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## Introducing CRIS at FAU

### Project Presentation

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#### Abstract

We look at the process of introducing a research information system at a large German university with more than 40.000 students, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU). Background information about FAU is provided as well as a short overview of the historical development of the CRIS project and some technical details relevant to the system. The paper details the challenges that had (and have) to be overcome, taking into account general obstacles which could be encountered by any large research body implementing a CRIS, some challenges specific to the German university landscape and lastly those unique to FAU. We also focus on strategies to win the researchers for CRIS, some of which can be classified as general best practice, others are tailored to specific FAU demands.

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#### 1. FAU Background information

Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU) is located in the European Metropolitan Region Nuremberg of Bavaria with 3.5 million inhabitants. The university itself is spread over the cities of Nuremberg and Erlangen, with most of the administration located in Erlangen.

FAU is among the Top 10 German Research Universities with more than 40.000 students, 5 faculties (including the university hospital with 25 clinics), 23 departments and 661 professorships. FAU was ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in Germany in third-party-funding by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in Germany (52<sup>nd</sup> worldwide) in the 2015 Reuters ranking of most innovative universities [8].

With more than 5.000 employees and over € 180 million generated in third-party funding in 2014, there is no shortage of information to gather for a CRIS.

Reasons for the creation of FAU CRIS included the need for faster and more comprehensive evaluations and rankings, the generation of reports for both university administration, government and funding organisations. Better support of internationalization efforts is also at the heart of CRIS. Last but not least, a central platform for the presentation of FAU's research output was needed.

Introduction of CRIS systems is a being considered or already implemented in a number of German universities. Tobias et al. 2015 [5] mentions FAU as one of 22 Universities in Germany to have introduced a CRIS, which amounted to 43% of the poll.

### **1.1. FAU CRIS History**

In 2011, FAU University management decided to launch the FAU CRIS project. In 2012, the software Converis 4 [9] was purchased from Avedas AG (which was bought by Thomson Reuters in 2013). In 2012 and 2013, the data model was specified, source systems were identified and the first interfaces with these were developed and implemented. During the implementation phase, the German Council of Science and Humanities released recommendations for a core data collection [7]. These were integrated into FAU CRIS as much as possible. After initial workshops and training sessions for one test department, the decision was made to upgrade to Converis 5. Most of 2014 was spent upgrading to the new version and adding bulk data imports from various source systems. 2015 saw the roll out for 4 of our 5 faculties for the publication core while more entities were added and filled. In 2016, research projects and patents, the next large entities, are being added.

FAU is a founding member of the Converis User Group Germany, visiting and hosting regular meetings of German universities working with Converis.

## **2. FAU CRIS Description**

The aim of FAU CRIS is full coverage of all research output metadata. This includes publications (currently about 18.000 in CRIS), ranging from peer-reviewed papers in academic journals to online discussion papers. The second largest entity are research projects (currently 1.500), including third-party funded projects with private and / or public funders as well as smaller self-funded projects. Researchers are given the option of linking entities, for example projects and publications, thus creating a more and more complete map of research activity at the university.

Other entities include awards and grants (currently 200), researcher activities such as non-published talks or membership on editorial boards, and knowledge and technology transfer, i.e. patents and spin-offs.

### **2.1. FAU CRIS data sources**

CRIS is connected to both internal and external systems via various interfaces: Converis uses Pentaho's Kettle data integration system [10], which allows the creation of flexible interfaces to several sources. Converis also utilizes hard-coded connectors to access outside publication databases. As the hard-coded connectors are part of the proprietary source code, configuration and changes of additional connectors are limited to the Kettle interface (in version 5.5).

Organisational information is taken from the university's central organization management system, FAU.ORG. This includes a full hierarchical tree of FAU's faculties, departments, institutes and chairs.

Personnel information, which is needed to both authenticate users via the University's shibboleth single-sign-on system and to populate the database with linkable authors, is imported daily via Kettle-process from a dedicated LDAP. This, in turn, receives its data from the University Identity management system (IdM). Personal information imported via this process is limited to that which is needed for identification: name, date of birth, IdM user name, email address, function and organization. FAU CRIS is in a continuous dialogue with the university data protection commissioner, making sure that any changes or alterations are legal and according to regulations.

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