# SCONUL Focus 69 Contents

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## Contents

# Editorial:
## Reaching out to the research community: roles for academic libraries

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Following on from the issue on support for teaching, this issue of *SCONUL Focus* turns its attention to looking at the ways in which our profession can add value in supporting the research community.

The Research Excellence Framework (REF), the growth of open access, issues relating to research and data management and scholarly communication, as well as the requirement to extend more traditional means of support to an often disparate community, present a number of opportunities as well as challenges.

Jane Belger and Jennifer Crossley describe the approach taken at UWE to expand the growth of support to researchers there, focusing on two core activities – managing the institutional research and data repositories and scholarly communication, alongside the more traditional areas of liaison, teaching and advocacy. Vicky Wallace from the University of Birmingham gives an overview of the university's approaches to enhancing researcher engagement with research support services, noting how colleagues from different divisions came together to offer a 'world café' style event and a range of menus for bespoke training to help researchers raise their academic profile. The provision of innovative and appropriate study spaces within libraries remains important for researchers. Articles from the universities of Birmingham and Leeds show how they have tackled this, the latter developing a research hub within an existing building, whilst the former took the opportunity to design spaces for researchers and research collections as part of a new library build.

Ethnography-inspired approaches to determining user behaviour and experience have been popular in recent years when considering how best to support all students. This approach has been extended to the research community at the Open University, and the article by David Jenkins describes how the Open University has undertaken cognitive mapping to understand how their research students conduct research, with a view to maximising the relevance of services for this group.

It is perhaps wrong to assume that research students will commence their studies with all the skills required to conduct their studies; with this in mind, the article from Helen Williams at the University of Wolverhampton describes the new programme of doctoral academic writing support developed there, noting the popularity of daytime face-to-face support, despite the availability of online tools.

This issue also features a crop of articles which highlight the role that libraries can play in developing enhanced services to support the research process. The authors from UCL show how the appointment of Research Data Support Officers has enabled the library to build networks with others at the university to strengthen research data management advocacy and training, whilst an article from research librarians at the University of Bristol shows the potential to support researchers in data compliance matters such as the inclusion of data access statements in journal articles. At Loughborough, Elizabeth Gadd describes how a close working relationship between the research office and the library has led to the provision of enhanced bibliometrics support for their researchers, whilst in a similar vein, Helen Muir describes how her role as Research Support Librarian has evolved to support Queen Margaret University's REF submission – incorporating bibliometrics, altmetrics and open access publishing. Moving away from the UK, Rachel Isaac-Menard's article demonstrates that librarians face similar challenges in the USA as academic librarianship has changed. She shows how librarians at Adelphi University have assumed new roles, becoming instrumental in working towards the publication of a new book.

# Editorial:
## Reaching out to the research community: roles for academic libraries

A further three articles in this issue profile librarians who have also been undertaking research degrees themselves, providing interesting insights on the dual role of research supporter and research practitioner; Helen Fallon's article recounts her experience as an academic author, with reference to her role editing a themed issue of the *New review of academic librarianship*.

An initiative at Leeds Beckett University has brought together a number of research-related themes aimed at supporting their undergraduate community. The authors describe how they have launched the institution's first open access undergraduate journal, which offers the opportunity for students to enhance their digital literacy skills and provides them with experience of writing for publication and an understanding of the research culture, whilst at the same time recognising the contribution that undergraduates can make to research.

Moving on to collections, Gavin Willshaw offers us a flavour of the work being undertaken at the University of Edinburgh through a new project which seeks to digitise the remaining 17,000 of their 27,000 PhD theses so the entire collection of Edinburgh research is available for anyone anywhere in the world to download free of charge – evidence that the importance and significance of open access goes above and beyond the availability of journal articles!

Finally, this research theme concludes with an overview of the topics covered in the DARTS series of conferences – which are aimed specifically at librarians with an interest in research support – since 2005. This reflective article demonstrates nicely how the research landscape has changed over the last decade, as revealed in the content of the conferences.

# Supporting research staff and postgraduates at the University of the West of England, Bristol:
## the growth of library research support

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## Introduction

In common with many other universities, the University of the West of England Bristol (UWE Bristol) has developed its library support for research staff and students to respond to the strategic objectives of the institution and the changing research environment, and to push towards open research driven by funding council policies.

Blatchford *et al.* (2016) describe the various approaches that can be taken to support research, from reskilling academic liaison staff to creating dedicated teams. At UWE Bristol a small team has been created to support research staff and students.

## Development of library research support team

The library research support team has been through various iterations on the way to its current form. For a number of years, support for research formed a minor part of a subject librarian's role. As the open access culture grew, UWE Bristol launched its own research repository in 2010, and at that point had one full-time repository manager who was responsible for promoting and managing the repository, plus one staff member who was involved in policy development and advocacy relating to the research repository. At around this time, the university revised its strategic plan, and 'Research with impact' became a prominent area of strategic activity. In response to this, and as part of a broader service restructure, Library Services introduced a new role – the Research and Knowledge Exchange (R&KE) Librarian (filled as a job share) – and recognised the need to increase support for the research repository through the addition of a part-time repository assistant post. Further library service changes saw research support move away from subject colleagues and merge with the collections team, the rationale being to bring about closer alignment of areas that were managing access to information. As a result, other research support activities and expertise (e.g. finance, copyright) could be shared across this broader team.

The retirement in 2013 of one half of the R&KE Librarian post provided an ideal opportunity to re-assess the research support team. The decision was made not to replace directly, but to introduce a new post, the research and open access librarian. This was partly a response to the growing open access requirements from funders and HEFCE's requirements for the post-2014 REF exercise, which led to an increase in the need for advocacy and engagement work. It also provided more depth to the team.

# Supporting research staff and postgraduates at the University of the West of England, Bristol:
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## Where are we now?

Research Support at UWE Bristol now consists of a part-time Library Research Manager (formerly the R&KE Librarian), a Research and Open Access Librarian, a Research Support Librarian (Repositories) and a Library Information Administrator (Repositories). The team reports to a member of senior management with responsibility for research support.

## What services do we provide?

The work of the research support team is roughly divided between two core activities:

- managing the institutional research and data repositories and other scholarly communication activities
- liaison, teaching and advocacy

Managing the institutional research repository almost predates the existence of the research support team at UWE Bristol and continues to be one of our main activities. Although we do not offer a fully mediated service, checks are made for copyright adherence, and more recently for HEFCE compliance for appropriate publications. Deposit of research outputs with the research repository is now fairly well established. Prior to the change in funding council policies, two of the most effective drivers for engagement were: making academics aware that the research repository feeds the publications list on their staff profile pages; and offering training that covered both the research repository and the staff profiles. In order to encourage deposits, it has been vital to liaise with the research and business innovation office, as well as with associate deans for research, research centre directors and the lead staff for the REF in individual units of assessment.

Another significant responsibility for the research repository team is the management of doctoral theses. In cooperation with the Graduate School, we have developed a compulsory process whereby candidates upload a 'soft-bound' pre-viva thesis and, eventually, the final version, which is made open access. To facilitate this, we have provided copyright guidance for the use of third-party material, including regular training sessions delivered in collaboration with the Graduate School's research development manager. At UWE, as at many other universities, management of the block grant from Research Councils UK for open access payments (Research Councils UK, 2016) resides with the research support team. As UWE is a teaching-led institution, the administrative burden is relatively light for us; however, we are negotiating with library, faculty and management colleagues regarding how open access will be financially supported beyond the end of the block grant in 2018. Research data management (RDM) was identified as an emerging area of research activity before the establishment of the Research Support team. We were lucky enough to be awarded funding under the JISC Research Data Management Programme (JISC, 2013) to start RDM activities at UWE Bristol. Like many institutions, we are now grappling with the on-going challenges surrounding RDM, including providing appropriate data preservation infrastructure (we have a data repository linked to Arkivum), and encouraging researchers to engage with the processes involved.

The Research and Open Access librarians and the Library Research Manager have primary responsibility for liaison, teaching and advocacy work. Our aim is to deliver the most pertinent messages at the right time and to the right audience. The core work of the research librarian is still liaison, but this needs to be strategic (Parker, 2012): being involved in the right faculty and higher-level university meetings is vital for liaison and advocacy work to be effective. We have representation at key research committees, which allows us to deliver those important strategic messages, to report on progress in terms of policy compliance, and to establish what the research community regards as

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priority work areas. Close working with the university's Research and Business Innovation (RBI) office also offers opportunities for collaborative approaches to specific issues.

As we have a large team of subject librarians, the research support team provides generic rather than subject-focused teaching sessions, and covers themes such as literature searching, research data management, open access, using the research repository to upload theses, and e-theses and copyright. They are delivered two or three times a year, in conjunction with the Graduate School's skills development manager. We also run one-off seminars and workshops such as our recent Open Research Series. Sessions are frequently simultaneously webcast and recorded for future viewing. It is not unheard of for there to be more remote viewers than attendees, which of course brings its own challenges in terms of content development.

Finally, a significant part of the research and open access librarian role is advocacy around open access publishing and funder requirements. This includes keeping the library research pages updated with current information on publication strategies, funder requirements and research data management advice, as well as answering individual enquires. Managing and reporting on the spend from the block grant received from Research Councils UK (RCUK) is an important part of this role. So too are encouraging grant holders to access the block grant, and suggesting alternative publishing options to authors who lack any special funds to cover open access costs. Increasingly, the team are asked for advice about publication options, including how to avoid publishers that have unfriendly policies towards researchers.

## What next?

As we enter our third year as an established team, we are considering the next steps for our development. Open research is a rapidly changing landscape that requires us to keep up to date and plan accordingly. We are working with RBI on the purchase of a current research information system, which may well have implications for how we use the research repository in future. Coupled with this, we are interested in how we can get a broader range of academics to engage with open access, in particular in the arts and humanities. We continue to focus on liaising with professional services colleagues and academic staff to provide the guidance and development activities that are required to support them throughout the research lifecycle. The end of the RCUK block grant in 2018 and HEFCE's open access requirements for future REF exercises will be a continuing challenge for our researchers, whom we shall try to support in the best way we can. Alongside this, we need to ensure that any developments in research support reflect the overarching library environment at UWE Bristol, which is itself about to embark on a period of change in terms of access to information as the push towards fully digital and increasingly open access to information environment gains momentum. This, along with the continued redevelopment of the physical space to reflect the changing needs of the university population, requires the library service to look at how we support research both financially and practically.

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# From generic to bespoke:
## Enhancing researcher engagement with library research

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This paper gives an overview of how colleagues from different divisions within Library Services came together to deliver an innovative 'world café' style event for researchers at the University of Birmingham, and offer a range menus for bespoke training to help researchers raise their academic profile.

## Background

Library Services at the University of Birmingham has been offering training sessions as part of the Raising Your Research Profile (RYRP) programme since November 2012. RYRP trainers – a mix of subject librarians and copyright, open access and repository advisors – offered traditional library workshops lasting one and a half to two hours. Each session covered a research-related topic such as publishing strategies, open access, social media, copyright and bibliometrics. Over time, the content of the programme evolved. Research data management was added to the programme in November 2014, and open access and publishing strategies were merged into a single session. Sessions were open to all researchers, including research staff, research postgraduates and staff supporting researchers, and were held in computer clusters in the library and IT training facilities in order to allow for hands-on practice.

A longitudinal survey of previous attendees was undertaken in 2014. This found that the workshop approach was beneficial, with attendees appreciating the opportunity to commit time to exploring a topic in great depth in a traditional teaching format. Although feedback was positive, overall engagement was low, with very low take-up for some sessions. It is possible that the positive feedback came from a population that preferred this teaching method.

Whilst the two-hour workshops were valued, the trainers felt that there were drawbacks to this approach, including the facts that:

- Attendees needed to invest significant amounts of time to gain an overview of all five topics.
- Sessions had to be pitched at a general audience to meet the needs of a wide range of attendees, from experienced researchers to postgraduate research students, and from a range of disciplines. This meant that particular nuances relating to researcher disciplines, funders and researcher stages could not be addressed in depth.
- There was no opportunity for cross-topic discussion, e.g. how social media could be used to raise the impact of research outputs, and how altmetrics can inform a social media strategy.
- The low take-up reduced the possibilities for useful networking.
- Networking was incidental to the workshops, rather than a focus.

