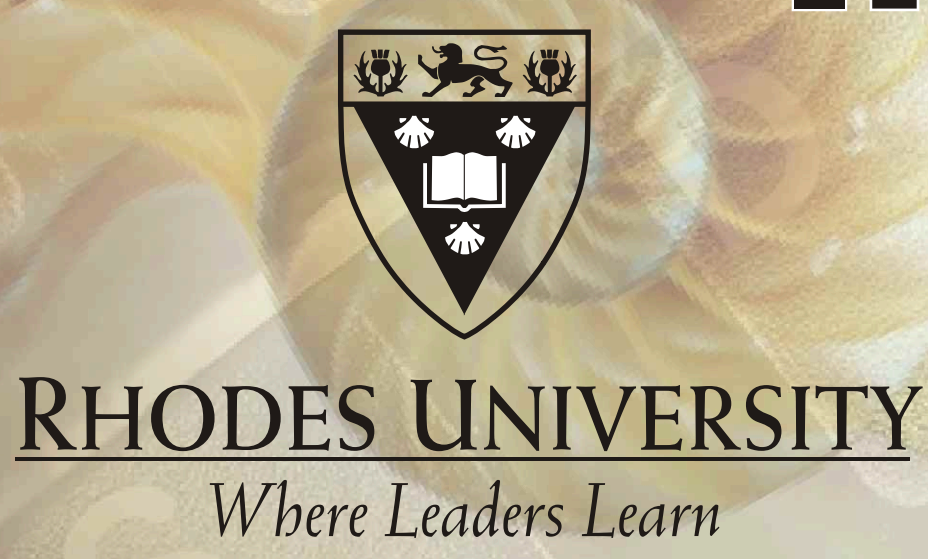


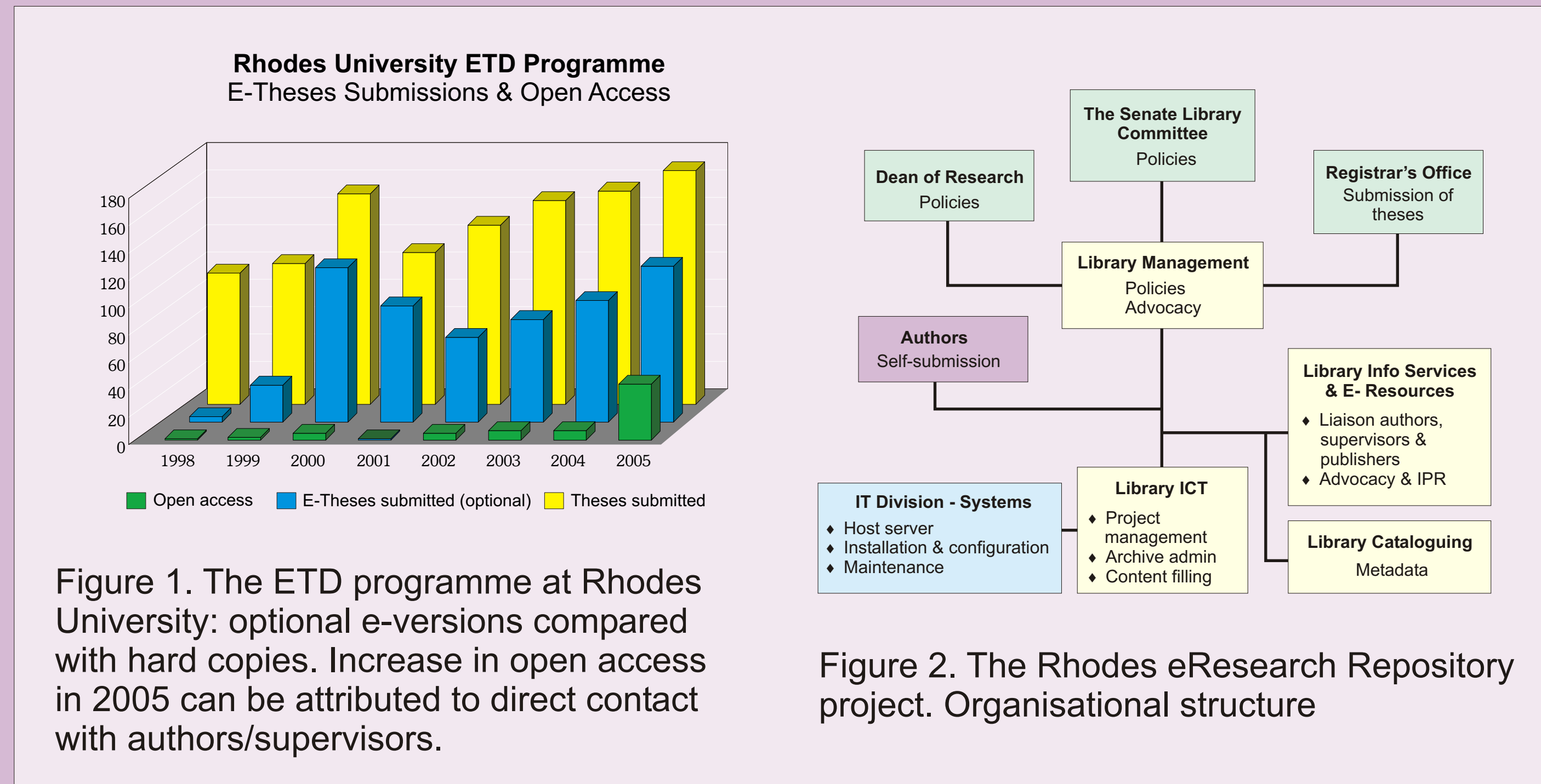
Implementing an EPrints repository system at a small South African university



