



Why the Web Never Took Off

Les Carr

IAM / EPrints

Abstract

- Many people think that the Web has revolutionised the lives of researchers and academics, but to a large extent it has failed.
- This seminar will describe
 - where it has fizzled out
 - explain some of the work that we are engaged in to fan the flames again
 - seek to re-ignite the explosive potential that the web architecture provides.

I Want to Tell You A Story

- It is a story of us
 - Researchers, students, academics
 - Knowledge workers
- It is very partial and ideosyncratic



If you are reading this on the Web, then you're probably wondering how a Web researcher can possibly claim that the Web has failed to have an impact on researchers.

This talk is about how researchers are failing to engage with the Web as writers, disseminators and information producers. This is evidenced in the worldwide attempts to provide Open Access via repositories and in the low priority that researchers give to maintaining accurate and up-to-date home pages and project pages on the web.

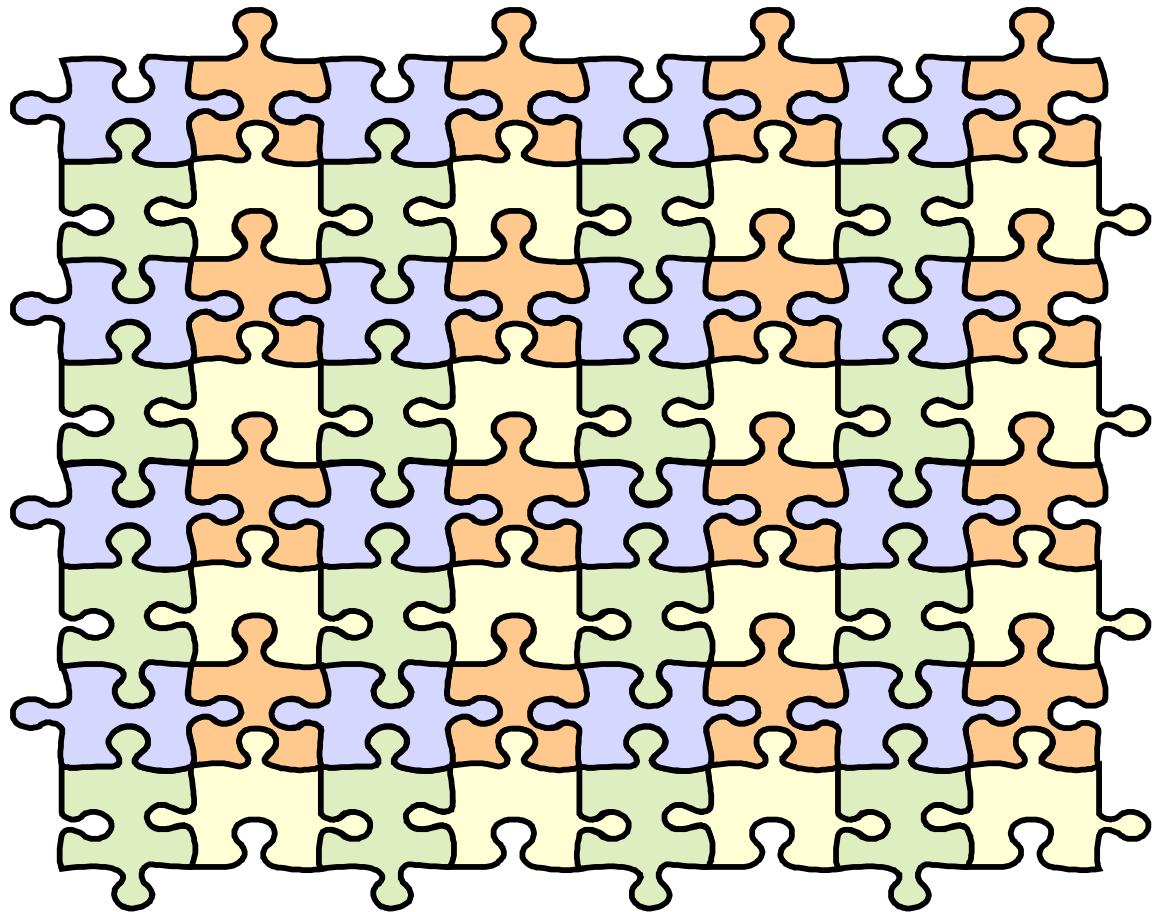
This talk pins the blame on the researchers' relationship to the publishing industry, and their dissociation from their own intellectual outputs. It raises the issue of responsibility in the context of research knowledge.

Plot of the Story (Part I)

- The literature
- Not accessible, subscription etc
- Open Access, Budapest
- Institutional Repositories
- Empty - too difficult to fill
- Conclusion - Open Access is wrong, repositories are too hard.
- Or is it?