In order to mitigate the first two of these difficulties, online course materials were developed in the areas of bibliometrics and research data management. They were used in a blended approach in the face-to-face sessions to enable more context-specific hands-on activities, and could also be used later by individual researchers to revisit any of the topics in more depth. The online courses were listed on the university's 'course gallery', so any university member could self-enrol. Whilst these materials were well received, some commented that everything they needed was already in the online material, so the value of the face-to-face sessions was limited.

## Ideas for rejuvenation

Due to low turnout and a sense that the format was tired and unattractive to researchers, it was felt that the programme would benefit from an overhaul. After a discussion amongst the course trainers, it was suggested that the five two-hour workshops be compressed into a single one-hour lunchtime slot to give an overview of the issues facing researchers in academia. The trainers hoped that this reduction in time commitment would remove one of the

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barriers to signing up to the session, allow for more cross-topic synergies to be raised, and that a 'world café' style approach would afford more networking opportunities.

The trainers also designed menus of smaller training modules that could be used to construct bespoke sessions for particular groups of researchers. At the end of the showcase session, researchers were to be invited to commission their own bespoke training session at a time to suit them. This would have the benefits of targeting a specific group and being able to offer in-depth discipline-specific guidance and support on the areas of their choice.

Menus were constructed for each of the five major themes. For example, the bibliometrics menu offered: finding citation metrics (demonstrations and hands-on of Web of Science, Scopus, or Google Scholar); introduction to the h index (strengths and weaknesses of the h index, data sources, demonstrations and hands-on of how to find a h index on Web of Science, Scopus, or Google Scholar); journal metrics (journal metrics available, how they are calculated and how they can be used). For more information go to https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/library/ryrp/menu

The first showcase session took place at lunchtime in the training room of the university's brand new library – a further incentive for researchers to come to the session. The introduction outlined the aims of the session and how the 'world café' approach would work. This was followed by the five experts (one each for bibliometrics, copyright, open access, research data management and social media) presenting their topic using one slide and in one minute each. They then sat one at each of five tables and hosted a discussion about their topic for five minutes, after which the attendees moved to the next table where a new discussion would begin. This process was repeated until everyone had participated in a discussion at all five tables.

## Student feedback

Twenty people attended, and nineteen completed paper feedback forms. Attendees were invited to score aspects of the session on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high).

Two attendees gave a score of 3 (average) on length of session and clarity of presentation – all other attendees gave scores of 4 or 5. Apart from one person who didn't indicate, everyone said that they had greater confidence in the subject matter after the session.

In response to the question 'What did you find most useful?' all five topics were mentioned. Nine people commented that they liked the way the session was run. Attendees also welcomed the signposting information.

We asked them how the sessions could be improved. Eight people commented that they wanted more time for discussion and two commented that the presentations at the start of the session should be longer. One thought it would be useful to include information on the stages at which issues become important during PhD programmes.

## The future

The trainers felt that the first session was successful, with good attendance, a lot of useful discussions and that there was a 'buzz' in the room. Although several attendees had commented that they would like longer sessions, it was felt that this was a sign of success, and that leaving attendees wanting more would encourage them to commission their own bespoke session or explore online course materials and web materials in their own time. It was felt to be important to keep the showcase session short in order to maximise take-up and to give an overview in a short timescale. However, to increase the opportunities

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for networking, it was decided that future sessions would start fifteen minutes earlier, with tea and coffee before the start of the main session.

There has been take-up on the menu offer. Sessions have been designed and delivered on bibliometrics, social media and research data management so far, and more are planned.

In addition to the topic-based menus described, example thematic sessions have now been suggested. These take advantage of the fact that most of the topics covered are interconnected and in reality most research groups would be interested in a session including elements from more than one of the topics, tailored to their particular research stage and discipline. Suggested sessions include:

- RYRP – an introductory session
- What are scholarly communications?
- Getting your thesis ready
- I'm funded, what do I have to do?
- Introduction to open research
- Navigating the scholarly communications maze

As well as the positive impact on attendees, there have been benefits for the trainers. They have had the opportunity to develop cross-topic publicity (with logos and publicity material achieving a consistent RYRP brand) and to work together more closely. Trainers have been able to use their time more effectively by drumming up interest in the RYRP topics during the lunchtime showcase session, and delivering high-level bespoke training to those who request it. It is hoped that as more groups attend the lunchtime showcase and commission bespoke courses, word of mouth will help to build relationships with colleagues in the academic departments and increase researcher effectiveness.

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# Meeting the needs of researchers in the new main library at the University of Birmingham

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The new main library at the University of Birmingham opened its doors on 19 September 2016, the first day of welcome week at the start of the academic year. The new building was the outcome of many years of planning and thought about the needs of the modern student and the staff who teach them. Researchers were not forgotten, and the building was designed to meet the requirements of our approximately 3,000 postgraduate research students, nearly 3,000 academic staff and around 26,000 taught students.

The new library was designed to provide an inspirational space and state-of-the-art facilities as well as improving access to our wide-ranging collections. It is spread over five floors, with 62km of shelving and over 1,800 seats. It contains a variety of study spaces, including group study rooms, individual desks and informal seating, a media room and a training suite with a panoramic view of the surrounding campus. This article will focus on two key elements of the building that were predominantly designed to meet the needs of researchers: the Research Reserve and the Research Suite.

## The Research Reserve

As with many research-intensive universities, the library had struggled for many years to find space for physical stock. Despite early participation in the UKRR scheme and periodic weeding of monographs, over 16,000 linear metres of older material was kept in closed access library stores, in sometimes poor environmental conditions. Items were fetched from these stores twice a day and only on extremely rare occasions were academic staff able to browse the stock. We were also aware that a lot of old or low-use items were sitting on the shelves of the old main library, making the library less attractive and making it harder for students to find the material they wanted because of a very complicated stock layout. The library did not necessarily want to withdraw these items, as their potential for research use was still evident, but a new solution was required. The challenge when designing the new library was therefore how to house lower-use, heritage collections mainly of interest to researchers whilst at the same time providing the range of study spaces and new technology expected in a modern library.

Although we considered building an annexe, it was decided that the lower ground floor of the library would form a Research Reserve to house the university's lower-use collections. The Research Reserve contains 50,000 linear metres of mobile shelving, and accommodates journals, monographs, newspapers, microfilms and audio-visual material, as well as some special collections material shelved in a secure area.

The balance in the new library is now around 20% of the collections on the open shelves and 80% in the Research Reserve. In order to decide how the collections should be split, an extensive modelling exercise was carried out to test different criteria. Past usage was clearly an important factor, as was how recently the material had been purchased. In preparation for moving to the new library, it was decided that the criteria for the open shelves would be:

- borrowed at least once since 1 August 2011 (i.e. during the five years prior to the new library opening), or
- purchased since 1 August 2014 (i.e. two years prior to the new library opening), or
- published since 2006 in the case of items in the reference collections.

We also made the decision that pamphlets and oversize books would normally be stored in the Research Reserve, except in exceptional cases, due to their fragility and non-standard sizes. In the case of periodicals, only current, print-only subscriptions were earmarked for the open shelves in the new library. Any material not fitting the criteria for the open shelves was designated for the Research Reserve, although some exceptions were made, for example for classic reference works. Sets and series were kept together either on the open shelves or in the Research Reserve, depending where most volumes fit the criteria.

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Items stored in the Research Reserve have a link from our resource discovery system (FindIt@bham, http://findit.bham.ac.uk) to a request form. Staff fetch the requested items throughout the day seven days a week. Currently, 85% of requests are satisfied within a day. Items for loan are made ready for collection on the ground floor, and reference items can be consulted in a room next to the reserve. Despite the fact that the items stored in the reserve are all low usage, the aggregate usage has been high, and the average number of requests per month is between 1,500 and 2,000. Requests may also be made for book chapters or articles to be scanned. Although this is a free service, the take-up has been low. Perhaps unsurprisingly, we have found that around 70% of the fetching requests each month come from the College of Arts and Law. Around 20% of the total requests received come from staff and students of the history department alone, with substantial usage also from classics, ancient history and archaeology; English literature; law; English language and linguistics; and modern languages. Around 80% of the requests are for monographs.



*Research Reserve*

To address concerns about the fact that less material is available on the open shelves, we offer a browsing service for academics and researchers. Tutors may also request the browsing service for individual taught students undertaking their dissertations. Our subject advisors regularly deliver an introductory session in the reserve that includes basic health and safety training (for example on how to use the ladders and mobile shelving). Once people have received this training, they are able to book a browsing session, with library staff on hand to direct them to the section that is of interest to them. The layout of the Research Reserve was designed with the requirement for monograph browsing very much in mind. The new library contains stock from the old main library as well as two stores and four site libraries, and during the move significant effort was put into interfiling as many books as possible into a single sequence. People browsing the reserve are provided with small trolleys and can take items out into the consultation room. As of mid-March 2017, 275 individuals had attended the introductory sessions. The majority were reassured that the stock was 'safe' and were happy to apply for items online rather than browse. From the beginning of January until 13 March, there had been 86 visits to browse from 52 individuals, most of the usage again coming from members of the College of Arts and Law.

## The Research Suite

In the old Main Library, we provided a space for academics and researchers in rooms originally occupied by special collections before their move to the purpose-built Cadbury Research Library (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/facilities/cadbury/). The aim in the new library was to create a space specifically designed for use by this group, and this proved a popular retreat from a building dominated by the requirements of taught students.

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The Research Suite is located in one corner of the building, facing east and south. Controlled access restricts entrance to eligible users. The suite consists of two rooms, the first of which, with a capacity of 34, has various uses and contains a small computer cluster, a break-out area, lockers and a drinks machine. The second room was created to look like a more traditional library, while at the same time fitting in with the overall modern look of the building. A mahogany veneer on one of the walls and on the large study desks helps to create the traditional look. The desks have task lighting and leather-look inlay. A number of high-backed individual armchairs provide a more relaxed option. This room has seating for 49. A snapshot of usage in March showed well over 60 people using the suite.
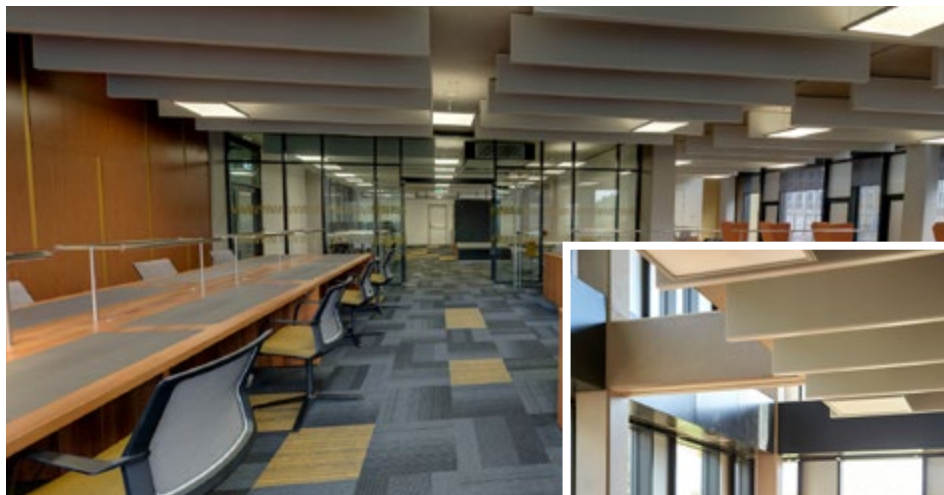


*Research Suite*

Comments show that the suite is appreciated:

> *Just discovered the postgrad/staff Research Suite @UoBLibServices, complete with comfy sofas, coffee machine & glorious silence – bliss!*
>
> *I am very impressed with the Post Graduate suite.*

When the old library is knocked down and the 'Green Heart' parkland is created in the centre of the campus, this corner of the building will have magnificent views.



*New Library*

# Meeting the needs of researchers in the new main library at the University of Birmingham

## Appointment rooms

Another improved facility in the new library is the six appointment rooms for use for individual meetings with students by subject advisors and Academic Skills Centre staff. In the old library there was only one such room and many subject advisors ran advice sessions for individuals at their desks in shared offices. Although not exclusively for use with research students, these rooms have proved invaluable in enabling staff to run focused sessions.