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ABSTRACT

This presentation gives a descriptive and analytical overview of the implementation of the Rhodes eResearch Repository system at Rhodes University, building on an ETD programme started in 1998 (Fig.1). This project involves staff from Rhodes University Library and the Information Technology Division, with the approval of the Dean of Research (Fig.2).



With the support of Management and a strong university IT culture of using open source software, Rhodes University Library planned the implementation of the system without major bureaucratic obstacles. We did, however, experience limited budgetary support and severe staff constraints.

This poster aims to encourage institutions with very limited resources to start IR programmes and emphasizes the short space of time required "to get up and go".

INTRODUCTION

Rhodes is the smallest university in South Africa, with approximately 6200 students, and views its small size as a distinct advantage. The University has a strong research and teaching profile and IT infrastructure. The Rhodes eResearch Repository was implemented early in 2005 and was designed to hold the academic and research output of the Rhodes University community.

Rhodes Library started to investigate open access institutional repositories in 2004 and was encouraged by various open access initiatives to proceed with installing a system immediately. National initiatives were organized by SASLI (South African Site Licensing Initiative): the Open Access Scholarly Communication Conference was held in Pretoria in June 2004 and this was followed up with an IR Workshop in May 2005.

After configuring and customizing the system, strategies for content filling before launching the repository were

- ◆ to add all open access theses from the existing ETD collection
- ◆ to showcase a sample collection of journal articles: the South African Journal of Science dedicated a centenary issue to Rhodes University in 2004. (Fig.3) These research papers by Rhodes scientists form the basis of the journal article collection.



Figure 3. Rhodes centenary issue of the South African Journal of Science, Vol. 100, No. 11/12, Nov/Dec 2004. Source of first articles deposited in the repository.



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THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Software selection

Several software options were considered, including our library system's media management module and its own IR product (still in development), but we concluded that open access could not satisfactorily be promoted by using proprietary software. The choice was clearly between the 2 most widely used open source IR systems, GNU EPrints and DSpace, which both met our criteria. EPrints was the system which could best be supported on campus at no extra cost.

Test Phase using old server (Sept - Dec 2004)

New server installed (end January 2005)

- ◆ P4 3.0 Ghz, 2 Gb RAM, 160 Gb Serial ATA HDD;
- ◆ Running on: MySQL, Apache Webserver, PERL, mod_perl, XML, DOM, ParaCite, GNU EPrints 2.3.12

Configuring & customizing the software (Feb - March 2005)

Examples: self-archiving registration limited to current staff and students, additional browse views by faculty and eprint type, etc (Fig.4)