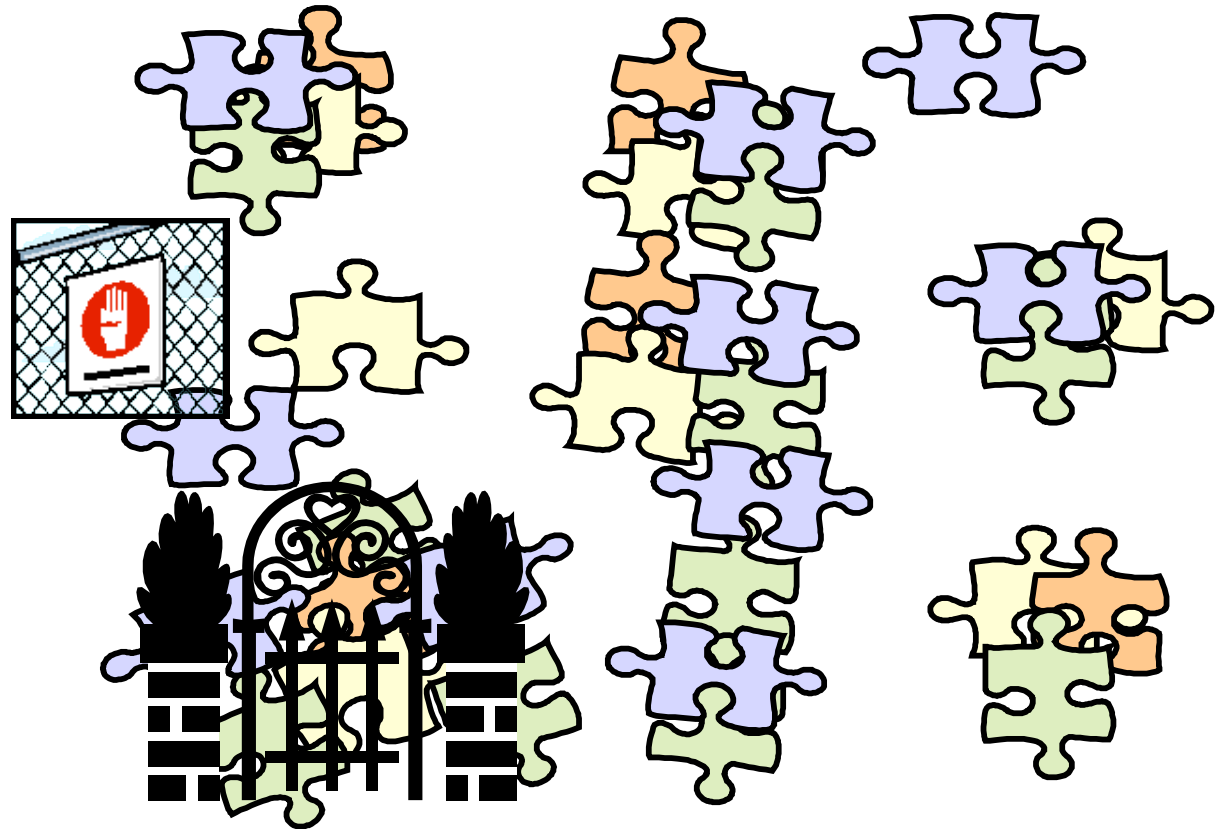
The Literature: As We Imagine

- Integrated
- Available



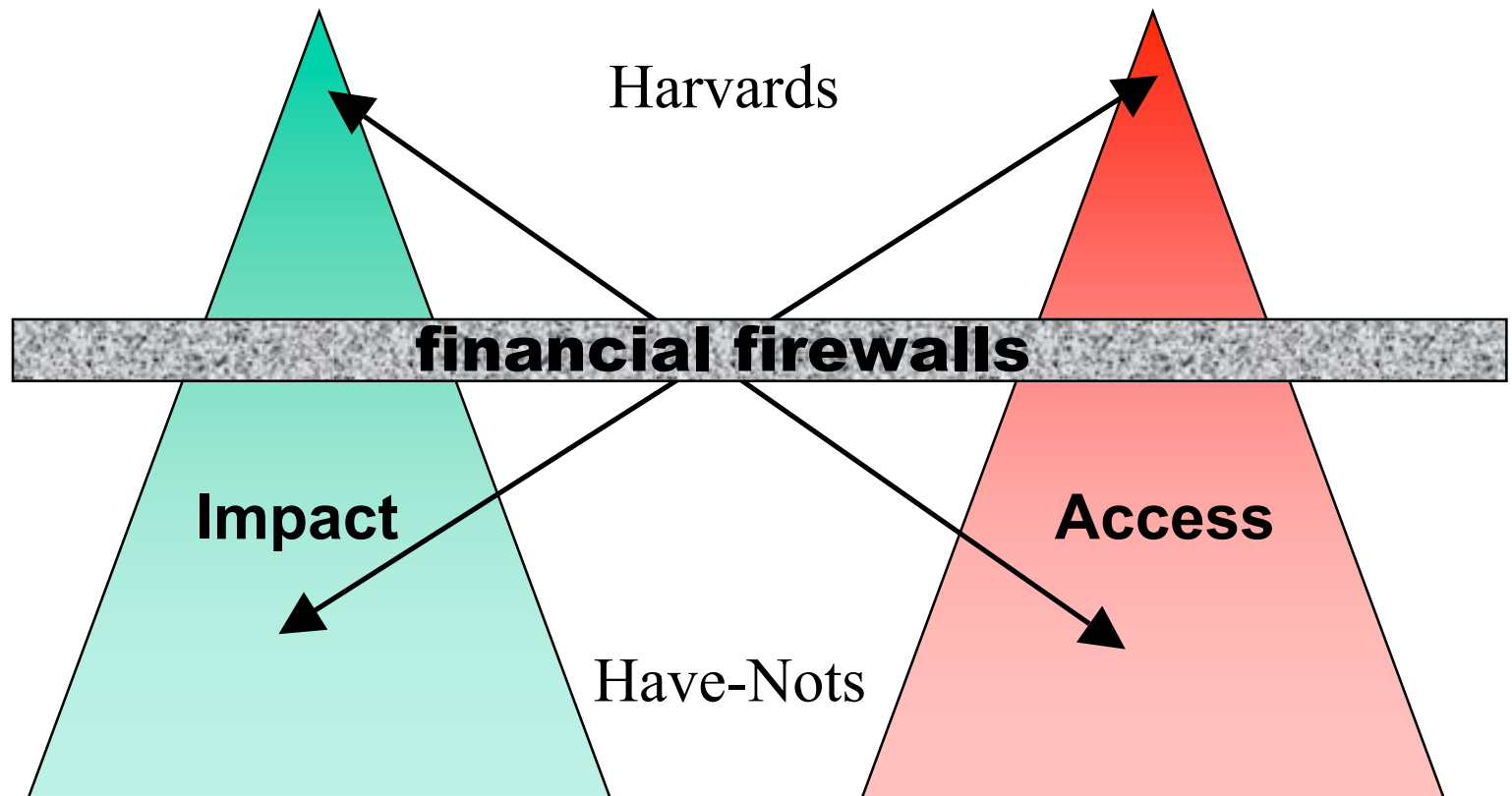
The Literature: As It Is

- Inaccessible
- Disjoint



The Twin Peaks Problem

- 24,000 journals with 2,500,000 articles/yr



The Budapest Open Access Initiative

- Old tradition of scholarly publishing
+
New technology of the Internet
=
• Public good: free and unrestricted access to
peer-reviewed journal literature



Budapest, December 2001

An Open Access Strategies

- **Green: Self-Archiving**

- Journals continue as normal
- Authors deposit a copy of their papers into an 'institutional repository'
- Public copy is a supplement to the publishers official article for those who can't afford a subscription