Although the new library has been designed to be attractive to the students of the university, it was certainly not designed solely with the taught students in mind. With provision of dedicated study space, and the facility to bring together collections that were previously dispersed across multiple sites, in poor condition and not always browsable, the new facility has much to offer researchers at the university.

# A changing space:
## a case study of the Research Hub at University of Leeds Library

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Repurposing space in academic libraries is high on the agenda for institutions across the UK. Academic libraries strive to allocate, record and assess every square foot in order to optimise all useable library space, and to provide environments that enhance the student experience and further research excellence. The Research Hub at the University of Leeds is testament to evolving ideas about what library space should be, how it should serve users and how users interact and work in library space today.

As in many libraries, Leeds University's Edward Boyle Library held extensive collections of reference books, which took up premium floor space on level 13 at a time when more and more researchers are turning to digital collections and are increasing the demand for seamless access to information via IT. Researchers are seen to be working more collaboratively and need space to hold meetings, training, networking and events. Consequently, the library had to change in order to support them. In addition, university research and innovation strategies are driving forward the critical roles the library performs in relation to increasing research funding and supporting research excellence. Conventional library space, with all its rich history and conceptualisations, is not easy to change, but change it must. Space can be continually adaptable and expansive, rather than fixed and subject to inertia.

The development of the Research Hub on level 13 of the Edward Boyle Library was shaped by our researchers' requirements. A survey, conducted in June 2014 as part of the planning of the refurbishment of the library found that researchers and postgraduate students wanted a dedicated library space, separate from that used by undergraduates, where they would have access to a variety of study environments. As a result, the Research Hub has been designed to provide opportunities for individual or collaborative working of taught and research postgraduates and research staff.

For researchers working independently, the Hub has ten individual study rooms, each equipped with a PC. Generous desk space, with individual lighting and plenty of sockets to charge mobile devices, are available in large silent study areas. For those who prefer collaborative working, seven IT-enabled group study rooms, with large screens linked to Airmedia software, enable users to share data from up to four mobile devices simultaneously. All study rooms are available on demand through an online booking system. You can see some of the facilities on offer in our Research Hub video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThbYRgyYa64&t=4s&list=PL4PSr5RRxgLHElQq296fw5tl_JrZ_ccFn&index=3

Two large research meeting rooms are equipped with excellent presentation equipment, including a white board wall and lecture capture technology. The rooms are available for researcher training, conferences and networking events. Since the Hub opened in September 2016, a number of researcher-led events, training and workshops have been held in the specially designed meeting space. Research staff have arranged workshops, presentations and training courses specifically aimed at the research community. These range from workshops on ResearchFish, robotics and open access to an EU funding symposium. Postgraduate researchers have also benefited from workshops and training delivered by the library and the university's Organisational Development and Professional Learning (OD&PL) service. In the six months after opening, over a hundred events and training courses were held in the Hub and attracted nearly 3,500 participants, the majority of whom were research postgraduates and research staff.

From the early stages of planning for the Research Hub it was clear that the library and OD&PL had a strong, shared commitment to developing the Hub as a focal point for training and as a vibrant, interesting space for researchers. Since the Hub opened, very well-attended OD&PL training sessions have run every week, covering topics such as academic writing, time management

# A changing space:

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during a research degree and preparing for a viva. OD&PL has office and storage space for training materials in the Hub, which has become an important and familiar workspace for our OD&PL colleagues. Dr Tony Bromley, Senior Training and Development Officer, has found that the high-quality Hub space 'provides more flexibility than we have had previously in being able to provide small workshops or open up the whole space for events like the University Welcome event for postgraduate researchers. We haven't had a dedicated postgraduate training space like this before'. The formal training delivery aspect of the Hub is working extremely well. Research Support and Research Data Management teams have also run well-attended training for postgraduate researchers on how to raise the visibility of research and research data management essentials. The physical Hub space has become a catalyst for closer working between OD&PL and the library, encouraging more coordinated curriculum planning and a stronger sense of collegiality. As the Hub moves towards its second academic year, we are planning how the space will be used for a wider range of activities for – and led by – researchers. Colleagues from OD&PL have invaluable experience, knowledge and enthusiasm to contribute to this next phase of Hub evolution.

The library's Research Support and Research Data Management teams are based in the Research Hub, which gives us a high-profile location from which to run and develop our research support services. The research support offices are in the midst of the researcher space; congregations of library users work directly outside our offices. Only time will tell how effective the new space is for facilitating partnership with researchers.

One of the objectives of the library's strategy, 'Powering knowledge and opportunity, 2016–2021', focuses on working to better understand research priorities and ways the library can provide support and add value throughout the research lifecycle. The library is working towards understanding the diverse needs of researchers and developing our services, thus ensuring that our service offers are integral, beneficial and relevant.

Currently the Library Research Support and Data Management teams work alongside researchers, supporting several fundamental stages of the research lifecycle. The Research Hub provides a comfortable and professional space in which to conduct a variety of meetings, training and one-to-one support. For example, our information specialists develop literature searches for research projects and often hold meetings with researchers to provide grant application and research project support. The Open Access team manage the institutional repositories and help to ensure researchers meet funder and REF (Research Excellence Framework) requirements. The Research Data Management team help researchers write data management plans – for example, if they are submitting a bid for funding – and work with researchers to prepare research data for sharing via the institution's research data repository. Furthermore, the library offers a range of one-to-one support, from EndNote support to literature searching guidance.

The Research Hub seeks to create atmosphere and a sense of place and belonging for those who frequent it, and to attract those research postgraduates and staff who have yet to engage with it and its research services. It is a place that is neither home nor the office, a place where researchers can work, relax, socialise, showcase their work, share ideas and seek a range of training, advice and support. One challenge is to balance the use of the study space (silent, individual and group rooms) with the desire to foster an environment of interdisciplinary research, networking and collaboration for our researchers.

What do researchers think of the space? As they say, you can't please everyone all of the time. On her first visit to the Hub, one seasoned researcher joked: 'I remember when this was a library!' However, this type of reaction has been the

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exception. Other comments gathered on the Hub white board wall include: 'postgraduate heaven', 'huge improvement –really love the new space', and the rather plaintive: 'nice change from a lonely office'. Like many of our other libraries, the Hub has many requests for 24x7 opening, and there is more demand for PCs than we had anticipated as we had assumed that most visitors would want to work on their own device.

When the creation of the space was first discussed, there was some concern that it might be underused; in fact, the Hub is very busy. Since opening in September 2016, the study spaces have been extensively used, primarily by taught postgraduate students, and we have reached 100% occupancy on several occasions. Access to the Hub is by swipe card, and between October 2016 and January 2017 we recorded over 60,000 people entering, 92% of whom were taught postgraduates.

As part of the library strategy, we are undertaking a consultation with researchers to investigate how they want to use the Research Hub in the future, and to engage them in developing and delivering a programme of events and activities that facilitate interdisciplinary research collaboration and are targeted at postgraduate researchers and staff.

The challenge now is how to create an environment that supports both postgraduate researchers and research staff in their work and myriad activities. Space is not static, but shaped by how its inhabitants use and interact with it. Uses for the Research Hub will grow and change over time as researchers – with their different needs, attitudes and priorities – imprint on the space. The library will adapt, continuously.

### Note

Researcher@Library: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThbYRgyYa64&t=4s&list=PL4PSr5RRxgLHElQq296fw5tl_JrZ_ccFn&index=3

# How research students at The Open University conduct research:
## insights from cognitive mapping

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There are currently 818 research students (496 full-time and 322 part-time) at The Open University. They are one of the core groups served by the Library Services Research Support Team. A number of factors have led us to focus on developing the services we offer this group: recommendations made in an external appraisal of the library (published in January 2016); user needs identified in the library's draft research support strategy; a history of limited communication with this group.

We undertook a small-scale research project to inform the development of services for research students. We wanted insights into how research students conduct research: the processes they go through, the people they work with, the resources they use and the places they go to. In particular, the project aimed to identify any 'unknown unknowns' – that is, aspects of their processes that we were previously unaware of. It was designed as a starting point for ongoing engagement with research students and, as such, was exploratory in nature. Its purpose was not to generalise about a wider population but to identify themes for further investigation and inform future research, which would aim for generalisability.

In generating rich data on a small sample of users, we planned for this project to complement data we get from the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), which generates less in-depth data on a larger sample.

To achieve this we used cognitive mapping, one of the ethnography-inspired user experience (UX) methods outlined at the first UXLibs conference (UX in libraries, n.d.) Cognitive mapping involves asking people to draw maps from memory and it is particularly suited to giving insights into peoples' behaviour and perceptions. It has been used as a research method in libraries to map physical spaces (Asher, 2013, and Lanclos, 2013) can also be used to map processes (Lanclos 2015). We based our map template on that used by Lanclos (2013), which itself is based on a toolkit from the Ethnographic Research in Illinois Academic Libraries (ERIAL) Project (Asher & Miller, 2011). The template was a plain sheet of A4 paper with the following instruction at the top:

*You will be given 9 minutes to draw from memory a map of how you undertook the last piece of research you completed – please include the processes, people, resources etc. that you worked with/used. Every three minutes you will be asked to change the colour of your pen in the following order: 1. Blue, 2. Red, 3. Black. After the 9 minutes is complete, please label the features on your map. Please try to be as complete as possible but don't worry about the quality of the drawing!*

The changing of coloured pens at timed intervals is designed to capture what participants write on the map first, which is assumed to be what's most important to them.
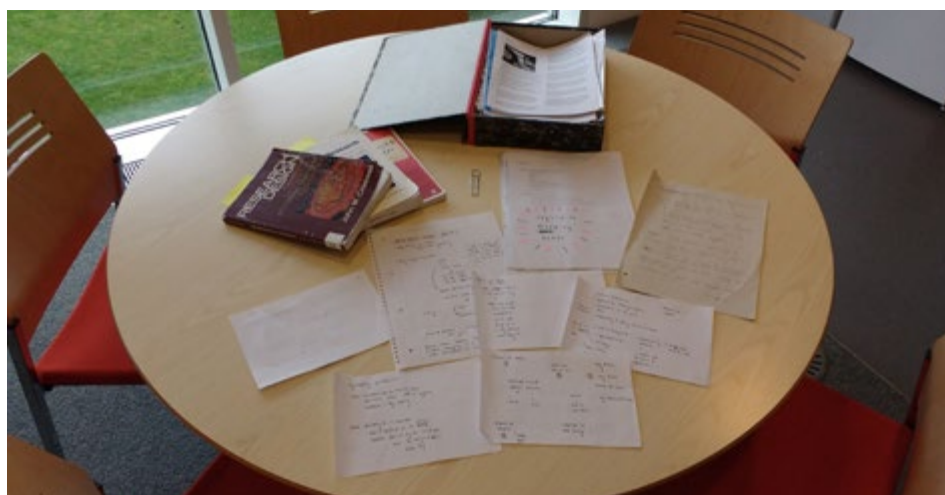


*The research process – field notes and background reading*

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A brief, unstructured interview followed the mapping in order to pursue any themes or ideas that emerged. This method was identified as appropriate because it allows interviewees to speak their minds and facilitates discovery (Denscombe, 2003). Interview data were captured in the form of field notes, based on best practice identified by Mills and Morton (Mills & Morton, 2013). This method limited the amount of data captured but reduced how long it took transcribe the interviews. The choice of this method reflects efforts to manage the amount of staff time spent on the project.

Cognitive mapping can be undertaken relatively quickly. We hoped this would make recruiting participants easier, as we would require less of their time, as well as saving staff time. We undertook the mapping and interviewed one participant at a time and face to face, spending approximately thirty minutes with each person.

There were thirteen participants, who were all based on campus. In terms of the faculty they belong to, seven were from Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), three were from Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS) and three were from the Institute of Educational Technology (IET). The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) and the Faculty of Business and Law (FBL) were not represented.

We were aware of the limits of such a small sample in terms of generalisability, but this was in keeping with the purpose of the research. Furthermore, it may be appropriate to compare data gathered with that from other research (be it existing research or future research) to corroborate identified themes.

All participants were offered a voucher for an online retailer on completion of the mapping and interview.

