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Catalogue and Index

Editorial

June 2012, Issue 167

Those of us who don't work in academic institutions might find repositories a bit of an unknown entity. In this issue we hope to solve your dilemma – we give you everything you always wanted to know about repositories but were afraid to ask. We start with articles by Gareth Johnson and Jackie Wickham that provide some background information, and follow up with more personal articles from a variety of practitioners that give a flavour of what it's like managing a repository, dealing with classification problems, and moving from cataloguing into repository management. We hope these will answer most of your questions. Finally, we include a review of a seminar and a book review.

Cathy Broad

library@ethicalsoc.org.uk

Heather Jardine

heatherjardine402@hotmail.com



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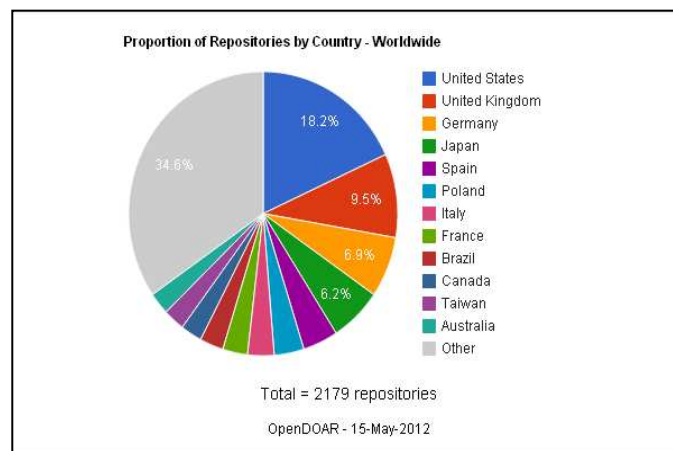
The Repositories Support Project

Jackie Wickham, Project Coordinator, Repositories Support Project

The Repositories Support Project is funded by JISC to support the development of research repositories in the UK. It began in September 2006 and has contributed to building repository capacity, knowledge and skills within UK higher education institutions. Through providing guidance and advice it benefits the whole of the UK sector resulting in the wider take-up and development of institutional repositories in HEIs.

The ongoing aim of the project is to progress the vision of a deployed network of interoperable repositories for academic papers, learning materials and research data across the UK. Whilst fulfilling the business requirements of HEIs to manage their assets, showcase research outputs, and share learning materials, such a network of populated repositories is a major step forward in the provision of open access materials.

The UK has been a real success story thanks to the investment provided through JISC¹ and by higher education institutions themselves. There are now 208 UK repositories registered in OpenDOAR², 9.5% of worldwide registrations.



Over the last few years institutional repositories have become well established and ubiquitous but they face two major challenges. The first is to encourage and increase the amount of full text (most repositories accept metadata only records as well as those with a full text attachment). The second is to ensure that the repository is integrated with other university systems, especially research information systems, and there is some anecdotal evidence that higher levels of integration lead to an increase in the number of full text deposits in the repository.

Last year, the RSP published the Embedding Guide which aims to support repository staff and help them meet these challenges. This website is a practical guide to embedding the repositories into institutional processes, systems and culture. Research repositories in higher education need to demonstrate value to their institutions and researchers. This means a close alignment with the institution's strategic aims and the provision of services which help researchers with their own day-to-day work. The repository can help support the institution in, for example, reporting for the Research Excellence Framework, promoting the university as a research leader and increasing engagement with businesses and the community. The guide has collated the learning and experience of previous projects and activity in the UK. It includes video interviews with key people and a self-assessment tool which provides an "embedded score". This can also be a useful catalyst for beginning discussion on how to integrate the repository and a vehicle for engaging those who need to be involved in planning and implementation.

Looking through the guide and self-assessment tool, it is evident that the U.K. has developed a solid infrastructure surrounding institutional repositories both within and between institutions; As a whole, the Embedding Repositories guide and self-assessment tool is an excellent starting point for any repository wanting to take its services to the next level."³

This recent development builds on the RSP's established provision of practical and timely support to the repository community through its training events, outreach programme, website information and helpdesk. During the course of the project, the majority of UK higher education institutions have received support in one or more of these ways.