- Also an institutional record of its work for sharing, reuse, marketing etc

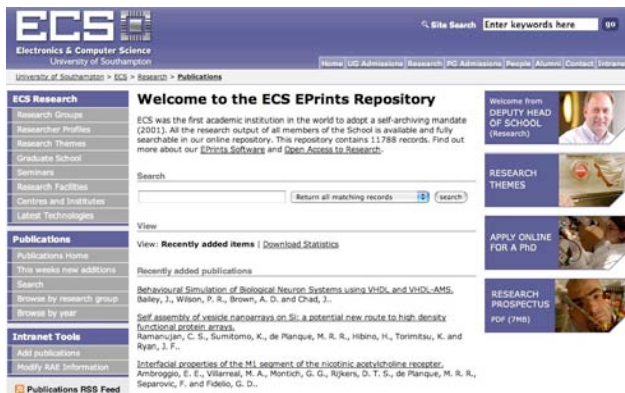
Fast Forward to Open Access

- The Optimal and Inevitable for Researchers.
 - The entire full-text refereed corpus online
 - On every researcher's desktop, everywhere
 - 24 hours a day
 - All papers citation-interlinked
 - Fully searchable, navigable, retrievable
 - For free, for all, forever

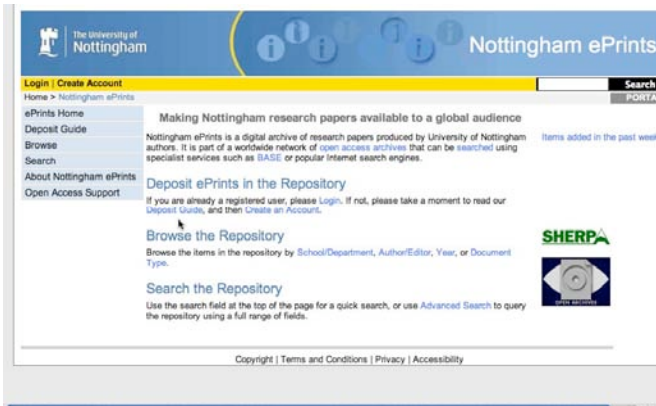
Stevan Harnad, Les Carr

OpCit International DLI Project Proposal (1999)

Problem



- ECS repository, 11,000 records, 4,000 full text, 80-100% open access to our research output.



- Average repository, 300 items, 200 full text, negligible research output
- Recent NIH request for OA achieved 4% compliance

