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NDRIO and the Canadian Digital Research Infrastructure Strategy

by Caroline Winter | 24 April 2020 | English, Observations, Observations and Responses | 0 comments



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This observation was written by Caroline Winter, with thanks to Jonathan Bengtson and Janet Halliwell for their feedback and contributions.

At a glance:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Title | Digital Research Infrastructure Strategy |
| Creator | Government of Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) Canada |
| Publication Date | n/a |
| Keywords | Canadian government, data management, open data |

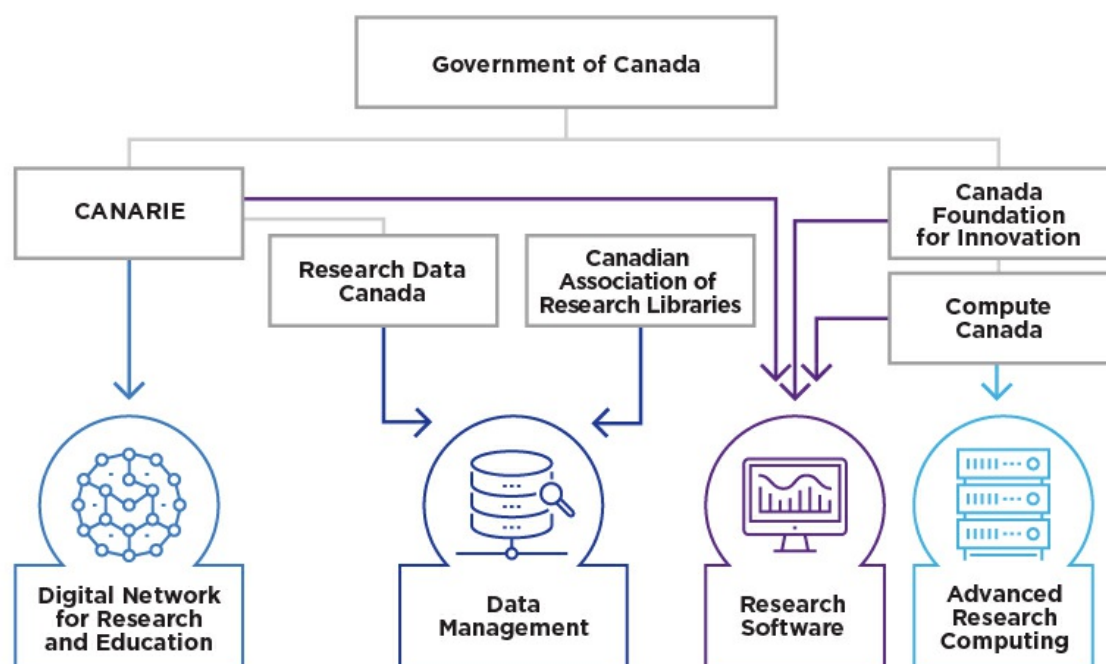
As reported in “[How the 2018 Federal Budget Impacts Research in Canada](#),” the Government of Canada’s 2018 federal budget included \$572.5 million to fund a Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) Strategy. This DRI Strategy supports data management, research software, advanced research computing (ARC), and other digital research infrastructure in Canada.

The [DRI Strategy](#), a program of [Innovation, Science and Economic Development \(ISED\) Canada](#), has five key components:

- Providing \$375 million to fund a new, national, not-for-profit RDI organization
- Investing \$145 million in [CANARIE](#)
- Investing \$50 million to expand ARC capacity at the five existing national host sites: McGill University, Simon Fraser University, the University of Toronto, the University of Victoria, and the University of Waterloo
- Ongoing support for highly qualified personnel in the field of DRI
- Clarifying the roles of provincial and institutional DRI stakeholders (Government of Canada 2019a).