Data from the maps and interviews were segmented, typed up, coded and thematically analysed based on the simple approaches propounded by Denscombe (2003) and Creswell (2003), with techniques adapted from Guest *et al.* (Guest *et al.* 2012). This approach was adopted in an attempt to balance methodological rigour with the time constraints of day-to-day work commitments. Additionally, a simple quantitative analysis of the codes gave insight into their frequency, which fed into evaluation of their significance and development of themes.

Our findings were as follows:

- Literature reviews were the most mentioned part of the research process:
  - Eight participants experienced difficulties relating to their literature review, including not being able to access literature they needed, not having good search skills and feeling overwhelmed by the amount of literature.
  - Four participants reported that they had no problem with the mechanics of finding literature. However, it has to be remembered this is only one part of the literature review process - one of these participants still struggled to process the literature they had found.
  - Interestingly, the STEM students did not usually mention literature searching without being prompted even though they were amongst the most extensive users of it – they focused more on their lab or fieldwork.
- Support from supervisors is really important and encompasses numerous areas:
  - All participants mentioned the support they got from their supervisor.
  - There were more mentions of positive experiences with supervisors

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than negative, but it is undoubtedly a mixed picture – some students reported significant differences of opinion with their supervisors, which adversely affected their research.

- Research students received supervisor support regarding various issues, including research methods, research data, fieldwork and literature reviews.

- There were more instances of negative feedback about the library than positive:

  - Negative feedback focused on perceived lack of access to required e-resources, library e-resources having complicated interfaces, out-of-date print stock, problems with our document delivery and inter-library loans service, the fact that there are no recalls on print materials and that library training is too generic and not hands-on.

  - Positive feedback focused on problem-free access to e-resources, staff manner and communication and good experiences of our document delivery and inter-library loans service.

  - Interestingly, participants had a good understanding of what services we provide, why we provide them and what factors restrict our services.

- Library print resources were mentioned almost as much as electronic resources:

  - This suggests that print still has a significant role for these students.

  - Mentions of both e-resources and print resources were very mixed, with no significant themes emerging beyond those mentioned above.

- Most participants use Google Scholar as their primary (or one of their primary) means of finding literature:

  - Reasons for using Google Scholar included the fact that it provides a good user experience, allows them to find and access articles.

  - There was some negative comparison of library resources to Google Scholar in terms of usability.

- There is some significant use of non-Library Services resources:

  - Six participants talked about how they used information services provided by other sources, including sourcing literature via peers, using other libraries and using methods that might violate copyright and licensing agreements (Sci-Hub, peer-to-peer file-sharing systems and sharing via Facebook).

  - Some of this was by chance or from personal preference, but a significant amount was prompted by dissatisfaction with Library Services (e.g. not being able to find material they need or being unhappy with the time required for document delivery and inter-library loans).

As a result of these findings, we
- have begun communicating findings to library staff via a senior managers' meeting, an open staff development session and meetings with relevant teams. This is being done in order to engage colleagues with the findings and to inform discussions about how Library Services as a whole can meet research students' needs.

- have founded a research student forum and used findings to inform the first meeting.

  - We did an activity to learn more about their literature search/review processes.

# How research students at The Open University conduct research:
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- shall continue our investigations into:
  - developing a print collection of research methods books
  - reviewing recalls on print books.
- shall develop a plan for raising awareness of library resources and helping students overcome any access issues.
- shall develop a plan for liaising with supervisors.
- shall use identified themes to inform future research on and engagement with research students.

We found that cognitive mapping was easy to undertake and led to insightful data. One participant fed back that the timed element made it feel like an exam but that changing coloured pens at timed intervals helped them talk through their map afterwards. Otherwise, the changing of pens was of limited use in this project, because most of our participants mapped their research projects chronologically, so the colours capture what happened first in their project rather than what was most important.

There were issues with one participant's handwriting, which was illegible in some parts and reduced the usefulness of their map. We shall investigate whether there is any appropriate means of addressing this, or whether it just has to be treated as an inherent risk of the method.

We also learned that incentives were important to the students – a number were very keen to get their vouchers – as was anonymity. The guarantee of anonymity was communicated in the consent process, but we shall emphasise it at the beginning of any future interviews.

Segmentation of data was challenging in terms of deciding what constituted a unit of meaning, and coding data was time-consuming, but these issues are normal, and guidance from research methods literature helped resolve them. What's more, the application of these methods increased the value of the data and our understanding of research students.

One of the biggest lessons learned relates to consent for the sharing and re-use of the research data. We are unable to share any text or images from the research data outside The Open University as we did not originally intend to disseminate the research more widely and did not factor it in to our consent forms. We are very keen to be able to share our data more widely in future and shall adapt our approach accordingly.

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# Developing academic writing support for postgraduate researchers at the University of Wolverhampton

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The University of Wolverhampton (UoW) is a post-1992 university split across four campuses, with eighteen schools and institutes housed in four faculties. Support for students' learning and academic development is provided by Learning and Information Services, part of the Directorate of Academic Support, both in person at the university's four learning centres and online. The Skills for Learning team within Learning and Information Services is responsible for providing academic skills support for students from all disciplines and levels in the form of embedded sessions, stand-alone workshops and one-to-one support. The service is extremely popular with students and very well used by staff, with good engagement across all faculties. Whilst all students are welcome to access support, it became apparent that the skills workshops, which are more introductory in tone and content, were being used by doctoral research students. A need was therefore identified for extra academic skills support that was appropriate and relevant for research students' requirements, resulting in the development and piloting of a new programme of doctoral academic writing support.

## A need for doctoral student support

Whilst academic skills support (and specifically academic writing support) for undergraduates is generally well signposted and easily accessible, provision for postgraduate researchers (PGRs) to build on core skills in this area can be overlooked because it is assumed that students at this level develop these capabilities independently (Odena & Burgess, 2015). This outlook largely neglects the fact that many students enrolled on doctoral programmes require supplementary academic support for various reasons (for example, returning to university after a break, or progressing directly from undergraduate to PhD study, as is common in some disciplines), and promotes a view of students at this level as essentially homogeneous and sharing a broadly similar skillset. More than 75% of doctoral students fail to complete their studies within the expected four-year time frame or part-time equivalent (HEFCE, 2010), and it is estimated that issues with academic writing and thesis completion are contributing factors (Odena & Burgess, 2015). The identification of various 'thresholds' that doctoral students must overcome or progress past gives further support to the notion that almost all PGRs, at different stages of study, may require additional assistance or strategies for developing their learning further (Kiley, 2009)

In enhancing the work that we could do with PGRs, we focused on developing specific academic writing support that could sit alongside existing provision for students in areas such as English for academic purposes (EAP) (open only to non-native speakers of English), and broader researcher development in line with the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. At UoW, assistance and guidance are amply provided in these areas by the Doctoral College and the International Academy, so it was essential that additional skills for learning support should concentrate on academic writing for the purposes of thesis completion. This would not only distinguish the areas for which we could provide support, but would also create appropriate guidance for doctoral students who are native speakers of English yet require additional academic writing instruction, a group that can be neglected due to lack of assistance for home students that mirrors EAP provision and associated writing support (Wingate & Tribble, 2012).

The fact that PGRs required academic writing support was demonstrated by the consistent use of Skills for Learning workshops by research students. A surprising number of PGRs attended these sessions, especially workshops relating to the writing process, the most popular being Academic Writing, Writing a Literature Review and Introduction to Critical Thinking. There was an even distribution of students from such diverse backgrounds as biomedical science, musical composition, psychology and fine arts. The skills sessions ran weekly throughout the year, whereas PGR support in other areas tended to be clustered in semesters one and two; student feedback noted that more

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frequent sessions and one-to-one appointments for PGRs would be helpful. Thus, there appeared to be a gap – and a need – for suitable doctoral-level academic writing support that was year-round and easily accessible.

## Developing writing support for postgraduate researchers

The main areas that needed to be addressed were support tailored to this level of study, and issues of timing and regularity. Whilst support for undergraduates could be targeted to periods of enrolment, starts of semesters, teaching weeks or deadlines, the nature of doctoral study requires a more flexible approach. Although many PGRs commence their degrees at designated intake points throughout the year, their progress thereafter (and attendance on campus) is much more sporadic and unlikely to follow a set pattern. The time constraints of part-time students, distance learners and those completing professional doctorates are more complex still and require proper consideration. It was also important to pay attention to what students were actively seeking help with: namely, introductory academic writing support appropriate for doctoral-level study. Supervisors confirmed that general writing skills were indeed often lacking, and that more support was needed.

Through working with the Doctoral College – and building on the patterns identified in the PGR use of Skills for Learning workshops – a new timetable of workshops and one-to-one support was developed, including a tailor-made Academic Writing at Doctoral Level workshop, which ran both on the Doctoral College's Research Skills Development series and in a separate Skills for Researchers programme. The workshop addresses macro and micro issues relating to thesis writing that are common across all disciplines. The workshop starts with a wide perspective, including thinking broadly about readership, what each section of a thesis needs to argue or achieve, and strategies for creating structure across chapters and sections. It then looks more closely at how to write engagingly while making a clear and effective argument. Students are encouraged to critique sections from journal articles and theses, examining what makes a particular style of writing interesting or difficult to read. There is time at the end of the session for students to discuss work individually.

The need for more regular support (and one-to-one help) was also addressed through drop-ins, which run twice a month across the university's two largest campuses, and appointments at all campuses available by request. Further assistance and interim support between workshops have proved popular. Appointments are available for discussing sections of writing in detail. Researchers requiring additional help finding information or using referencing software have also used them. Drop-in sessions tend to be accessed by students with questions or issues to discuss rather than for writing support, and are also used for arranging follow-up appointments.



**Doctoral Drop In**
Skills for Learning

**City Campus**
First Wednesday of every month
Harrison Learning Centre: Pod 1
2 – 4pm

**Walsall Campus**
Last Wednesday of every month
Walsall Learning Centre: Pod 1
2 – 4pm

**Saturday drop-in sessions**
Walsall Learning Centre: Helpzone
12.30-2pm
Next drop-in session: 6th May

**Skills for Learning**
Skills for Researchers

**Doctoral Appointments**
Skills for Learning

**PhD and Prof-Doc appointments**
By request at all campuses – please email
skills@wlv.ac.uk to book

**Tuesday evening appointments**
Walsall Learning Centre: Helpzone
5.30pm-7.30pm
Please email skills@wlv.ac.uk to book an appointment

**Not on campus?**
Email skills@wlv.ac.uk to arrange an appointment on Skype or ASSIST

**Skills for Learning**
Skills for Researchers

*Marketing for doctoral support at the University of Wolverhampton*

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## Findings, challenges, successes and surprises

Since the start of this academic year (2016–17), uptake of the new PGR academic writing support has been very good – initial academic writing workshops were oversubscribed and interest in follow-up sessions remained high. Feedback on workshops and one-to-one support has been overwhelmingly positive: users of appointments have mentioned increased confidence and proficiency in their writing, along with improved feedback from supervisors, whilst workshop attendees also noted their usefulness, particularly for assessing and critiquing examples of academic writing and applying their findings to their own work.

*Thanks for the privilege. It was an intuitive workshop. I wish I had one like this when I started my PhD. Once again thanks. – Final-year Education PhD student*

*Just to update you on the outcome of my supervisors' meeting last Friday – they were really pleased with the work and in fact one of them remarked that 'my work is starting to look like a PhD thesis' – Second-year Business PhD student*

The service appears to be used in quite a linear way, in that attendees at workshops often book follow-up appointments, which then become regular bookings. Many have also noted how helpful it is to discuss their research with an independent and impartial listener who is not a subject specialist, as this forces them to explain their ideas and arguments more clearly – a process that often leads to greater clarity in their writing. For some students, a form of support outside their relationship with their supervisors is also valuable. Others also find interaction with a range of students in the workshops is a welcome break from some of the loneliness and isolation of doctoral study, which can be a common issue (Wisker, *et al.* 2007).