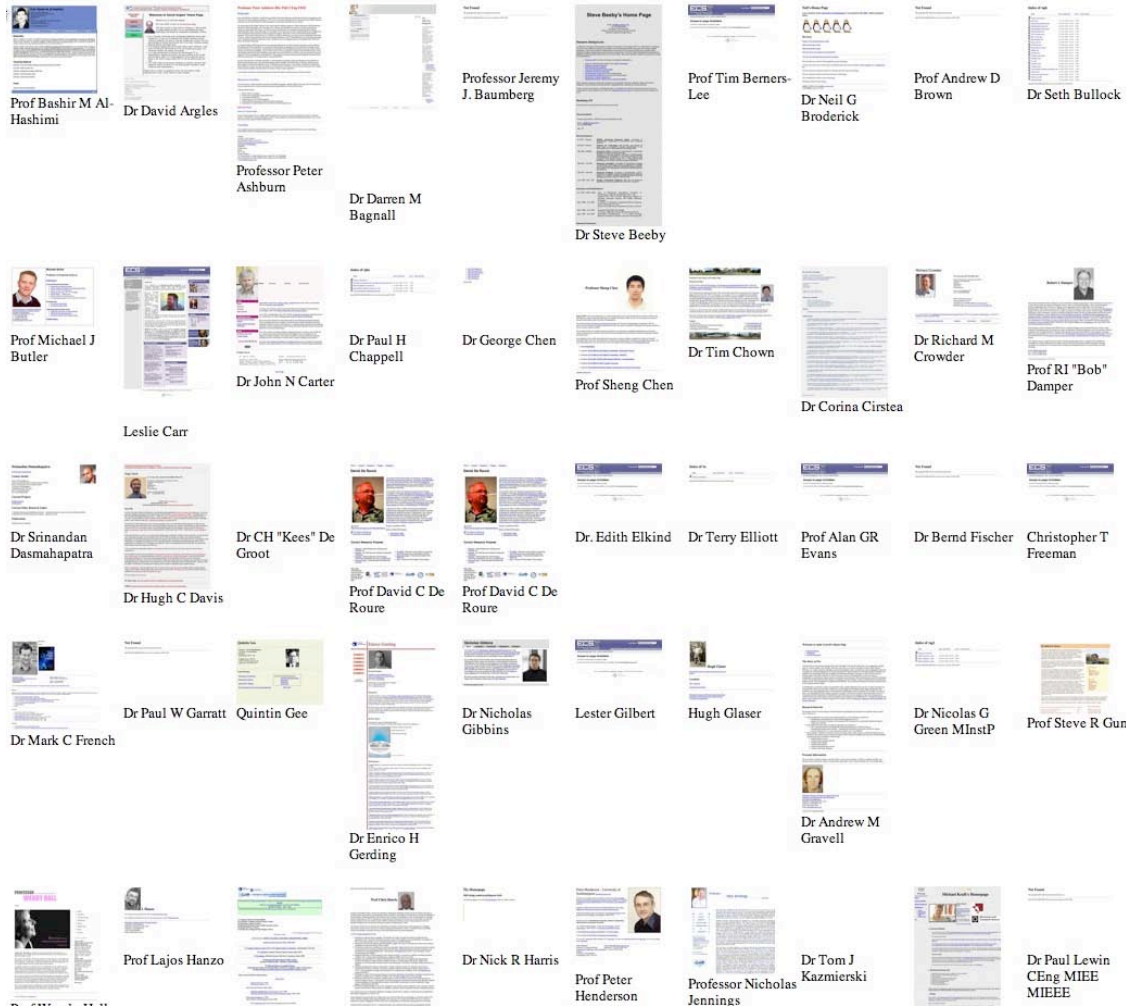
Cliffhanger

- Open Access is just too difficult
- Repositories are too difficult
- Only OA nutcases care

Plot of the Story (Part II)

- It's not just OA Repositories that aren't well used
- Neither are home pages, or project pages
- We don't make web dissemination a priority
- In a world of ubiquitous web use, we start to disappear

Home Sweet Home Page?



- 30% of ECS academics don't have working home page
- Neither do 20% of MIT professors

How Knowable Is Our Work?

- How does the outside world (external agents, e.g. journalists, industrialists, students, researchers) find out about us?
 - Google, linking
- Can you find joined up examples
 - BBC story links to researcher's home page links to their research links to opportunities for MSc and Postgraduate study - bingo!
 - No.
 - Not just us look at BBC tech stories about any uni.
 - Some researchers feel they don't need to care about the web.

Plot of the Story (Part III)

- Hypertext researchers go back to Vannevar Bush
- Let's also go back to HG Wells, a decade before
- Who is responsible for knowledge and how can it be found?
- Enter the villain!



H. G. Wells, *World Brain: The Idea of a Permanent World Encyclopaedia*,
Encyclopédie Française, August, 1937

- Encyclopaedias of the past sufficed for the needs of a cultivated minority
 - universal education was unthought of
 - gigantic increase in recorded knowledge
 - more gigantic growth in the numbers of human beings requiring accurate and easily accessible information

Permanent World Encyclopaedia

- Discontent with the role of universities and libraries in the intellectual life of mankind
- Universities multiply but do not enlarge their scope
 - thought & knowledge organization of the world
- **No obstacle** to the creation of an efficient index to *all* human knowledge, ideas and achievements



Vannevar Bush, *As We May Think* Atlantic Monthly, July 1945

- Director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development in USA, coordinating 6,000 American scientists during WW2
- Make our ‘bewildering store’ of knowledge more accessible
- “*For many years inventions have extended man’s physical powers rather than the powers of his mind.*”

Memex

- The Memex (never built) was to be a mechanised device to allow a library user to
 - consult all kinds of written material
 - organize it in any way the user wanted
 - add private comments and link documents together at will.
 -
- A personal library station which held *all* written articles and journals on microfilm.
 - system of levers allowed users to add links
 - create trails

Wells vs Bush

- **Wells** : a centralised, managed global knowledge repository to combat fragmenting academic authority.
- **Bush** : a *cross-disciplinary* scholarly paradigm to combat fragmenting scientific knowledge.

