

Internet

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RAE, institutional repositories and the Internet

How institutional repositories have impacted on preparation for the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise

This column examines my own journey in relation to the RAE¹ and the use of Internet resources to assist in the preparation of Kingston University's submission.

The RAE – Research Assessment Exercise – has as its primary purpose the production of quality profiles for each submission of research activity made by an institution. The four higher education funding bodies intend to use the quality profiles to determine their grant for research to the institution which they fund with effect from 2009-10. These submissions are supported by huge rafts of data about the university, student numbers and its research functions, as well as the physical evidence of each researcher's chosen research outputs – with a maximum of four outputs per researcher.

The first stage of this journey started back at the beginning of the 2005/6 academic year with the implementation of EPrints², an open-source software for building repositories. We were early implementers of this software, attending the first formal EPrints training programme back in September 2005. Kingston University Research Repository³ was officially launched in October 2006. Unfortunately, we were not able to benefit from the expertise within the Sherpa-LEAP project, and so have found our own way through the maze of software development, open access issues, copyright and the needs of our University researchers to arrive at the place we are now.

This place is slightly divergent from where many other institutional repositories are, in that:

- we are a metadata-only repository, which is not entirely in accordance of the aims of the open access movement
- we are exporting details of each research output from our repository to use within the RAE submission
- we accept a broad range of multimedia files, particularly for music- and arts-based outputs

Following the successful launch of our Research Repository, I started leading the second phase of the project, which was to populate the repository with details of our researchers' outputs. Initial population work was spread out among the subject teams within the University Library, with hands-on training sessions being provided to all subject teams, and briefing sessions to other teams with the Library. Advocacy work was limited to training sessions to specific research groups who requested them, a leaflet circulated to all members of Faculty; presentations at University Research Committee and Faculty Research Committee meetings; and links to the Repository from our external Research Web pages⁴.

It is here, in the autumn of 2006, that I decided to make use of Web technologies, which were fairly new to libraries. I decided to use a blog instead of e-mail to disseminate information, and tips and

¹ Rae2008 Research Assessment Exercise. Available at: <http://www.rae.ac.uk/> (Accessed: 24 September 2007).

² EPrints for digital repositories. Available at: <http://eprints.org> (Accessed: 24 September 2007).

³ Kingston University Research Repository (2007). Available at: <http://eprints.kingston.ac.uk> (Accessed: 24 September 2007).

⁴ The Kingston research environment (2007). Available at: <http://www.kingston.ac.uk/research/centres/index.htm> (Accessed: 24 September 2007).

tricks to the subject team members who were involved in the population project. This blog had a short active life, from January to May 2007, but could be used again in the future. It was an early exposure to the use of blogs to support library work for many of the population team, and was used by most of the team members. The blog was supplemented by a Delicious account containing links to a variety of useful websites. I promoted the use of Firefox for tabbed browsing. All these tools were used during the Repository training sessions. This provided a useful way of showing Web 2.0 applications in a real-life setting to a relatively large proportion of library staff in a short space of time.

The population team were working from academic's own lists of publications, and verification of these details provided some challenges ranging from errors in article titles, to complete flights of fancy concerning unwritten journal articles. A range of Web-based resources were used: Ulrich's Periodicals Directory was a reliable source for ascertaining which titles were or were not refereed, as well as checking ISSNs and journal Web addresses. Google Scholar was invaluable for being able to check a surprising number of book chapters, particularly when trying to ascertain the page ranges of chapters. However, our experience with DOIs has been somewhat mixed, with about 10% proving to be unresolvable. This has been a big disappointment as I had, naively, assumed that if something had a DOI provided, then it would work – but apparently not! It is also an expensive blow to us, because the RAE requirements for the submission of physical evidence need DOIs for journal articles, or a printed copy, so now we have to obtain printed copies of those articles with broken DOIs. Broken DOIs were reported to Cross Ref, but only one has so far been fixed. Intranet pages have been used to keep track of the progress of the Repository population project and, now, the collation of those physical outputs which will form part of the RAE submission.

The population part of the project has now been completed, and the results have been:

- ◆ Increased awareness of the range of sources and search techniques needed to verify or locate details of a range of research items, both in print and for arts-based research
- ◆ Increased awareness of the breadth of research being undertaken within the University
- ◆ Increased awareness amongst the University research community of skills and support the library can provide
- ◆ That a blog can successfully replace e-mails
- ◆ That academics have started to put in details of their own outputs into the Repository

This last point has been the most surprising, and gratifying, since advocacy opportunities have been limited. The issue of critical mass has certainly played a part; now that there is a core collection of items for each faculty, some academics want to supplement this.

In conclusion, the close association between the development of the Kingston University Research Repository and the RAE submission has proved to be both a driver and a constraint. It has enabled the Repository to be developed, with an appropriate level of staffing and a remit that benefits the research community. It has provided a momentum to its population. However, the RAE schedule has meant that we have not been able to evolve to keep up with developments in Repository management techniques, or new software versions. However, the future of the Research Repository seems assured, and 2008 should see further opportunities to move the Repository onto EPrints 3.0 and improve our service to the University research community.

Online Information and IMS 2007



Exhibitions

UKeiG will again be exhibiting at Online Information this year. The dates for your diary are December 4-6th, and the venue is the Olympia Grand Hall, London. We shall be on stand 734. Co-located with Online Information is Information Management Solutions 2007. Details of both events and how to register are on the [Online Information web site](#).



Online Information 2007 Conference – discounts for UKeiG members

Full details of the conference programme, which runs in parallel with the exhibition, are at <http://www.online-information.co.uk/online07/conferenceprogramme.html>.

There are discounts for UKeiG members.

Register up to the 9 November 2007 for the Association Super Early Bird discount and save 25%. Super Early Bird price: £579 + VAT

Register after the 10 November 2007 for the special Association Full Delegate rate and save 15%. Full Association price: £655 + VAT.

Further details are at <http://www.online-information.co.uk/online07/conferenceprices.html>