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Using a CRIS to support communication of research: mapping the publication cycle to deposit workflows for data and publications

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Abstract

This paper describes a case study to explore how we continue to develop our CRIS and support the University's research needs and how it has become an embedded tool for researchers to manage their research outputs and to enable Open Access and Open Data.
The paper will show how we used researchers' feedback and comments to develop a simple and easy to remember workflow mapped against existing and familiar research lifecycles. We examine some of the technical, practical and cultural issues we have encountered in implementing these workflows, and show how the CRIS as a single portal has streamlined tasks and reduced duplication of effort.

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Keywords: CRIS, Pure, Open Access, Research Data Management, workflows

1. Introduction

1.1. Policies scenario

Organisations and funders have a growing expectation of openness by default. Both Open Access to publications and more recently Open Data have an important role in this gradual move to Open Research. Ambitious policies have been developed to build on the opportunities this 'open by default' can deliver: to drive innovation, support sharing and derive new knowledge built on outputs. Funders such as the Wellcome Trust,[1,2] ERC[3] and RCUK[4,5] stress the need to derive maximum value from funded research, and individual researchers need to consider compliance with funder policies as well as maximising their visibility and impact. To achieve this 'open by default' scenario a cultural change has to be introduced among researchers. Funders and institutions have introduced new expectations and requirements. Organisations must have in place services and resources to allow compliance, inform and guide researchers as mentioned in the first of the nine EPSRC expectations:

"Research organisations will promote internal awareness of these principles and expectations and ensure that their researchers and research students have a general awareness of the regulatory environment and of the available exemptions which may be used, should the need arise, to justify the withholding of research data"[6]

Institutions are also expected to manage the research outputs and maintain a publicly available catalogue:

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"Research organisations will ensure that appropriately structured metadata describing the research data they hold is published (normally within 12 months of the data being generated) and made freely accessible on the internet;"[6]

An institutional CRIS offers the functionalities that both researchers and support staff need to meet the 'open-by-default' agenda.

1.2. CRIS at St Andrews background

The University of St Andrews has been using a research information infrastructure since 2006 starting with an in-house current research information system (CRIS) called Research Expertise, which was then replaced by Pure (Elsevier) in 2010.[7,8] The CRIS allows managers, support staff and researchers to access institutional data related to research at St Andrews and held in other corporate systems. These data include staff information, student records, and research grants.

The initial focus of the CRIS was that of managing research assessment, but policy and cultural shifts have meant a steady increase in the need to use the CRIS to support the open agenda. This saw the Pure CRIS being integrated with the Open Access (OA) institutional repository (DSpace[9]) in 2010, following a pilot service in 2008 linking Dspace with Research Expertise.[10,11]

Subsequently, with the introduction of Open Data policies, in 2015 the CRIS became a research data catalogue and a research data repository. During 2014 we explored several options for deposit and storage of data, including extending the Pure/Dspace integration or using Pure as a catalogue and Dspace separately as our data repository. The primary driver was an easy interface to encourage researcher engagement, and the familiarity of Pure combined with its developing data functionality and easier technical implementation led to this choice.

The CRIS at St Andrews is now a single source of information but also a single interface for both administrators and users to meet the open agenda requirements.

1.3. Case study

With the use of a case study the paper explores how we continue to develop the CRIS and support the University's research needs and how it has become an embedded tool for researchers to manage their research outputs and to enable Open Access and Open Data.

The paper describes the workflows and procedures the Open Access (OA) and Research Data Management (RDM) support teams have put in place in St Andrews to use the CRIS as a single tool for research office, administrators, library and individual researchers to manage information, data sources and storage as efficiently as possible. We examine some of the technical, practical and cultural issues we have encountered in implementing these workflows, and show how the CRIS as a single portal has streamlined tasks and reduced duplication of effort.

2. Questions faced

In recent years the introduction of new and stricter Open Access requirements has brought changes in researchers' publication practices, for example having to think ahead at grant application stage about the potential cost of Article Processing Charges (APCs) and later on considering the most appropriate journals, correct licenses, additional funder requirements of co-authors; and individual journals' policies.

The addition of funders' research data policies meant that researchers had to modify their entire research practices, from estimating data volumes at an early stage of the grant application all the way to the publication of raw data.

These changes, inevitably led researchers to have lot of questions for both OA and RDM teams.

2.1. Open Access

Until very recently OA policies have been primarily associated with funder requirements, with only certain researchers developing awareness and making their work open by default. The introduction of the new OA policy[12] for the next REF – requiring that "*to be eligible for submission to the post-2014 REF, authors' outputs must have been deposited in an institutional or subject repository*" - has changed this significantly. The focus is now on deposit of accepted manuscripts with the aim of making Open Access a standard part of scholarly communication. We began preapring for the REF/OA policy in 2014, becoming a partner on a Jisc OA Good Practice project (Lessons in Open Access Compliance for Higher Education (LOCH[13]) led by University of Edinburgh). The University implemented the policy in January 2015 with the key message to 'deposit in Pure'.

While a simple message is easier to communicate, it inevitably leads to questions. Many of these are nuanced and varied across disciplines, and the regular outputs of the OA Good Practice projects combined with our own experience proved invaluable in enabling us to respond and support researchers appropriately. The most common questions are often deceptively simple:

- Why do I have to do this?
- When and how do I upload my article?
- When and how will my manuscript be made public?