Research Communications Strategy Project

Want to know more?

The Research Communications Strategy project is a JISC-funded activity working to identify current issues in research communications, to generate responses at a strategic level and to develop an understanding of the processes of advocacy for open access within the sector. We welcome feedback from all interested parties.

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Current Issues in Research Communications: the Power of Open Access

Researchers in all disciplines want their research to be known and their expertise recognised. A recent report by the Royal Society states:

Science thrives on openness – the free exchange of ideas, knowledge and data. Changes to the way that information is shared are already accelerating developments in certain disciplines and creating new approaches to research. This openness can create a tension with the need to capture and exploit intellectual property. But it also presents an opportunity for scientific collaboration and innovation.[1]

Open access research communication is one way in which this free exchange of ideas can be achieved. Open access can have a positive effect on knowledge transfer and bring consequent economic benefits for the UK as a whole.

[1]*The Royal Society, 2010. The Scientific Century: Securing our Future Prosperity, p.39.*

Costs and savings: can open access bring financial benefits to institutions?

Recent reports have shown that open access can offer financial advantages, both to institutions and to the national economy. For institutions, open access has the potential to deliver long-term cost savings and benefits. Open access also has a part to play in building the knowledge economy and encouraging research commercialisation and exchange.

See Houghton et al, **Economic Implications of Alternative Scholarly Publishing Models:** *http://bit.ly/bu3b1D and* **Modelling Scholarly Communication Options**, *a report for JISC by Alma Swan at Key Perspectives Ltd: http://bit.ly/cf7Kyr*

The knowledge economy: can open access be a national economic lever?

A recent report from the Royal Society underlines the need to encourage research commercialisation and knowledge exchange between the HE sector and the wider community. Open access can deliver clear benefits to collaborations between universities and industry.

See **The Scientific Century: securing our future prosperity:** *http://royalsociety.org/the-scientific-century*

The REF: how can open access repositories support the REF – and also create a better research environment for the future?

Repositories can contribute to an integrated research management environment that may be configured to support the REF process. A system of this kind may also provide the basis for the ongoing recording and dissemination of research output.

The JISC **Readiness for REF** *project (http://bit.ly/bE06tQ) is evaluating systems that capture and manage research outputs. For information on Current Research Information Systems go to the* **euroCRIS** *website at http://www.eurocris.org/public/home*

Open access publication costs: how can researchers be supported?

Researchers who are not in receipt of grants may have access to institutional open access publication funds. Another idea is for research funders to introduce a "publication period" at the end of a standard research grant, during which a specified percentage of the grant would remain available to help with open access publication costs.

The University of Nottingham has established a centralised open access publication fund. See Pinfield, Stephen, 2010. Paying for open access? Institutional funding streams and OA publication charges. **Learned Publishing**, *23/1 http://dx.doi.org/10.1087/20100108*

Support for open access processes: how can researchers, funders and support staff work together?

While a significant number of research funders require the placing of results in a repository, compliance rates may be as low as 40% or less. Compliance may be improved by developing more efficient models of information exchange between funders, repositories, research support staff and open access publication fund administrators. This can also facilitate the creation of a seamless workflow for researchers and encourage them to put their work into the repository as a matter of course.

Research Councils UK's position statement on access to research outputs can be read at http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/access/default.htm where links to policy statements from the various **Research Councils** *can also be found. The* **Wellcome Trust's** *open access policy is at http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/About-us/Policy/Spotlight-issues/Open-access*

The Research Communications Strategy project is addressing the issue of workflow planning. Please contact **amanda.hodgson@nottingham.ac.uk** *if you are interested in this development.*

Options for publication: which are most likely to harmonise the interests of researchers and publishers?

Traditional publishers (and learned societies) may be anxious about the effect of open access publishing on their activities and revenue streams. However those publishers providing open access to articles for an additional payment have found this to confer commercial benefit. Paid-for open access may usefully act as a transitional method of embedding open access publishing in the research process, until new economic models can be developed for research dissemination.

For information on publishers' policies on open access archiving, see the **RoMEO** *site at http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo. There is a* **Directory of Open Access Journals** *at http://www.doaj.org*

Research data: what are the challenges in storing and preserving large data sets?

Repository content is beginning to expand to include research data and links from this data to relevant research publications. Such data collections bring with them their own particular technical challenges and also raise questions about ownership. There is a need for institutions to develop data archiving policies, including guidance on storage, preservation, access and re-use.

For a survey of issues in digital preservation see Ball, A., 2010. **Review of the State of the Art of the Digital Curation of Research Data** *(a report from the Engineering Research Information Management (ERIM) Project), http://opus.bath.ac.uk/18774*

Services for institutional repositories: how can these best be developed?

Among the current issues for repository managers are: the need for repository searching to become embedded in the normal research practice of academic staff alongside more established methods of searching for information; and the preservation of digital material.

See **Overcoming Barriers: Access to Research Information Content**, *a report by the Research Information Network: http://bit.ly/5GT6Ig. The* **Repositories Support Project** *offers advice and training to repository managers: http://www.rsp.ac.uk*