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The Emerging Role of Institutional CRIS in Facilitating Open Scholarship

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This paper describes the evolution of institutional CRIS (Current Research Information Systems) from their traditional role as a tool managed by the Research Office to manage and assess research towards more widespread uses within institutions, in particular within the Library, to facilitate Open Science.

Open Science or Scholarship is one of the hottest topics around. Organisations and funders from the G8 down stress the importance of openness in driving everything from global innovation through to more accountable governance; not to mention the more direct possibility that non-compliance could result in grant income drying up for individual researchers.

We will focus on the UK, using St Andrews as a detailed example, describing the organisational, procedural and technological responses to this 'open by default' agenda, and why and how the Library is taking a leading role in these changes.

We have had a CRIS since 2006, evolving in tandem with the rapidly changing external policies and slower cultural shifts towards more and more open access to research outputs. The CRIS is a tool for managers but increasingly for researchers too. The latter are key to addressing some of the challenges we face as institutions in developing strategies to support Open Scholarship. The CRIS provides a single portal bringing corporate and academic research activity together, reducing duplicate data entry, increasing data quality, identifying authority sources of information and recording complex relationships between researchers, projects, outputs and impact.

Increasingly a CRIS is the primary bibliographic record and a similar role is emerging for research data. The Library has a key role to play in curating, preserving and sharing the metadata and digital objects produced as a result of research undertaken at the Institution. Arguably the Library is also key to bridging the gap between the research process itself and its more traditional end of life curation, archiving and preservation role. In particular with research data management the challenge is to understand sufficiently the common and discipline-specific research processes in order to engage with researchers at the appropriate times and with the appropriate skills and advice.

At St Andrews we are exploring the use of our CRIS to help build these contacts with researchers both with Open Access and Open Data throughout the lifecycle and the paper will report on both the successes achieved and issues encountered.

Author biographies

Anna Clements was appointed Assistant Director of Library Services at University of St Andrews, to head up the new Digital Research Division created in April 2015. The Division brings together Open Access & Research Publications Support, Research Data Management, Digital Humanities and Research Computing. There is also a remit to develop Bibliometric and Digital Science support services.

Anna moved to the Library from IT Services in 2013. In IT Services she held posts as Programme Manager, Data Architect and Enterprise Architect and was also co-opted to serve as Senior Research Policy Advisor in 2011. Prior to joining the University in 2003, Anna had over 20 years experience working as a consultant, software developer and project manager designing and building systems for a variety of SMEs, and UK/ US educational and academic publishers.

Her current role consolidates her skills and expertise in data management, research information management and policy development. She is a tireless advocate, within the University and (inter)nationally of the basic management information principles of entering data once and using open standards to improve data quality whilst minimizing the data collection burden across the research sector.

Externally, Anna is Executive for strategy on the euroCRIS Board (www.eurocris.org), a member of the Snowball Metrics Steering Committee (www.snowballmetrics.com) and chairs the Pure UK Strategy Group and the CASRAI-UK Data Management Planning Working Group (www.casrai.org)

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Jackie Proven is Repository and Open Access Services Manager at the University of St Andrews Library, in the new Digital Research Division created in April 2015. Jackie manages the integration of the University's Current Research Information System (Pure) with the institutional research repository (<https://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk>), and co-ordinates the University's central funding for open access. She manages the open access support team, helping researchers to comply with funder mandates and providing advice on copyright, licensing and publisher policies relating to open access.

Jackie is also responsible for development and promotion of new repository services which support scholarly communication and increase the visibility of research outputs. These services include the Library's Journal Hosting Service which enables academic staff and students to set up their own open access journals. Jackie has been a passionate advocate for open access for over 10 years and worked on a Jisc Digital Repositories Project in 2005–07 which investigated issues around open educational resources. She had experience of developing policies and infrastructure for institutional repositories at two other universities before joining St Andrews in 2010. Jackie is currently working on a Jisc OA Good Practice Project (<http://libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/loch>), is a member of the Pure Repositories Working Group and the IRUS-UK Community Advisory Group (www.irus.mimas.ac.uk).