The Big Bad Wolf



- 1960s Robbins Report / expansion of higher education & expansion of science **budget**
- After the war **Robert Maxwell** decided to publish scientific journals and set up Pergamon Press which was quickly and hugely profitable. (BBC News)
- Up to this point, journal publishing was done by university presses and scholarly societies
- The New Demand made for a very profitable system - with an increasing number of commercial publishers moving into STM.

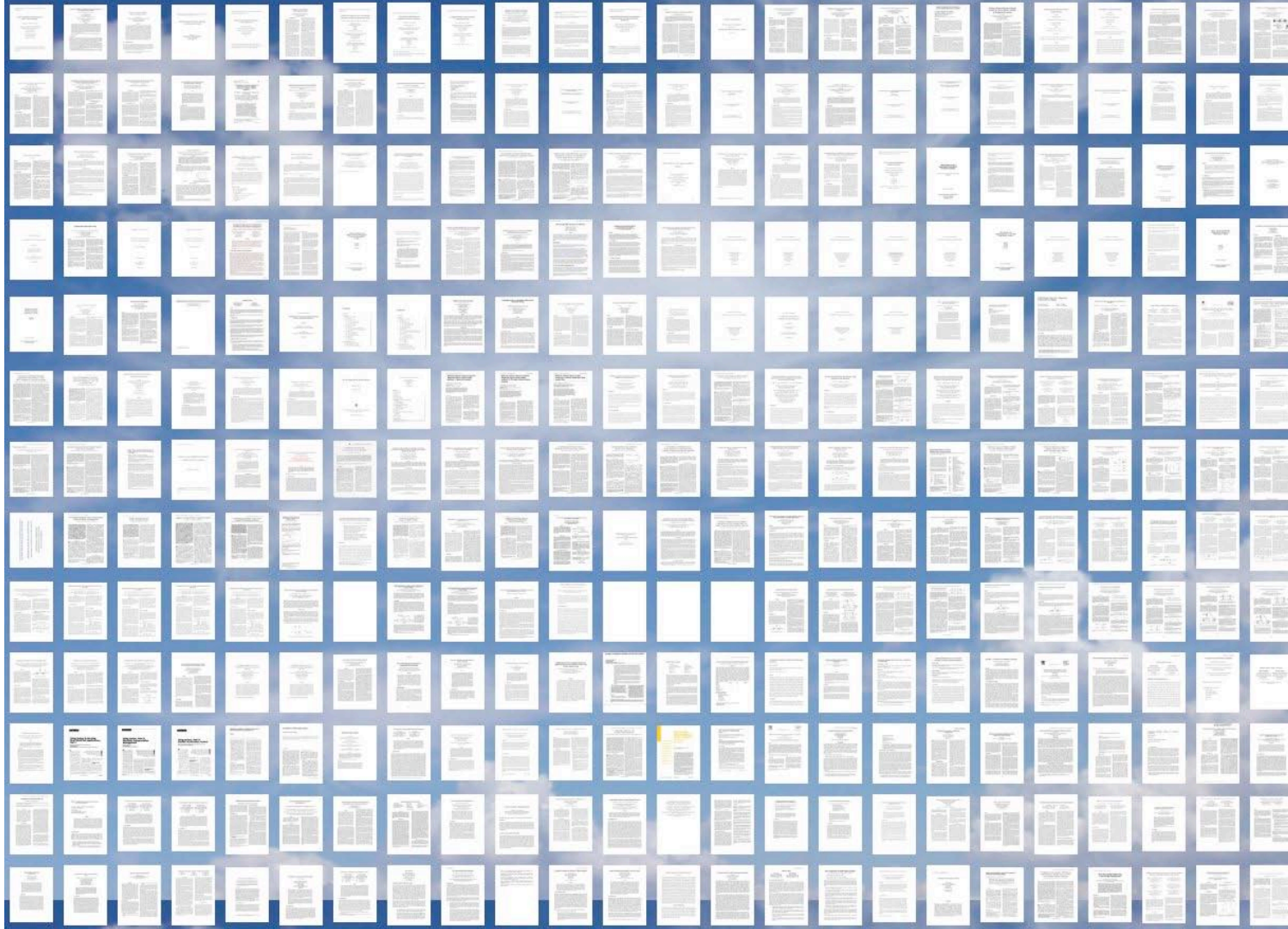
Plot of the Story (Part IV)

- Result is that universities further abdicated on their Wellsian responsibilities
 - Knowledge dissemination outsourced
 - Ownership of research materials given away
- Scholarly communications now largely in the hands of commercial concerns
- Popular imagination is that publishers do reviewing
 - Researchers are passive consumers of publishers output

Recapitulation Story $V = I$

- Who takes responsibility for curating the knowledge of the world?
- Back to OA & repositories - we do!
- The Institutional repository is a place where the members of an institution can curate their intellectual outputs / knowledge capital
 - Share
 - Use
 - Reuse
- The real Web revolution of ubiquitous knowledge will arrive.

Our Research (ECS)



Only a
small
part
(7%)

Hurrah!
The
goodies
are
winning!

Where There is No Vision, The People Perish *Proverbs 29:18*

Personal academic web pages
ad hoc and 2 years out of date
(on average!)