One of the surprises has been how strongly PGRs favour face-to-face daytime weekday meetings, despite evening, weekend and online support being available. Whilst flexibility is essential, users of the provision are evidently keen to attend where possible, some even appearing to use face-to-face meetings as an incentive to come onto campus. Particular challenges of providing support at this level have become apparent too, most notably around creating workshops that provide specific support relating to thesis writing that are generic enough to be applicable to most disciplines. A common issue in feedback for workshops is that students want to work with texts that are more subject-specific, yet it is difficult to achieve this when offering university-wide sessions open to all PGRs. Whilst the importance of discipline-specific texts in developing academic writing techniques is well known (Wingate, 2012; Odena & Burgess, 2015) this is perhaps a line of support that is best addressed through supervisory assistance. Nevertheless, the new workshops and one-to-one sessions so far appear to be highly effective in providing the majority of students with useful first steps in developing their thesis writing and considering the approaches they may take.

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# Building networks to strengthen research data management advocacy and training

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University College London (UCL) is a research-intensive university with 380 research departments, units, institutes and centres that are home to 12,000 research staff and research students. The university has been at the forefront of delivering open access to research publications through Discovery, the institutional publications repository. In August 2013 the Research Data Executive Services Group published a Research Data Policy outlining the responsibilities of research staff and students and describing the variety of institutional services that are available to support Research Data Management (RDM). UCL's Research Data Policy is supported by two Research Data Support Officers (RDSOs) who work as part of the Liaison and Support Services within UCL Library Services and work on a regular basis with the Research Data Service based in Research IT Services and a number of other central services. This article will briefly describe how the RDSOs have developed links with other services in order to improve awareness of RDM services.

## Research Data Management advocacy at UCL

The RDSOs support best practices in RDM and sharing through a number of avenues, including a website that provides guidance on practical issues in RDM, support on UCL and research funder policies and advice on writing data management plans. The website was developed by a working group of library colleagues; the ongoing development of guidance on the website continues to draw on the expertise of subject librarians, copyright officers and others in the library.

Attending faculty and departmental meetings has been a primary channel of advocating for effective RDM and sharing. Alongside this, the RDSOs regularly attend events in the university aimed at research staff and deliver tailored training and workshops for research groups and departments.

One-to-one and research group support are other key areas of our advocacy activities. Responding to enquiries and meeting researchers is part of day-to-day support to users. In addition, the RDSOs review data management plans by giving feedback on the content and layout of each plan as well as advice on where to find funders' requirements and guidance for writing the plan. They also provide information on relevant university or external resources to improve it. Users are offered the opportunity to submit a second draft of their plan for a last review. Through the very positive feedback sent by users, we have observed that such assistance has an extensive and immediate impact on their grant application and potentially on their future project. It also provides an opportunity to point to relevant central services, and to explain to a researcher several aspects of data management.

## Challenges to advocacy

The size and structure of UCL present a number of challenges to the RSDOs, including the number of researchers the service is trying to support, the diversity of research taking place, and researchers working as part of overlapping institutions such as the NHS. Working across a broad range of research areas also presents a challenge in developing domain-specific knowledge of Research Data Management. Since the inception of the RDSO roles, one approach to tackling this problem has been to draw upon the expertise of library colleagues.

The results of a survey carried out in 2016 (Fellous-Sigrist, 2016) showed that whilst a positive 70% of respondents were aware of the UCL and funders' policy on research data, there was a much lower level of awareness of local services: both the RDM website (online since September 2015) and the Research Data Storage facility (available since 2012) were unknown to 60% of the participants. The survey also helped to identify areas in which researchers felt they were in particular need of support.

# Building networks to strengthen research data management advocacy and training

## Responding to the challenge: building links with other support services

The RDSOs have used the expertise and knowledge of other support services across the university to address the challenges outlined above. Some of these links have been 'obvious' ones, whilst others have been more specific to UCL.

## Collaboration within Library Services

The Open Access Team at UCL provides support to researchers in achieving green and gold open access. There are frequently links and overlaps between RDM and open access services in universities in the UK. At UCL links with the Open Access Team were established early on in the process of developing a RDM support service; such collaboration includes, for example, giving joint presentations in research departments. Frequently requests for support around open access also involve requests for support on data management planning, research funder and publisher policies, and information on where to deposit research data. As data management planning (ideally) takes place early in a project, it provides opportunities for the RDSOs to promote open access and data sharing early on in the research lifecycle and help researchers plan for both of these activities.

The RDSOs have worked to introduce subject librarians to RDM issues through a series of workshops that presented some of the 'theoretical' issues around RDM. The fourth workshop was run jointly by the library and UCL IT department (Information Systems Division), and was attended by subject librarians and local departmental data managers. The RDSOs have organised further workshops drawing upon previous work on internal library education (Mattern, Brenner and Lyon, 2016). These sessions focused on discipline-specific guidance and data management plans. Outputs produced during these sessions will feed into further discipline-specific guidance being developed by the RDSOs.

Finally, the Digital Curation Manager and the Records Manager, both of whom work in Library Services, have been involved in the Library RDM Working Group from its inception. Their expertise has, for instance, been beneficial in creating online how-to guides on topics such as file formats and sensitive data for the RDM website.

## Collaboration with other central services

Alongside these 'standard' collaborations, links have been made with other support services across the university. A particularly strong and useful link has been made with Research IT Services (RITS), which offers a range of support to researchers, including the Research Data Service. This provides the live research data store and is currently developing a research data archive. RITS also provide researchers with support on high-performance computing, research software development, and training. The RITS team includes two research IT facilitators who share a similar role to the RDSOs by providing support and guidance, links to other services and advocacy for the services offered by RITS. A major benefit of these close links has been the ability to provide support to researchers on both technical and policy-related questions as well as to coordinate communications about our services and presentations in research departments. Recently the RDSOs have collaborated with colleagues from RITS to set up regular drop-ins twice a month, where researchers can get support on a range of topics, including funder policies and best practices in RDM, practical advice on data storage, support for research software development, high-performance computing and handling sensitive data. On average, five researchers have attended each of the last four sessions; interestingly, they represented six out of UCL's eleven faculties. Though still a new offering, we have found it a useful way for researchers to get advice quickly on a number of related areas without enquiries having to be passed across different teams. It has also given members of the services contributing

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to the drop-ins a better understanding of each other's services.

Since December 2016 a new half-day session for PhD students has been offered on the theme of research integrity. It is a collaboration between the RDSOs, the Office of the Vice-Provost (Research) and the Doctoral Skills Development Programme. Sessions aim to provide an overview of research support services at UCL whilst also engaging early career researchers on the issue of research integrity. Research integrity is conceived of broadly – sessions include an introduction to ethics, data protection, RDM, open access and research IT – and there is interactive discussion of dilemmas faced by researchers around these topics as well as an opportunity for PhD students to get advice on them. The feedback from doctoral students has been very positive: out of 108 participants so far, 56% found the course 'useful' and 36% found it 'very useful'. There was particular enthusiasm for the practical nature of the session and the overview provided of the various research support services available whilst they are at UCL.

## Conclusion: continuing to develop links

Developing links across support services within the university has allowed the RSDOs to have a broader and more meaningful impact than would otherwise be possible. Whilst ensuring researchers comply with funder and university policies is a core aim of the RDSOs, the service is also keen to promote RDM as integral to good research practice. By developing links across the university, the RDSOs have been able to incorporate discussions of RDM into sessions on research integrity, provide support on RDM alongside support on high-performance computing, software development and data storage, and develop further links across the university. One of these future links is with the Organisational Development department of Human Resources, who have proposed including sessions on RDM as part of a bi-annual research staff conference. The RDSOs have found drawing upon the expertise in the library and developing links across the university useful in tackling the challenge of advocating RDM across a large and diverse research community. This experience may potentially be applicable to other services.

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## Notes

1   As listed in the UCL Departments A to Z available at https://www.ucl.ac.uk/departments/a-z/ [accessed 4 August 2016]

2   Figure from the UCL Human Resources as of 1 October 2015 and Registry Services as of 1 December 2015

3   Available at: www.ucl.ac.uk/library/research-support/research-data [accessed 24 March 2017]

# Making a statement
## Funder-compliant data access statements and support offered at the University of Bristol

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## Abstract

There is an increased focus on the inclusion of data access statements in articles since the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) expectation regarding this came into effect in May 2015. Data access statements are brief declarations in an article which cite any data underpinning claims and note any access restrictions placed upon these data, and the EPSRC expectation makes such a statement mandatory in any article acknowledging EPSRC funding. The University of Bristol has taken a variety of approaches to raise awareness of the requirements for data access statements, including promotional campaigns, email alerting and advocacy activities. In addition, we have developed guidance in several different formats. In addition to traditional discipline-specific guides, we have created an interactive web-based tool and a LaTeX package to help researchers create compliant statements. We have also worked collaboratively with other library teams, including Open Access, both to identify researchers in need of assistance and to monitor compliance. The latest figures indicate that 48% of researchers contacted have subsequently added compliant data access statements to their papers, and there has been a three-fold increase in the number of authors including compliant data access statements since our campaign to increase awareness began.

## Background

The 2011 Research Councils UK (RCUK) Common Principles on Data Policy outlines high-level standards and expectations for the management and sharing of research data.[1] In particular, the policy includes a statement that 'published results should always include information on how to access the supporting data'. This is generally achieved by means of a data availability or data access statement: a brief declaration to readers citing any underpinning data, usually by means of a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), and also noting any access restrictions placed upon these data.

The RCUK principles are reflected in more or less detail in the individual data policies of the majority of UK funding bodies. Two bodies in particular have chosen to include a specific requirement for data access statements in their policies: from 1 May 2015, all articles acknowledging Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) funding are required to include a data access statement describing how any supporting data may be accessed, or alternatively, reasons why they cannot.[2] The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) data policy includes a similar requirement for NERC-funded research.[3] The penalties for non-compliance are potentially very serious for both the researcher and the institution – the NERC data policy also stipulates that those who do not comply with the policy may have award payments withheld, or be deemed ineligible for future funding.

The University of Bristol Research Data Service (RDS) was established in 2013 to provide support in all aspects of research data management to academic staff and postgraduates at the university, including the management of the institutional research data repository, data.bris (https://data.bris.ac.uk/data/). We were therefore keen to ensure that all Bristol researchers were made aware of the specific data access statement requirements for EPSRC and NERC-funded research, and to offer support and advice where needed.

We initially focused on broadly promoting EPSRC data management expectations, including producing data access statements. As EPSRC-funded researchers are not required to submit a data management plan (DMP) with their grant applications, it was felt that there was a greater risk of essential data management tasks being overlooked in this group. Once the EPSRC campaign was under way, we extended aspects of it to NERC-funded researchers as well. We used a variety of strategies to ensure that our message was widely received, including working with other teams in the university library and across the university. These methods are discussed below.

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## Awareness-raising strategies

We launched a multi-phase promotional campaign in early 2015; this focused primarily on the faculty of engineering, which had been identified as the faculty in receipt of most EPSRC funding. Firstly, posters, banners and digital signage were placed in key locations in the faculty buildings, outlining the four main tasks required to meet EPSRC expectations on data management:

- preservation of data for at least ten years post-project
- inclusion of a data access statement in all published papers
- inclusion of data management costs in grant applications
- creation of a data management plan (EPSRC require this to be completed, but not submitted as part of a grant application.)

The poster can be seen in Fig. 1. However, we were aware that there were still likely to be some members of staff who would not see these, so we also created a series of leaflets which were sent to key contacts and disseminated at School assemblies and workshops (Fig. 2).



*EPSRC data management poster*



*EPSRC leaflet 1*
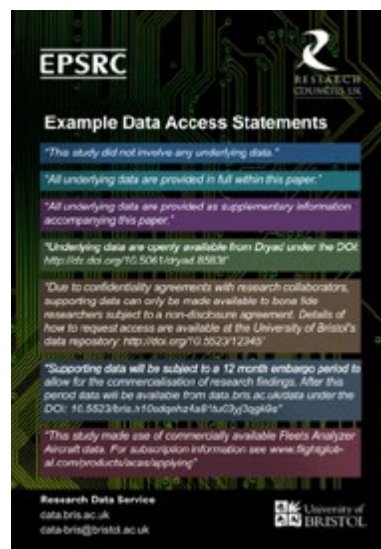


*EPSRC postcard – reverse*

In May 2016, a year after the EPSRC expectations came into effect, we launched a second series of posters and leaflets with greater focus on the requirements for data access statements. The leaflets were sent out to research staff with their payslips and included examples of compliant data access statements on the reverse side, in order to help researchers construct their own statements (Fig. 3).