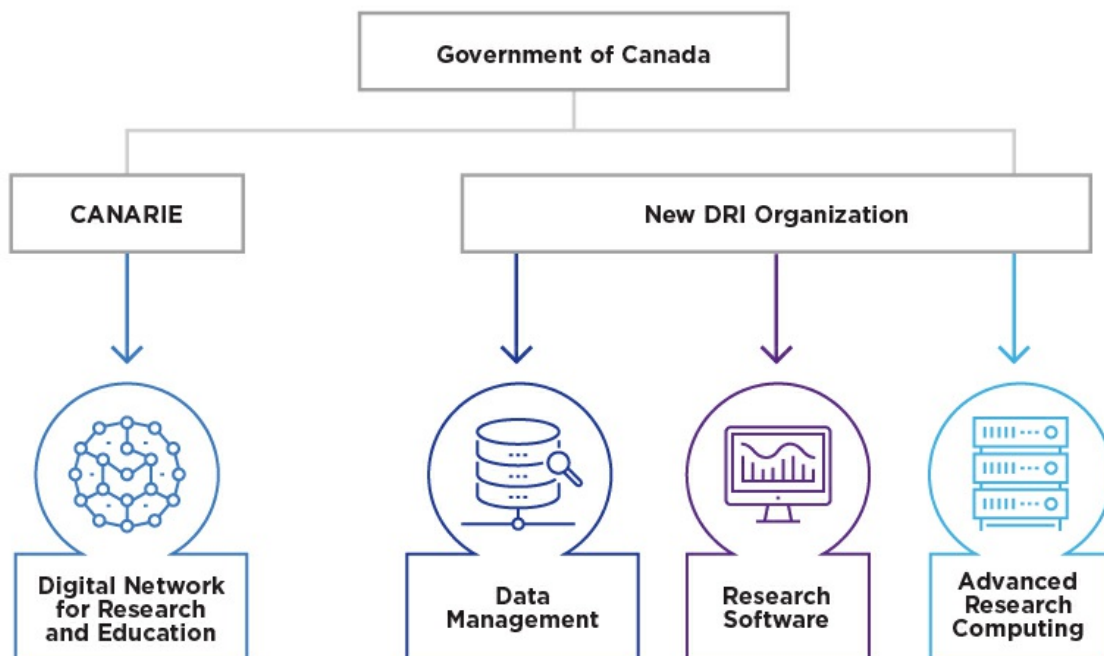
The creation of a new DRI organization will restructure the DRI landscape in Canada, streamlining the existing system and adding a national layer, as shown in figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1: Current National Digital Research Infrastructure Landscape



Source: Government of Canada, [Digital Research Infrastructure](#)

Figure 2: Future National Digital Research Infrastructure Landscape



Source: Government of Canada, [Digital Research Infrastructure](#)

The New DRI Organization (NDRIO–NOIRN)

The creation of a new national RDI organization is the cornerstone of the RDI Strategy. In response to the call for proposals issued in April 2019, the U15 Group of Research Universities [announced the creation of a steering group](#) to develop a proposal for this new organization. After consulting with the research community, that steering group (known as the Applicant Board) submitted a [proposal](#) in May 2019, which was approved.

From September–November 2019, the Applicant Board conducted a series of [community consultations](#) about the membership and governance structures of the new organization, dubbed NDRIO–NOIRN (New Digital Research Infrastructure Organization – Nouvelle Organisation de l’Infrastructure de Recherche Numérique). The Board posted a [Summary of these consultations](#) in fall 2019.

In December 2019, NDRIO shared its [Governance and Membership Model](#). A service delivery model and transition plan is under development, with support from Compute Canada (Westgrid 2020).

NDRIO officially launched at a Special Members’ Meeting on March 11, 2020. It has over 300 full and associate institutional founding members from more than 135 institutions (Westgrid 2020; Rankin 2020). The 15-member board of directors, elected at this meeting, is chaired by [Janet Davidson](#) and co-chair [Peter MacKinnon](#). NDRIO’s [Corporate Plan 2020–2021](#) and other governance documents are available [on its website](#).

The DRI Strategy and the INKE Community

The DRI Strategy and the formation of NDRIO will restructure the digital research landscape in Canada, and it will affect the [Canadian Association of Research Libraries \(CARL\)](#) and [Compute Canada](#) directly. Compute Canada will continue to be funded until March 31, 2022, after which many of its functions will transfer to NDRIO (Government of Canada 2019b).

CARL will continue to provide institutional RDM support, but national-level RDM responsibilities will be eventually transitioned from Research Data Canada (RDC) and CANARIE to NDRIO (Government of Canada 2019b).

NDRIO’s members include several INKE partners: the [Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences](#), the [Canadian Research Knowledge Network \(CRKN\)](#), CARL, and Compute Canada. INKE member

Constance Crompton gave a talk on “[Research Infrastructure in HSS](#)” at the Special Members’ meeting in March 2020.

The DRI Strategy and Open Scholarship in Canada

As noted in a [Canadian Foundation for Innovation report](#) from 2015, many of the challenges related to the changing DRI ecosystem in Canada involve a shift in mindset toward greater openness and collaboration, such as a shift in thinking about “My data” to “Our data,” from “Priorities of the individual” to “Priorities of the collective,” and from “A ‘fragmented’ DRI ecosystem” to “A ‘distributed’ DRI ecosystem” (CFI 2015).

Although the DRI Strategy does not address open scholarship specifically, it emphasizes the need for improved infrastructure to enable greater data sharing and collaboration, and to improve the discoverability and accessibility of research data.

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