New! [BCS President - A Year in Pictures](#)



Professor Wendy Hall

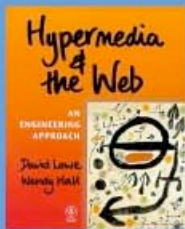
[Wendy Hall](#) is Professor of Computer Science at the [University of Southampton](#), UK. She was the founding Head of the [Intelligence, Agents, Multimedia \(IAM\) Research Group](#) in the [School of Electronics and Computer Science](#) at Southampton and is currently the Head of School.

Her research interests include the development of web technologies (particularly the Semantic Web), open hypermedia systems and link services, advanced knowledge technologies, digital libraries, multimedia information management, agent-based systems and human computer interaction. More information about her research interests and work can be found by looking at her [publications](#).

Her group developed the open hypermedia system, [Microcosm](#), which was commercially exploited through Multicosm Ltd. The Microcosm software was an ITEA'95 award winner and a BCS IT award winner in 1996. The company is now called [Active Navigation Ltd](#), and focuses on Web-based link services.

Wendy was awarded a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list in June 2000, and became a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering (FREng) in the same year. She is a Fellow of the British Computer Society (FBCS) and a

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[Career](#)

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Seminars Given and Upcoming

- [Web Science Briefing](#) (Wednesday 20th September, 2006)

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- [Churchill Archive Project](#)
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- [Perspectives in Electronic Publishing](#)
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- [Turing Archive Project](#)
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Automatic Mailing Lists	hod-all hog-all s-all acstaff-all b59-all examiners-all academic-all f-all supervisor-all
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Publications, PrePrints etc.

Number of items: 378.

Article

- Bailey, C., Hall, W., Millard, D. E. and Weal, M. J. (2007) [Adaptive Hypermedia through Contextualised Open Hypermedia Structures](#). *ACM Transactions on Information Systems* 25(4).
- Andric, M., Devedzic, V., Hall, W. and Carr, L. (2007) [Keywords linking method for selecting educational web resources à la ZigZag](#). *International Journal of Knowledge and Learning (IJKL)* 3(1) pp. 30-45.
- Andric, M., Devedzic, V., Hall, W. and Carr, L. (2007) [Keywords linking method for selecting educational web resources à la ZigZag](#). *International Journal of Knowledge and Learning (IJKL)* 3(1) pp. 30-45.
- Zhou, J., Hall, W., De Roure, D. and Dialani, V. (2007) [Supporting Ad Hoc Resource Sharing on the Web: A Peer-to-Peer Approach to Hypermedia Link Services](#). *ACM Transactions on Internet Technology*.
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- Miles-Board, T., Carr, L., Wills, G., Power, G., Bailey, C., Hall, W., Stenning, M. and Grange, S. (2006) [Extending the role of a healthcare digital library environment to support orthopaedic research](#). *Health Informatics Journal* 12(2) pp. 93-105.
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- O'Hara, K., Morris, R., Shadbolt, N., Hitch, G. J., Hall, W. and Beagrie, N. (2006) [Memories for Life: A Review of the Science and Technology](#). *Journal of the Royal Society Interface*.
- Shadbolt, N., Berners-Lee, T. and Hall, W. (2006) [The Semantic Web Revisited](#). *IEEE Intelligent Systems* 21(3) pp. 96-101.
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- Wills, G., Miles-Board, T., Bailey, C., Carr, L., Gee, Q., Hall, W. and Grange, S. (2005) [The Dynamic Review Journal: a scholarly archive](#). *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia* 11(1) pp. 69-89.
- schraefel, m. c., Carr, L., De Roure, D. and Hall, W. (2004) [You've Got Hypertext](#). *Journal of Digital Information (JoDI)* 5(1.253).
- Crowder, R., Hughes, G. and Hall, W. (2003) [Approaches to Locating Expertise using Corporate Knowledge](#). *International Journal of Intelligent Systems in Accounting, Finance and Management* 11 pp. 185-200.
- Alani, H., Kim, S., Millard, D. E., Weal, M. J., Hall, W., Lewis, P. H. and Shadbolt, N. R. (2003) [Automatic Ontology-Based Knowledge Extraction from Web Documents](#). *IEEE Intelligent Systems* 18(1) pp. 14-21.
- Crowder, R., Wills, G. and Hall, W. (2003) [Evaluation of a hypermedia maintenance support](#)

Portal pages: draw together all official info from many databases

Semantic web portal pages: equivalent information published as RDF. Policy establishes ontology, individuals and **persistent URIs**.

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VCard: <http://vcard.ecs.soton.ac.uk/person/1650>

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- Quic: Queries in Context
- Turing Archive Project
- Virtual Orthopaedic European University

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hasFamilyName Hall

hasFullName Prof Wendy Hall

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hasGivenName Wendy
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The Semantic Web Revisited

Shadbolt, Nigel and Berners-Lee, Tim and Hall, Wendy (2006) *The Semantic Web Revisited*. IEEE Intelligent Systems 21 (3). pp. 96-101. ISSN 1541-



[PDF](#) - Requires a PDF viewer such as [GSview](#), [Xpdf](#)
127Kb



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Preview

Abstract

The original Scientific American article on the Semantic Web appeared in 2001. It described the evolution of a Web that consisted largely of documents for humans to read to one that included data and information for computers to manipulate. The Semantic Web is a Web of actionable information, where machines can interpret the symbols. This simple idea, however, is not easy to implement on the Web, but these are essentially handcrafted for specific purposes and information types. Because we haven't yet seen the Semantic Web has failed to deliver. We see that the Web standards for expressing shared information are not working, and that the Web standards for expressing shared information are not working. We see the use of ontologies in the e-science community, and the use of HTTP within the CERN particle physics community. This is not a special issue on the Future of AI.