In late 2016 we also extended the poster campaign to selected non-engineering research staff. By consulting EPSRC's Grants on the Web portal (http://gow.epsrc.ac.uk/) we were able to identify individuals and research groups in receipt of significant EPSRC funding, and sent copies of our poster to them.

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The other aspect of our awareness strategy involved collaborative working with the library's Open Access (OA) team. Researchers wishing to claim article-processing charges from the university's RCUK and Charity Open Access Fund block grants apply to the OA team. From April 2015, the OA team sent a standard email to researchers acknowledging EPSRC or NERC funding in their claim form to remind them of the data access statement requirements, and forwarded details of these applications to the Research Data Service.

Finally, in 2015, a one-off series of workshops was added to the regular training schedule specifically addressing the EPSRC expectations on research data and what researchers would need to do to fulfil them. We followed this up by updating our usual workshops and other advocacy and outreach activities (aimed at researchers from all faculties) to include explicit mention of the requirements for data access statements, including examples of different types of statement.

## Guidance and support

We created a number of web-based guidance documents and tools to support our awareness-raising activities. These were intended to act as stand-alone sources of advice that we could direct researchers to outside our training workshops.

Firstly, we brought together more examples of compliant data access statements for major subject specialisms. Following the discipline divisions at Bristol, we produced three brief guides to data access statements in arts and social sciences, biomedicine and health science, and science and engineering. We used examples from publications by Bristol researchers in almost all instances to ensure that they were relevant to our audience. The examples covered a variety of situations, including:

- papers without data
- review (secondary analysis) papers
- data as supplementary material
- data published in the institutional repository
- data published in an external repository
- data published with access restrictions
- data described in a separate data paper

We received feedback that the data access statement examples were helpful, but that more guidance on how to decide which data to publish was a higher priority. After consultation with senior academics in the faculty of engineering we created more in-depth case studies to describe this aspect in more detail. The case studies were initially intended to track a single project through the whole research lifecycle, but the selected research groups expressed caution about publicising their data management plans. We therefore limited the case studies to the later stages of the research lifecycle: data collection, selection of data for publication, data deposit, publication of findings and re-use.

We identified research groups in the faculty of engineering who had published data in the institutional data repository (http://data.bris.ac.uk/data), and from these chose datasets representing a variety of sub-disciplines and access restrictions. For example, the Sensor Platform for Healthcare in a Residential Environment (SPHERE) case study describes the publication of a dataset containing information on human participants which was published as a restricted dataset available only to bona fide researchers in line with the limits set in the participant consent forms.

We interviewed the researchers in each team responsible for collecting the data and writing up the findings in order to find out how they had decided

what data to publish. This process highlighted the intensely subjective nature of determining what constitutes 'supporting data', as it became apparent that even for papers reporting work from the same project, different types of data were selected for publication.

This subjectivity is demonstrated in our second case study, based on two papers published by the Engineering Nonlinearity group. This group had taken a nuanced, case-by-case approach to data selection; in the first example, a numerical modelling paper, they had published files containing the data points underpinning each plot in the paper. The second paper involved numerically modelling a system and comparing this to experimental results generated by testing the response of that system to different inputs. In this instance, the group decided that although the plot data points were available, it would be more relevant to readers of the second paper to publish the most representative experimental results.

Since completion of these two case studies, other engineering groups have expressed interest in having case studies based on their own data types. Lastly, we produced a range of tools to automatically generate compliant data access statements. For those who are very new to data access statements, we have developed an interactive tool using Squiffy (http://textadventures.co.uk/squiffy). This asks a series of questions around data ownership and sensitivity to guide researchers to the appropriate statement. The data access statement generator tool will be incorporated into an online research data guidance tool being developed jointly with Bath, Exeter and Cardiff that will be available for user testing in February 2017. More information on this tool will be presented at the 12th International Digital Curation Conference (http://www.dcc.ac.uk/drupal/events/idcc17).

For those who were more confident in deciding what kind of statement they needed, but merely wanted help with wording, we developed a LaTeX package that allowed researchers to generate a compliant statement at any point in their document by entering a simple command. This is available both as a ShareLaTeX template and as a zipped package for download.
All guidance documents and LaTeX templates are available on our website at https://data.bris.ac.uk/sharingdata/.

## Monitoring

Measuring impact is often difficult, but we were able to work with the OA team again to gain insight into the rates of compliance. They have monitored the compliance of published Gold papers with RCUK's policy since 2013, and as part of this were collecting information on data access statements in papers acknowledging RCUK funding. They shared this information with us, and we were able to match this against researchers to whom we had sent reminder emails (part two of our awareness campaign) in order to gauge effectiveness.

From these data, it can be seen that our awareness campaign and guidance and support activities are correlated with a significant increase in the proportion of papers with compliant data access statements. So far, in 2016 48% of researchers who were sent reminders subsequently added compliant data access statements to their papers, and we have noticed that some 'frequent flyers' are now adding statements without reminders. From 2013 to 2015 there was a gradual increase in the proportion of papers with compliant data access statements (7.4 % to 10.8%) across all faculties; however, from 2015 to 2016, when the additional support was put into place, this figure increased three-fold, to 34.8% (Fig. 4). When only the publications acknowledging funding from EPSRC and NERC are considered, the increase from 2015-2016 is even more dramatic: from 9.2% to 37.0% for EPSRC, and from 18.9% to 60.1% for NERC (Fig. 5).

Overall data statement compliance 2013-2016
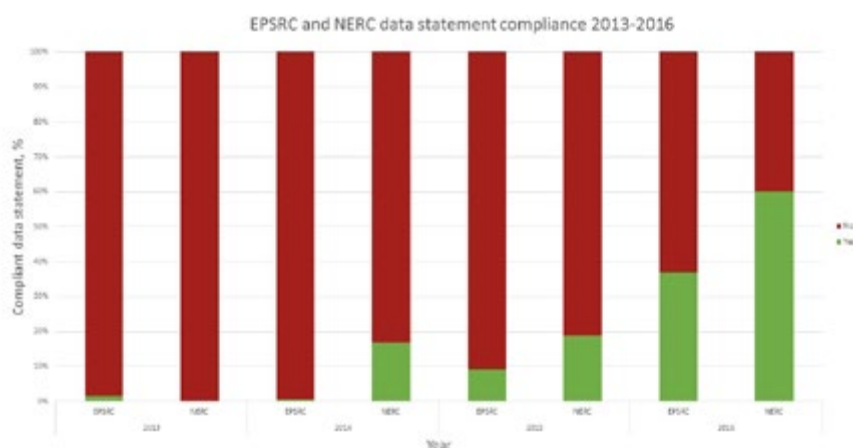


EPSRC and NERC data statement compliance 2013-2016

## Next steps

Whilst there have been significant improvements in the targeted groups, overall more than half of eligible papers are still non-compliant, so continued reminders and encouragement are necessary. Much of the guidance that has been produced so far has been weighted towards meeting EPSRC requirements, and it would be useful to expand the work to cover RCUK-wide data access statement stipulations. Finally, it is essential that we continue working closely with other library teams and faculties across the university in order to ensure that we provide relevant, timely advice to researchers.

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2    EPSRC, 2014. Clarifications of EPSRC expectations on research data management [online]. Available from: https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/files/aboutus/standards/clarificationsofexpectationsresearchdatamanagement/ [accessed 1 December 2016]

3    NERC, 2010. NERC Data Policy [online]. Available from: http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/sites/data/policy/data-policy/ [accessed 1 December 2016]

# Bibliometrics
## a job for the library or the research office?

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Bibliometrics was essentially a discipline created for librarians. Eugene Garfield's now much vilified Journal Impact Factor was created to help librarians to assess the 'bang for buck' of their journal subscriptions. It did this by providing a rough and ready 'average cites per paper' figure. Of course, in a world obsessed with value, this ubiquitous measure started being used for all sorts of other purposes; by academics seeking to choose the 'best' journals to publish in; by journal publishers to sell their journals; and by those seeking to measure the contribution of academics themselves. Quite rightly, there is much backlash against this, and the result has been a proliferation of additional publication metrics attempting to measure everything from level of citation and collaboration the visibility, reach and impact not only of journals, but also of articles, individuals, universities, countries and everything in-between. Interestingly, the expansion of the role of bibliometrics from its small beginnings in libraries to the wider world of research assessment mirrors my own experience of moving from the library to the research office (RO). In this article I reflect on this move and whether it makes a difference where in the institution bibliometrics is based.

My own bibliometrics journey began as an academic services manager with research support responsibilities at Loughborough University Library. Initially the extent of my role was to understand this burgeoning new field and to advise academics on where to find their h-index and how to engage with new services such as Web of Science's Researcher ID. In 2010 I established the Lis-Bibliometrics Forum with Jenny Delasalle, then of the University of Warwick, to share advice and best practice with fellow librarians seeking to support their academic colleagues through this new field. In 2011, I wrote up a survey on bibliometrics training practices in another SCONUL Focus piece (Gadd, 2011).

Around this time (2010) the game changed when *Times Higher Education* separated off from the QS World University Rankings to develop its own World Ranking of universities using a new methodology that allocated 30% of the total score to citations. This had a negative impact on Loughborough University as a relatively young university (receiving its charter in 1966) which has neither medical nor life sciences faculties, and which had a high proportion of engineering disciplines that relied on conference publications, which tend to be less frequently cited. Using newly purchased citation benchmarking tools, I found myself spending more time investigating some of the reasons for this negative impact. Then in 2014, the new Research Excellence Framework (REF) weighted outputs at 65% for all panels (in the 2008 RAE outputs could be weighted from 50% to 80% at the discretion of the panel). The REF also offered panels the choice of accessing citation data to support their decision-making (HEFCE, 2014). At this point the RO saw the area of publication strategy as important enough to merit the re-focusing of an existing vacancy and the post of Research Policy Manager (Publications) was born. I applied and was successful.

I've often been asked whether this post would sit better in the library, and I have colleagues at other institutions who do similar jobs who are based in the library. In Loughborough's case I would say that moving to the RO was critical because we were operating in an environment where publication practices in some areas would benefit from change. There were three reasons why being based in the RO enabled me to drive forward policy change far more easily than if I had been based in the library.

Firstly, there is something neutral about libraries. They are the quintessential intermediary sitting between academics and students on one side, and suppliers on the other. In the area of publication practice, libraries advise and facilitate, they don't set and monitor policy. Research offices on the other hand have more of a monitoring and compliance role, so a message from the RO has more impact. Secondly, there is something about geography and access. Libraries, by virtue of being large, self-contained units, are often geographically

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separate from the Vice-Chancellor's office or other decision-making centres. At Loughborough, the RO shares the same building as the Vice-Chancellor's senior management team including the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research). This inevitably increases the visibility of the RO and those who work there. I've had some significant conversations with senior managers about publication strategy as a result of bumping into them in corridors. This may seem minor, but in my experience is actually quite valuable. Thirdly, there are fewer direct distractions in the RO. Higher education libraries are busy service departments, often with tens of thousands of customers. The customer comes first, and at certain times of year it is 'all hands to the pump' – teaching, staffing information desks, and contributing to library-wide projects. By contrast the RO, although very busy and having institution-wide interactions including with performance indicators, deans and associate deans, does not have the same potential distractions. In my experience this enables a greater focus on policy matters.

Since I joined the RO in 2015 there have been significant moves forward in the provision of publication data in various settings to raise awareness and start conversations around best practice. There is now a new university key performance indicator for citations; publication data is supplied regularly to Schools to inform conversations with senior managers; and some research visibility data is now supplied as part of the Performance & Development Review process for academic staff. As a result of this increased activity, we considered it important to respond to the Metric Tide report (Wilsdon, 2015) to develop an institutional statement on the responsible use of such indicators. Loughborough was one of the first universities in the UK to do so (Else, 2017) and our statement is available on the web (Loughborough University, 2016).

My move to the RO does not mean that the library no longer has a stake in bibliometrics in particular or publication strategy in general – far from it! All academic librarians are expected to have achieved a certain level of competence in bibliometrics. Indeed it was the library's work in this area that inspired a wider piece of work commissioned by the Lis-Bibliometrics Forum, sponsored by Elsevier Research Intelligence and carried out by the University of Sheffield, into the development of a sector-wide set of bibliometric competencies (University of Sheffield, 2016). This work should deliver a set of entry-level and core competency statements for those engaging with bibliometrics at different levels of specialism. It is hoped that this will facilitate the recruitment and training of staff in this area.

