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Opening access to research with TARDis at Southampton University

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Project TARDis

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The Project

TARDis (Targeting Academic Research for Dissemination and Disclosure) [1] is a 30 month project funded by JISC as part of their FAIR (Focus on Access to Institutional Resources) Programme. The project sits alongside other e-Prints and e-Theses FAIR funded projects [2]. Institutional e-Print archives are developing new systems of scholarly communication and the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting [3] has created a technological environment in which interoperability standards are facilitating new ways of disseminating content.

Our project has developed a multi-disciplinary institutional repository (IR) for university research output known as **e-Prints Soton** [4], and will assess and evaluate the activity within a library led infrastructure. Specifically we are investigating strategies to overcome the technological, cultural and academic barriers. Uniquely, (although other archives now see the need to do this), we are offering a range of deposit options from self archiving to full mediation and will measure this requirement against discipline divide.

The University of Southampton is a world class multidisciplinary research led university which offers a rich spread of disciplines. However, in August 2003, the university was restructured and now operates within three faculties: Engineering, Science and Mathematics; Medical and Health and Life Sciences; and also Law, Arts and Social Sciences. An environment of change requires sensitivity to other demands; this indicates to TARDis a need for services which can simplify processes, and help the new schools develop their new roles within the Faculties, rather than present them with additional tasks.

We are using the pioneering software GNU EPrints [5] developed here within the School of Electronics and Computer Science at Southampton for e-Print archives worldwide and our project has had the opportunity to feedback into the software development. Whilst implementing an institutional repository is well supported by such tailored software; getting content is not easy. An important part of the project includes an intensive advocacy programme ranging from individuals through schools to research committees to University management. Initial user feedback from our pilot service has led us to base this programme on a message of one record for multiple purposes.

Simplifying the deposit process

TARDis has taken the approach of exploring the options of author deposit and mediated deposit for the research metadata and associated full text files to explore the disparity between different disciplines with different practices. A choice is offered to fill in all the information or to deposit a full text file along with the minimum metadata needed to provide a good record. Required information includes – Is the item peer-reviewed? Other information is usually available on the paper itself or by a quick search.

The deposit process was reviewed and ideas were fed back into the interface of the next version of the software. The process was checked to achieve interface functionality which would simplify the procedure for a depositor whether by the author or by an agent such as secretarial or research support. Examples analysed included order and size of fields, structuring in logical pages, addition of fields such as Corporate author, necessary fields for different categories of publication such as conference paper or book section. Metadata quality had been studied and seen to be a vital factor in providing good global search services to repositories whether they are discipline based or institutional. One key aim was to ensure the information provided was sufficient for a good citation which could then also be exported in a variety of ways for a variety of purposes. This reference provides an example.

Foskett, Nick, Dyke, Martin and Maringe, Felix (2003) The influence of the school on the decision to participate in learning post 16. In: *Annual conference of the British Educational Research Association, 11-13 Sep 2003, Edinburgh, Scotland*, 19pp (unpublished)
<http://eprints.soton.ac.uk/archive/00000223/>

Additional Information: Also available from Education Conference Programme Service <http://brs.leeds.ac.uk/~beiwwww/becp.htm> in html
(<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003251.htm>) and Word

It includes the repository URL providing easy 'open' access even if the final version has disappeared from the web or requires a paid subscription. The metadata can be checked for errors as it passes through the submission buffer into the live repository.

A case study

Working with departmental practices is proving important to achieving buy-in across the campuses for recording research output more efficiently. A significant factor is that the new schools have different ways of achieving their goals. The School of Education has a research office, which we are working closely with on best process, but also a marketing office, and so e-Prints Soton has to integrate with both operations to be effective in both recording and opening up access to research. Their aim will be both to manage the research process and to raise the research profile of the groups within the school with full text access as a tool.

The School of Social Sciences already has its own publication process linked to its school administrative data and so our strategy here is to work with the school to enable importing of existing records into e-Prints Soton. These can then be enhanced with full text where available before a possible transition to using e-Prints Soton as the master deposit database with schools using the records for their individual requirements. A paper by authors in both Education and Social Sciences needs to be entered only once to be reflected in each school. A particular consideration for Social Sciences is the contribution of our academics to

IDEAS [6] the bibliographic database for Economics linked to RePEc. Ideally the academic wants to represent their work both within the university and within the global discipline based community and we need to address the best way to do this to proactively present current research, without duplication of effort.

The Southampton Statistical Sciences Research Institute was set up in 2003 and has sets of Working Papers which their webmaster makes available as full text on the Web. Discussions here have focussed on changing that process to depositing in e-Prints Soton so that individual authors can also deposit their work themselves. However, a vital consideration is the ability to also present these papers within the Institute's own web pages. The aim of the Institute is to expand the national and international profile of statistical research at Southampton, with the aim of becoming a world-leading centre for this research and, therefore, its own branding is vital for its own marketing of its research.

Targeting Academic Research for Dissemination and Disclosure

FAIR projects are exploring together different ways of achieving greater access to institutional resources with shared tools (such as publisher copyright agreement information [7]) to ease the process. Institutional repositories have the potential to give a new opportunity to showcase the research output and other digital assets created by the institution provided their processes offer ease of deposit and value added services for the academics and their schools. The University of Southampton e-Prints Service presents one piece of the university's information infrastructure; a major tool in opening access to Southampton's research.

References (checked 17 May 2004)

- [1] TARDIS Project <http://tardis.eprints.org/>
- [2] FAIR Programme http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=programme_fair
- [3] OAI-PMH from <http://www.openarchives.org/>
- [4] e-Prints Soton <http://eprints.soton.ac.uk/>
- [5] GNU EPrints software <http://software.eprints.org/>
- [6] IDEAS <http://ideas.repec.org/>
- [7] Publisher Copyright and Policies <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php>