Repository pages: metadata and data deposited by user on a regular basis (backed by policy) for Open Access.

Title matches any of "turtle snake semantic"

Displaying results 1 to 10 of 10.

[Refine search](#) | [New search](#)

Order the results:

Export 10 results as

- Shadbolt, Nigel and Berners-Lee, Tim and Hall, Wendy (2006) [The Semantic Web Revisited](#). IEEE Intelligent Systems, 21 (3). pp. 96-101. ISSN 1541-1672 Item availability restricted.



- Gall, L. and Utsunomiya, R. (2005) [Mexican Musk Turtles and Man](#). Animal Issues, 18 (19). pp. 146-193.



- Cliff, Y. and Mohamed, Y. and Haggan, O. (2004) [Observations on the Black Wood Turtle](#).



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</ecs:hasAuthor>

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URI: <http://www.ecs.soton.ac.uk/~lac/snakes10.rdf>

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The tabulator project ×
 Decentralised Information Group ×
Demo EPrints Repository Query

mentions

- Person
- Publication
- Ontology

request

- Request for <<http://www.ecs.soton.ac.uk/~lac/snakes10.rdf>>

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- Demo EPrints Repository Query

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isDefinedBy of

- The Semantic Web Revisited - Demo Repository
- Mexican Musk Turtles and Man
- The Citation Advantage of Open Access

Semantic repository pages: equivalent information published as RDF.

Title matches any of "turtle snake"

Displaying results 1 to 10 of 10.

[Refine search](#) | [New search](#)

Order the results: by year (most recent first)

Export 10 results as [Export](#)

- Shadbolt, Nigel and Berners-Lee, Tim and Hall, Wendy (2006) [The Semantic Web Revisited](#). IEEE Intelligent Systems, 21 (3). pp. 96-101. ISSN 1541-1672 Item availability restricted.



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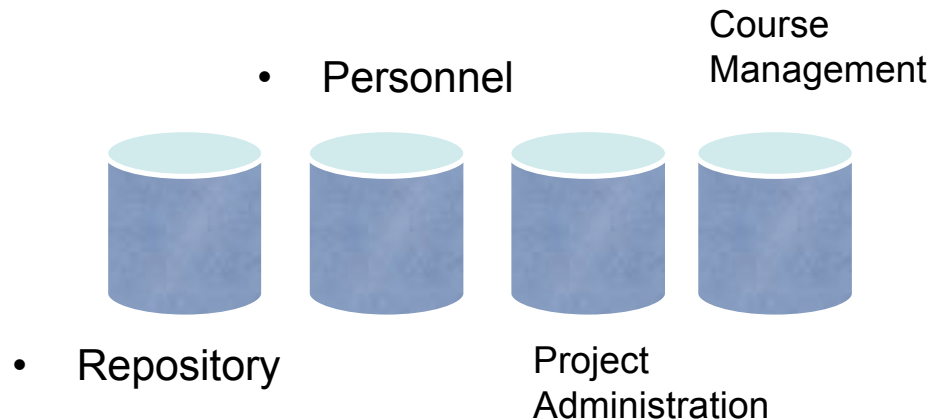
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Hall, Wendy
Prof Wendy Hall
hasGivenName
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Wendy
hasInterest
▶ http://id.ecs.soton.ac.uk/interest/semantic_web
hasRole
▶ <http://id.ecs.soton.ac.uk/role/1650>
memberOf
▶ <http://id.ecs.soton.ac.uk/project/AIMS>
▶ <http://id.ecs.soton.ac.uk/project/AKT>
▶ <http://id.ecs.soton.ac.uk/project/COHSE>

Semantic repository pages: adhere to discipline of referring to URIs established by external authorities, ie authors aren't strings, they are individuals who can be tabulated.

The Semantic Institution

- The Repository is a single player in an institution's knowledge publishing activities
 - Artefacts
 - Agents
 - Activities
- Different domains of authority over different kinds of information
- Should be an integrated policy for information publishing
 - Who assigns ids to what?
 - Who makes statements about what?