The highest profile activity is the events programme⁴. Some statistics: the RSP has organised 40 events (including seven residential schools), with 1,322 delegates from 229 organisations. Events are designed to support staff at all levels. For technicians, workshops on DSpace and Eprints have been provided; these are the two big open source software packages in use in the UK. Advocacy forms a large part of the work of those employed in repositories and therefore skills training to support this has featured prominently in the programme – this has included techniques for effective promotion and an opportunity to share experience with staff in other institutions. For managers, there is a more strategic focus. For example, at the Winter School in February 2011, the programme included the topic of integrating the repository in the institution at a number of levels including policies, systems and the culture. It had a particular emphasis on research management systems and processes – it included an afternoon looking at case studies at a number of institutions. The feedback from participants is really positive – overall 98% of respondents have rated our events as Very good or Good. The following comment exemplifies this:

“This has to have been one of the best work-related courses I've attended. Not only do I feel that I have taken on board an enormous amount of information that is directly relevant to my job - and intellectually stimulating to boot - but I feel I have made contact with a supportive network of colleagues. All this, perfectly organised, and a faultless, fabulous environment, too. Outstanding. Thank you!”



Residential schools

A recent development has been the introduction of webinars using Adobe Connect. This has proved extremely successful and meets the needs of the community:

“Great format. Really liked being able to attend a relevant awareness session from the comfort of my desk! Much better than travelling miles. I liked the way the session was set up with questions & answers allowed at the end.”

Two webinars were delivered by Professor Charles Oppenheim on copyright issues with 58 and 72 attendees respectively and a third was presented by Scott Lapinski on “Advocacy on implementing funders’ mandates”

with 35 attendees. More are planned for June and July; two will feature case studies from UK institutions on promoting their repositories and a third on using bibliometrics to demonstrate the importance of the institution's research. An additional advantage of the webinars is that they are recorded and made available as a resource for those who could not attend.

Consultancy visits provide individually tailored advice and support – 90 since the beginning of the project. The flavour of these can range from basic advice on setting up a repository through to a more topical approach with an established repository – for example reviewing an advocacy strategy or looking at workflows.

The helpdesk, telephone and e-mail, is available to answer individual queries and a Buddy Scheme puts people in touch with colleagues who may be able to offer advice and assistance, often someone who is in a similar position – perhaps in terms of repository development or geographical locality.

People can also consult the RSP website which has a wealth of information about setting up and developing repositories. This includes a detailed comparison of software providers⁵ which is very useful to those setting up. There is a wide range of briefing papers, which are succinct guides to the main areas of repository development, and a blog on topical issues. Details of all events are publicised on the website and the presentations archived as ongoing reference material. This is well-used with over 25,000 visitors in the last year, mostly from the UK but also across the world – from 140 countries. There is a community wiki⁶ containing detailed information about individual research repositories. The content is based on the questions asked by repository staff – for example, who provides a fully mediated deposit on behalf of academics? What is the % of full text in repositories? It answers those questions and each institution is able to edit their entry to keep it current.

The traditional view of repositories is that they are mainly populated with research articles, and textual material does form the majority of item types in repositories. However, there have been a number of projects and initiatives to develop repository software to accommodate and display non-text materials such as those produced in creative arts institutions and departments. These researchers are often very keen to deposit their work as long as it is presented on the web in a high quality and professional way. The JISC funded KULTUR⁷ project and spin offs such as KULTIVATE⁸ have taken repositories to new levels improving the appearance and metadata associated with such objects. The University of the Arts, London⁹ and University of the Creative Arts¹⁰ are good examples. The RSP website has a section¹¹ which collates information and resources on this topic.



In the latter half of the project, the RSP has made extensive use of social media to publicise its activities and enhance the website. The blog and Twitter channel are linked so that all blog posts are tweeted. Twitter is also used to promote events. News items, reports, and press releases on the topic of open access are curated daily using Scoop.it!¹³ and displayed on the home page.

There are some examples¹⁴, although not many, of similar support services in other countries. One of these is Japan and in January this year, Jackie Wickham, RSP team member, was invited to speak at a meeting of the Digital Repository Federation at Hokkaido University. This is described in detail on the RSP blog¹⁵. This resulted in an agreement between the UK (RSP and the United Kingdom Council of Repositories) and Japan (DRF) committing the organisations to sharing experience and expertise and maximising opportunities for joint exchanges.

For further information about the RSP contact Jackie Wickham and Nancy Pontika at support@rsp.ac.uk or visit the website at www.rsp.ac.uk .

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