The library also continues to deliver training on bibliometrics and publication strategy either in conjunction with me or independently. I deliver briefings to academic librarians to keep them up to date with institutional policy changes, and they helpfully share their learnings with me. One of the key bibliometric services that the library provides – and on which I utterly rely – is one-to-one support for academics and postgraduate researchers. I work part-time (0.5 full-time equivalent) and do not have the capacity to respond to every individual query, whereas their remit and subject focus allows for this more easily.

Thus, to answer my own question as to whether bibliometrics sits better in the library or the RO, I think the answer has to be both. My role in the RO has certainly enabled a greater focus on this important area within the institution. It has allowed the Schools to make evidence-based decisions about their own publication ambitions and provided a policy framework for the university to work with. However, these policies could not be driven forward without the support of the library, and indeed are influenced by my network of informed colleagues in the library. Whether the bibliometric function is based in the library or the research (or even planning) office, it is essential that the relevant parties develop good working relationships in order for the institution to gain the maximum benefit. Hopefully, having a librarian in the research office facilitates this.

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# Supporting REF in a small university
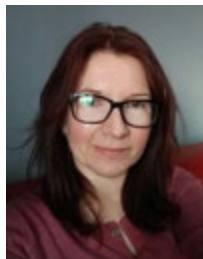
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The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the system used to assess the quality of research in UK higher education institutions and has direct implications for the amount of government research funding that higher education institutions receive. It is managed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), but represents the higher education funding bodies for all of the UK. Following on from the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), the first REF took place in 2014, with submissions covering the period from the beginning of 2008 to the end of 2013. The next REF is due to take place in 2021; submissions will be made towards the end of 2020, and will cover a census period from the start of 2014 to the end of 2020. REF 2014 submissions were evaluated on the quality of the following: research outputs (65%); impact (20%); environment (15%). It is thought that the three main criteria for REF will be similar for 2021. However, at the time of writing HEFCE is consulting with all UK higher education institutions on the exact format of REF 2021 following Lord Stern's review of REF, published in July 2016 (Stern, 2016).

Given that both REF, and prior to that the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), were heavily weighted towards research outputs (usually publications), higher education and research libraries can provide a lot of support for this part of the submission. At Queen Margaret University, the role of Research Support Librarian has evolved as demands to inform both the REF 2014 submission and the planning for REF 2021 – including providing support in bibliometrics, altmetrics and open access publishing – have increased.

For REF 2014, the university submitted to five REF units of assessment. The process for compiling this submission centred on the research publications of the university. There had been little library involvement with RAE 2008 other than assistance in obtaining hard copies of some publications. However, because the new census period for REF almost coincided with the advocacy of the university's research publications repository, eResearch, the repository seemed a logical source of support for the selection process for REF 2014. Originally eResearch was heavily promoted as an open access repository, but there had been limited success in engaging academics with open access publishing despite an institutional mandate. It was recognised that eResearch would suffer from a dearth of content should it follow an 'open access only' policy, so the repository has always accepted both open and closed content to attract more academic engagement, and the advocacy has begun to focus on the repository's dual content, both open and closed access. Mediated deposit, whereby library staff put academics' papers in the repository for them, is a service that has always been provided. As well as asking academics for their publications, and encouraging them to make the deposit process part of the publication workflow, the library also carried out retrospective searches of databases to find works written by Queen Margaret University staff, and new publications alerts were set up to ensure that eResearch captured as much of the published output of the university as possible. The university's Research Strategy Committee approved a proposal to adopt the repository as a formal tool to support the REF selection process and mandated that only papers deposited in eResearch would be eligible for the REF. This was not completely adhered to, but served to focus the minds of many academics on depositing their publications in the repository. As eResearch runs EPrints software, it was also possible to use an EPrints plug-in tool that had been designed for the previous RAE, and then been adapted at the University of Glasgow. The plug-in enabled our academics to select up to four of their papers that they felt were strongest for submission, and reports were then generated using Microsoft Access database software. As well as the use of the repository to collect papers, there was also a demand for bibliometric information to inform the selection process, which again fell under the remit of the library. Citation counts were collected from Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar.

# Supporting REF in a small university

The university's REF 2014 submission was widely regarded as successful, and with the census for REF 2021 starting on 1 January 2014, attention soon turned towards that. Particular notice was paid to the announcement made by HEFCE in March 2014 that an open access policy was to be adopted and would affect all papers accepted for publication from 1 April 2016 in any publication bearing an ISSN, i.e. mainly journal articles and conference proceedings published in journal format. The policy follows the 'green' approach to open access publishing, and requires that the post-print version of the paper be deposited in a repository within three months of publication until April 2018. From this date, authors have three months from their paper being accepted for publication to comply with the policy. Papers that have been published via the 'gold' open access model (where an article processing charge has been paid to make the published version open access) are still compliant with the policy and can be submitted as an exception. Advocacy for the REF open access policy began at the university almost immediately, and has been led by the research support librarian. Awareness of the policy was raised via a series of drop-in sessions, attendance at departmental meetings and a REF libguide and handouts; information was also shared across the library's social media accounts. At the time of writing, we are approaching the end of the first year of the policy, and advocacy is now mainly targeted at individuals who are actively considering where to publish in order to make sure that their paper will be compliant with the REF open access policy. We are also requesting a copy of the post-print once a paper has been published. Confusion over what the post-print actually is continues to be a challenge for some authors.

Here, the audit process has begun earlier for REF 2021 than it did for REF 2014, and the library is providing reports again based on all the publications from the census date. The audit reports hold the same bibliographic detail as before, and take citation counts from Scopus and Google Scholar. The author h-index is not currently being included in the reports, but there has been more interest in this than with the previous REF. Web of Science has been dropped for citation counts, as they were usually almost identical to those in Scopus. It is possible that there will be a move to taking citation counts from Harzing's Publish or Perish (PoP) rather than Google Scholar, as PoP now also draws information from both Microsoft Academic and Google Scholar. As well as citation counts, the reports also contain the Altmetric doughnut, which has been in place in our repository since 2015, and demonstrates the online attention that a paper is receiving on social media sites, news outlets, referencing software etc. Online attention is measured much more quickly than traditional citation-based bibliometrics, which can take years to build, and can be useful for assessing the impact of a piece of research. The Altmetric addition has been favourably received by the university's REF managers. Finally, compliance with the REF open access policy is also recorded, for papers accepted for publication after April 2016. At the time of writing, the majority of the papers affected are compliant, which hopefully indicates that the awareness raising campaign is successful. The compilation of the reports is not automated, involves pulling together information from a number of sources, and is very time consuming for the role of the research support librarian in the weeks leading up to the audits.

Though the full details of REF 2021 are not yet finalised, the outcome of the consultation on the Stern Review should not impact too much on the support that the library offers the university. However there is concern over the implications of the recommendation that academics can submit only publications that they have published while at their current place of employment. Author affiliations are not usually recorded in repositories, so there is potential here for having to trawl back through records to check authors' places of employment, and for having to add a new field to the record, showing the author's affiliation, so it can be kept for future reference. While it is not currently mandatory for authors to adopt of the ORCiD identifier (a number which serves essentially as an author disambiguation tool), it may become so in

# Supporting REF in a small university

future. The university is currently considering how to prepare for this. Likewise, though the publication of research data is not part of REF 2021, it could potentially play a part in future assessments, and our support for this requires more development.

To conclude, supporting REF in a small university poses challenges for the library. Extra demands for information and knowledge are being placed on a service that is already stretched both for staff time and money. Alongside this is the ongoing development of the REF, which could potentially change the demands on the library in the near future and further down the line. However, while providing support for REF does present challenges, it also provides the opportunity to engage with the wider university by raising the profile of the repository and library staff, and to learn more about the changing scholarly communications environment and the developments that support it.

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# Library support for the lifecycle of research publications

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## The University of Reading research review

The University of Reading is a research-intensive university and, following the last research excellence framework exercise (REF), a review of all its research activities was carried out in order to form a strategic plan looking ahead to 2020. This review presented an opportunity for the library to strengthen its support for research, particularly in areas relating to research publications, including open access, bibliometrics and the role of the university's institutional repository, CentAUR. Both Alison and Paul were involved in various working groups, and one area in which the university was particularly keen to improve was citations for research outputs. Alison sat on the enhancing research publications and dissemination task group and Paul sat on the research support implementation group. Through a combination of these groups we successfully outlined the need for additional resources in order to boost the enhancement and dissemination of research publications, which formed a part of the wider university research 2020 plan. It was concluded that improved access to research performance data, bibliographic evaluation and analysis tools, and additional staff, were needed in order to address the lack of a formal mechanism for monitoring the quality and quantity of the university's research output.

The methodology to be employed for high-level monitoring of research outputs would take the form of a research monitoring mechanism that would use individual researchers' publications lists extracted from CentAUR. In terms of bibliographic evaluation and analysis, it was important to create a new role that would encompass responsibility for this area. Although initially the focus of the post was on bibliometrics alone, we subsequently decided to broaden the profile of the role to incorporate open access, altmetrics and research identifiers, so that it changed from a pure bibliometrician to a research publications adviser – a more appealing role. The role has enabled us to maximise the potential of new subscriptions to Scopus, SciVal, and Altmetric, all obtained as part of our involvement in the research review.

## The role of the research publications adviser

The research publications adviser role involves supporting researchers throughout the research lifecycle, including researcher identity, journal choices, the publication process and post-publication monitoring of bibliometric and altmetric indicators.

Encouraging researchers to curate their own digital identity has become a key focus of the research publications adviser role. A clear digital identity is vital to ensure that researchers' works are correctly attributed and that their work is discoverable, and so easier to find, read and cite. As part of the set-up process for SciVal, we had to check the Scopus author profiles for all our research staff. It became clear that most researchers did not realise that they even had a Scopus author profile (something that they would not have created themselves) because the university had not had a subscription to Scopus previously. Through training sessions to both researchers and our graduate school, one-to-one meetings and presentations to away days, communities of practice, research groups and research division meetings, Karen has been promoting a digital researcher 'health check', which includes signing up for an Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID), populating their ORCID profiles, checking Scopus author profile records and creating Google Scholar accounts. Partly as a result of recent ORCID advocacy (for example: http://libguides.reading.ac.uk/orcid, accessed 22 March 2017), the number of ORCID profiles registered with a University of Reading email address has grown from 387 in January 2016 to 880 in February 2017.

To support the use of bibliometric tools, Karen has been running sessions on bibliometrics so that users can understand the metrics available to them, be aware of their limitations and interpret them correctly and according

# Library support for the lifecycle of research publications

to the principles of the responsible use of metrics. This includes sessions for academic staff and graduate school students, in which she explains the peer review process. The emphasis of all these sessions has been to show the potential uses of the tools, where the data come from, how they might be used to benchmark the University of Reading's research outputs against similar institutions and how to find potential collaborators. In order to help these researchers make informed and appropriate publishing choices for their research outputs, Karen has been promoting the use of tools such as Scopus, SciVal, SCImago and Journal Citation Reports as well as other resources such as the Think Check Submit website. Through analysis of previous citation patterns for their outputs and by looking at indicators of past journal performance, she has helped researchers to hone their journal choices. We are also promoting green open access routes via CentAUR and gold through the use of funds from our Research Councils UK (RCUK) block grant, our own university gold open access fund and deals with publishers.

The research publications adviser has also been encouraging researchers to track the impact of their research outputs using a selection of bibliometric tools and Altmetric for Institutions. By finding out who is citing and talking about their work, researchers can get feedback on their journal choices, build up networks of people working in their field and interact with the readers of their research publications. An example of the closer collaboration between the library and the wider university research support staff has been working with the press team to encourage the use of digital object identifiers (DOIs) for the research papers that they were promoting in press releases and via social media. This enables any attention to the promoted outputs to be tracked using Altmetrics and makes it easier for interested readers to find and cite the research.