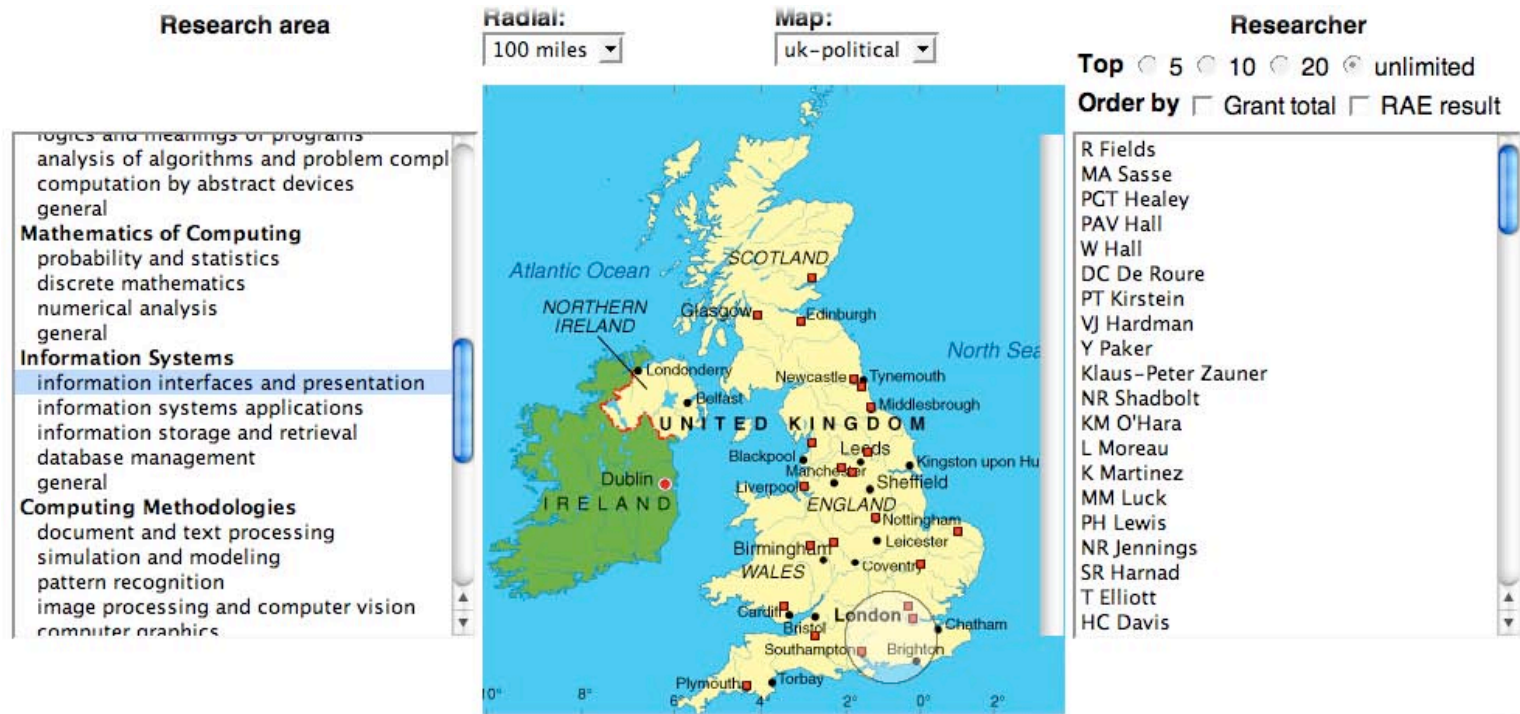
The Semantic Nation



- Semantic Individuals
 - *researchers who curate their own intellectual capital using repositories*
- combine to make Semantic Institutions
 - *organisations that defines policies on naming, identification, information sharing and preservation*
 - *see recent ECS initiative*
- which co-operate to form a Semantic Nation
 - *loose co-operation via SPARQL endpoints allow agents to query and combine all the information exported by every institution*

Semantic Mashups

Mashups are impressive **only because they are difficult**



AKT award-winning CS *AKTivespace* involved ACM classification, EPSRC database, mining entire national CS home pages, RAE database, publication list & making proto Google Map

A Misty Look into the Future: Plot of the Story VI

- Ubiquitous knowledge
- No need for ignorance
- What are the implications for devices, services, us, education.

Personal Experience

- While talking on the phone (e.g. to a potential collaborator) I can appear not too uninformed if I use Google to look up all the projects and people that they mention.
 - I can make links between what I discover and what I know
 - I can do it fast enough to keep up with the conversation
 - BUT the keyboard clicks make it obvious to the other party

A Turing Test

- Can you tell the difference between a real expert and someone faking it with Google?
 - or other more advanced knowledge tools
- What are the limitations on chicanery?
 - How unintrusive can the technology be?
 - How should the queries be made?
 - How should the results be shown?
 - What sort of answers can be faked?
 - cf Bloom

Experimental Proposal

- Who Wants to Cheat at Millionaire?
 - How well can you perform if one of your lifelines is 30-seconds on Google?
 - A minute, two minutes
 - All your lifelines are Google
 - Every answer can use Google
- This is Bloom's lowest layer - RECALL.

Experimental Proposal

- Open Book Exams?
 - How well can you perform on “understanding” questions in a typical Part I undergraduate exam (with Google)?
 - How long do you need?
 - How much do you retain?
- Work your way up through Bloom

Why is this Important

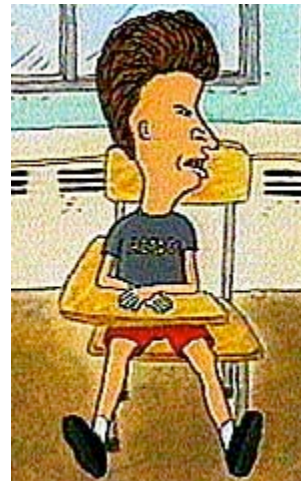
- In a world with ubiquitous calculators, no-one needs to know how to use log tables or Napier.
- In a world with ubiquitous knowledge sources immediately to hand, no-one needs to know *?anything?*
- What are the limits on knowledge support - what do people need to learn.

What's the Difference?

- Clever Chap + Learning = Expert



- Idiot + Google = Expert?



The End

A “Total Imagination” Production

by

Leslie Carr