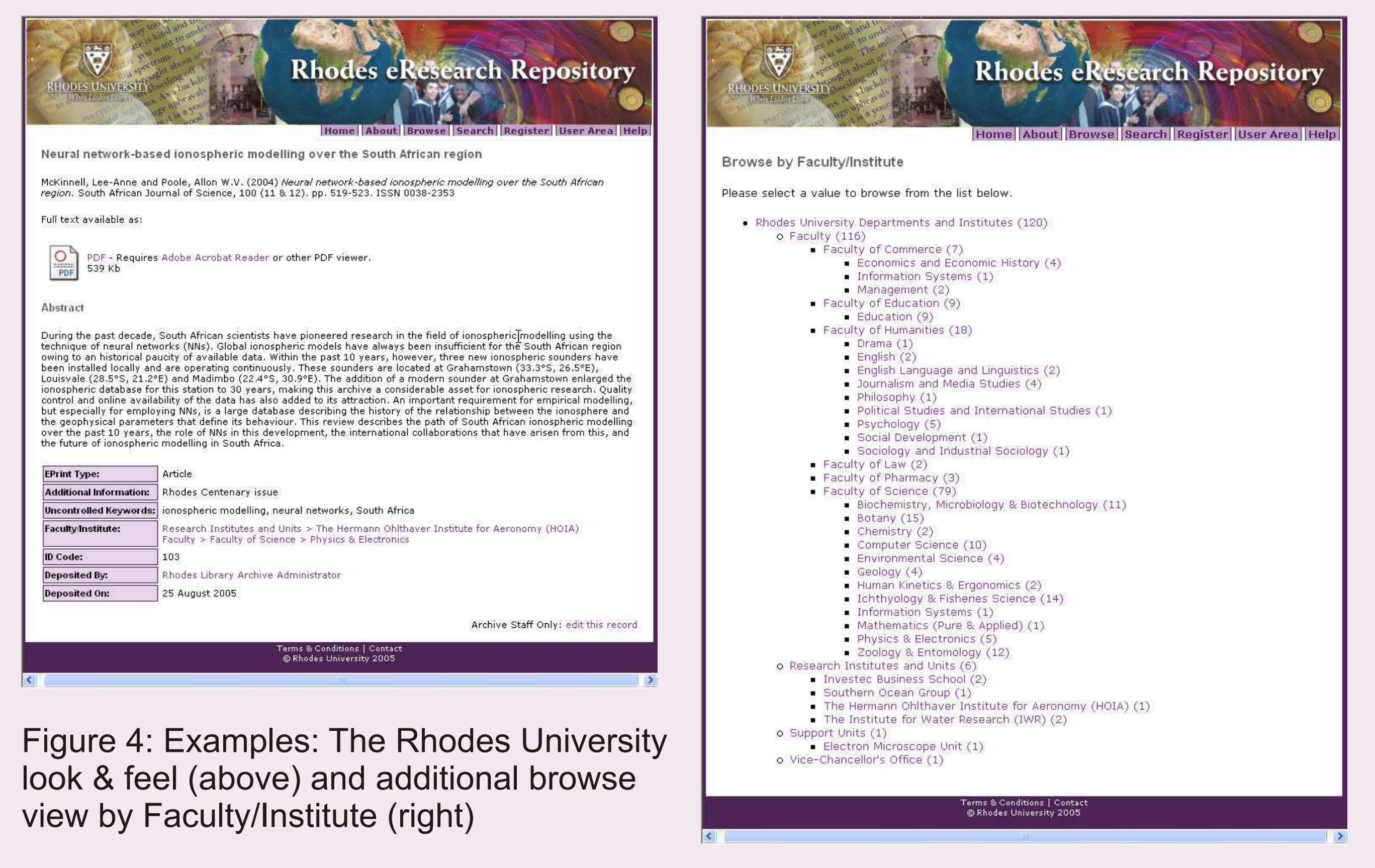


Figure 4: Examples: The Rhodes University look & feel (above) and additional browse view by Faculty/Institute (right)

Filling the repository (April 2005 -)

- ◆ theses - all open access ETDs from the existing collection
 - ◆ journal articles - showcase a sample collection of research papers
- Policies & Configuring OAI Interface (in progress)
Launch (planned for end 2005)

RESULTS

Initial experiences with the software

- ◆ stable and reliable system
- ◆ frequent enhancements and updates installed without affecting changes made to the system; no downtime required
- ◆ extensive documentation
- ◆ large user community
 - ◆ listservs (technical & "underground")
 - ◆ community wiki
- ◆ expenses minimal

Authors' responses were encouraging. For the sample journal article collection the Library obtained permission for open access from the publisher and 32 of the 33 authors so far. Some of these authors offered all their papers for depositing. We have already found a few self-archived works in the submission buffer, without promoting the repository.

CONCLUSIONS

- ◆ The technical part of starting an IR program is relatively easy and can be done with very limited resources within a short space of time.
- ◆ Future enhancements in other IR systems need to be monitored and compared closely. Ensure that data can migrate between systems.
- ◆ Requests for access restriction are difficult to administer and against the principle of open access. Rather delay deposit until open access is approved.
- ◆ The challenge will undoubtedly be to promote the repository amongst prospective authors and to take their concerns about open access seriously.
- ◆ Promote open access by approaching authors, supervisors and publishers directly.
- ◆ The impact of making research output available to a global audience may be difficult to measure and will take time.
- ◆ Institutions with limited resources should be encouraged to start similar IR programmes, eg within regional consortia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- ◆ Guy Halse, Systems Manager, IT Division, Rhodes University
- ◆ Bronwyn McLean, Graphics Services Unit, Rhodes University
- ◆ GNU EPrints is free software developed by the University of Southampton, England