries, storage was the most common query from all colleges.

Colleges = MDS – Medical and Dental Sciences, COSS – Social Sciences, LES – Life & Environmental Sciences, EPS – Engineering and Physical Sciences, CAL – Arts and Law.