Researchers have to upload their research outputs to CentAUR within a limited time frame in order for them to be eligible for the next REF exercise. We've been trying to make researchers aware of the benefits of compliance by highlighting the large number of visits that the repository gets from external users searching for access to Reading's research outputs. To this end, we've been producing monthly statistics on visitor numbers, downloads, deposits, the origin of the visitors and the top downloaded items. These statistics are converted into infographics that are used for social media (our Opening Research at Reading blog [http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/open-research/, accessed 22 March 2017] and Twitter [https://twitter.com/UniRdg_CentAUR, accessed 22 March 2017]) and for circulation to the research division leaders.

# Library support for the lifecycle of research publications



## CentAUR in 2016
### A QUICK SUMMARY
Data from http://centaur.reading.ac.uk and IRUS-UK

### LOTS OF DOWNLOADS
270,691 total downloads for full year
1 millionth download from CentAUR recorded in July 2016

18 items downloaded over 1000 times
66 items downloaded over 500 times
150 items downloaded over 250 times
456 items downloaded over 100 times
1006 items downloaded over 50 times

### LOTS OF VISITORS
268,855 unique visitors

10,337,766 hits

Visitors from 199 countries

South America
Oceania
North America
Europe
Africa
Asia

Visitors in 2016

### LOTS OF CONTENT
Other 6%
Books 6%
Book chapters 17%
Articles 71%

3,328 new items added

36,777 total items in CentAUR

Item types added in 2016

### LOTS OF CONTRIBUTORS
1,171 University of Reading authors deposited items

### TOP NEWCOMERS
- Erythristic leopards *Panthera pardus* in South Africa http://doi.org/10.4102/abc.v46i1.2034
- Proceedings of the 11th international conference on disability, virtual reality and associated technologies (ICDVRAT 2016) http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/66645/
- Executive control in bilinguals: a concise review on fMRI studies http://doi.org/10.1017/S1366728916000249
- Meta-analysis to integrate effect sizes within a paper: Possible misuse and Type-1 error inflation http://doi.org/10.1037/xge0000159
- Evidence from neurolinguistic methodologies: can it actually inform linguistic/language acquisition theories and translate to evidence-based applications? http://doi.org/10.1177/0267658316644010

*JohnsonCentAUR in 2016*

# CentAUR

## Key Stats: January 2017

**183** New items added to CentAUR

**36,953** Items in CentAUR

**14** Theses added

**919** Downloads for the most popular item

**205** University of Reading staff deposited items

**162** Countries accessed CentAUR
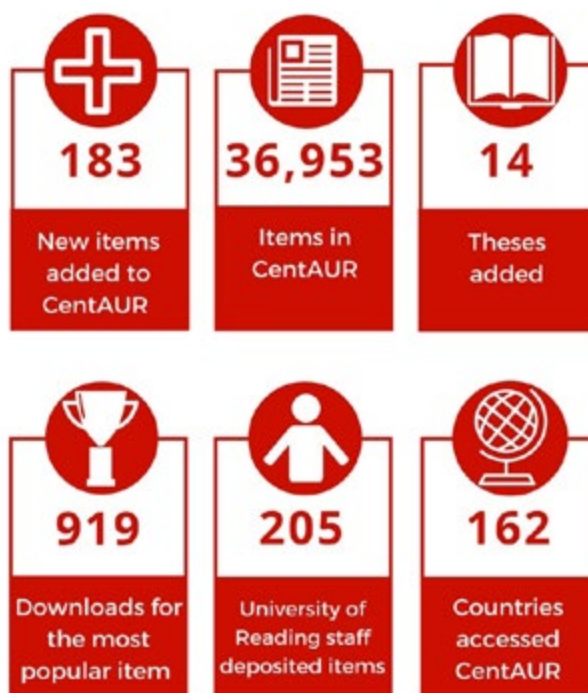
Statistics taken from IRUS-UK and http://centaur.reading.ac.uk

*JohnsonCentAUR January 2017*

## Supporting research through the institutional repository

The mechanism for monitoring output quality was achieved by the creation of the Research Outputs Support System (ROSS) tool within the CentAUR. The technical development of the ROSS tool was commissioned by the university with EPrints Services and became fully operational in 2016. The design and management of the ROSS tool is the joint responsibility of the library and the university's planning and strategy office and has helped to strengthen working relationships between these teams, as well as involving the library at a strategic level in supporting the research publication lifecycle. This involves collaborating on user support, policy development and technical improvement.

The ROSS tool enables the selection of research outputs deposited in CentAUR to create individual, research division and institutional summaries of output information. Individual researchers select their publications from CentAUR into their ROSS reports, to which research division leaders add evaluations and comments reflecting the review process carried out within their research divisions. The university collects information twice yearly from ROSS on the quality assessment of selected outputs, presented in Tableau dashboards, which are prepared for each research division and also aggregated at the research theme and institutional level.
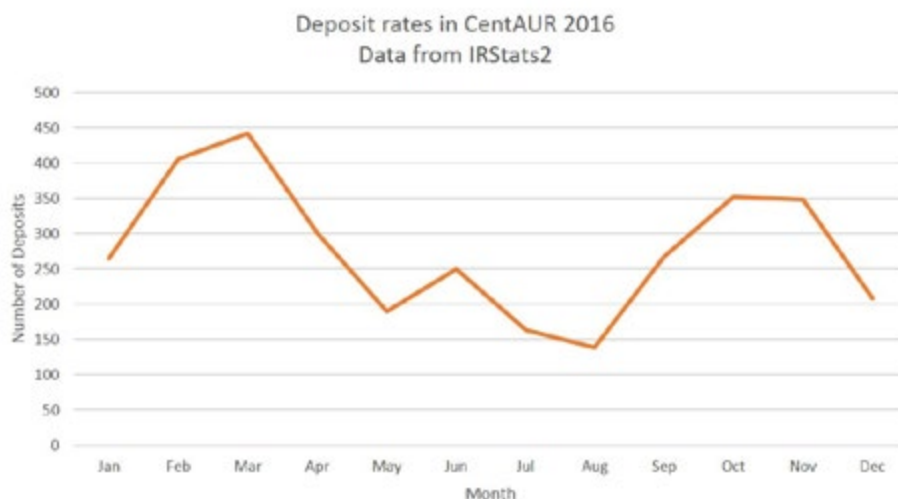
# Library support for the lifecycle of research publications

The concept of developing the ROSS tool in CentAUR was inspired by our use of the EPrints repository REF plugin in the previous REF. However, it has two distinct additional features:

- One of the key requirements of the ROSS process was that it had to allow for the inclusion of outputs at very early stages in the publication lifecycle, especially for outputs such as monographs which have a long period of development. However, CentAUR's scope only allows for publications that have at least reached the stage of acceptance for publication. To resolve this incompatibility, a 'work in progress' area within the depositor's workflow was developed for ROSS. This enables outputs that are too early for public view in CentAUR to be available for selection in the ROSS tool, but blocks their full deposit.

- To assist with understanding more about the quality and attention attracted by outputs that have progressed to later stages of the publication lifecycle, article- and journal-level bibliometrics from Scopus and the Altmetric score are imported into the ROSS tool via application programming interfaces (APIs). Google Scholar citation counts are also added manually to outputs in research divisions for which they are most relevant (mainly arts and humanities). The metrics are provided as additional information to help research division leaders in determining a quality assessment for a publication, or to provide guidance on future publishing choices.

The ROSS tool supports research planning, and will eventually be used for REF planning, but it encompasses a much wider body of outputs at all stages of the publication cycle than is required for the REF. However, there is already interest in including an indication in the ROSS reports about the levels of compliance with HEFCE's policy for open access in the next REF. The ROSS process has been valuable in driving up deposit rates into CentAUR, evidenced in the deposit peaks around the time of the twice-yearly reports; this will contribute to a greater rate of compliance with the HEFCE policy.



*Johnson–CentAUR deposits 2016*

# Library support for the lifecycle of research publications

## Next steps

Over the last year, the library's involvement in research support has grown considerably, which has led to increased collaboration with researchers, research support staff and graduate students across the whole university. Over the next twelve months, we plan to focus on the promotion of the HEFCE policies on open access for the next REF, while also trying to assess how many of the research publications already deposited in CentAUR will be eligible for our REF submission. We shall be encouraging researchers to be more proactive in monitoring citations to their own work and in promoting and tracking their research via social media channels. It is hoped that the additional data that are available to staff through access to our new research intelligence and bibliometric tools will assist in the development of publication strategies for our research themes and divisions. This strong base of support should help us to improve our services as the university moves ahead with its ambitious research vision and towards the next REF exercise.

# Dublin Business School Library
## Supporting research and scholarly activity

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*'All students must have access to teaching that has been kept up to date and relevant through scholarship, research and professional development' (Higher Education Strategy Group, 2011, p. 11).*

## Introduction to DBS

Dublin Business School (DBS) is the largest independent third-level college in Ireland, with over 9,000 students. It offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, diplomas and professional accountancy and executive education programmes. Disciplines covered include arts and humanities, business and law. All framework programmes are validated by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the state agency established by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 with a board appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills (Government of Ireland, 2012).

## Research culture

DBS has a vibrant and rapidly expanding research culture. The library provides a number of supports to underpin this and collates and records the scholarly activity of every faculty member. Institutional research is also disseminated via the DSpace institutional repository, eSource (Dublin Business School, 2017). DBS was the first academic institution in Ireland to acquire Elsevier's PlumX, an Altmetrics platform which captures the immediate impact of faculty members' scholarly output, (download statistics, usage, social media mentions as well as traditional Scopus citation metrics usage). Altmetric services can be especially beneficial to younger researchers. Kwok points out that 'Altmetrics enable scientists to see ripples generated by their research that might otherwise go unnoticed. Individual researchers can try to track buzz on their own, but data-aggregation and updating services make it much easier… The reports can even suggest potential collaborators or journals' (Kwok, 2013, p. 492).

DBS Library has a dedicated Research Librarian who provides consultancy on peer review publishing, bibliometrics, copyright, research funds, open access and more, via one-to-one sessions and faculty workshops. The library is represented on the DBS Research Committee. It also arranges relevant research support talks by bringing in external guest speakers such as Rita Ward (http://www.horizon2020.ie/team-member/rita-ward/ [accessed: 8 March 2017]), Enterprise Ireland, who spoke on the COST Actions fund, and Dr John Donovan (http://www.dit.ie/researchandenterprise/meettheteam/staffprofiles/drjohndonovan/ [accessed: 8 March 2017]), Head of Research at DIT and Chair of the European Research Managers and Administrators Association, who spoke on the Horizon 2020 programme.

There are a number of other research agents within the institution who are also making a significant contribution to research activity. The DBS Research Committee oversees the awarding of research scholarships that provide faculty with paid hours specifically for the purposes of research. The research outputs of these scholarships are presented at the annual DBS Research Day and are archived on eSource (Dublin Business School, 2016). Faculty from other institutions are invited to attend the day in order to facilitate research collaborations.

More recently, the library has been involved in additional projects to further enhance the research environment in DBS. As part of its new website, the library launched Research@Dbs.ie pages, which outline its research supports, with an emphasis on open access publishing (Kouker, 2017). The library publishes a peer reviewed open access journal, Studies in arts and humanities journal (http://sahjournal.com [accessed: 8 March 2017]) and will shortly launch a journal in the area of business: DBS business review (http://dbsbusinessreview.ie [accessed: 8 March 2017]).

# Dublin Business School Library
Supporting research and scholarly activity

## Library publishing

In recent years libraries have begun to play a much more active role in scholarly open access journal publishing because they possess the skillset and infrastructure that enable them to offer comprehensive services (Buggle, 2016; Walters, 2012; Mullins *et al.*, 2012). There are examples of highly evolved and successful models in the USA, where academic libraries operate as publishers and manage complex publication and post-publication activities. An example of this is Michigan Publishing (https://www.publishing.umich.edu/ [accessed: 14 March 2017]), which is a division of the University of Michigan Library (http://www.lib.umich.edu/ [accessed: 14 March 2017]). Its activities are wide-ranging and include the hosting and publishing of monographs and journals, rights management, developing digital publishing models, digital preservation, as well as publishing and copyright consultation (Michigan Publishing, 2017). Charles Watkinson, Associate University Librarian for Publishing, University of Michigan, believes the benefits to the library of involvement in publishing lie in increased visibility and understanding of library services: 'The library is invisible to many faculty members who do not realise when they access e-resources from their offices that librarians have made all this possible. Providing services like publishing makes the library relevant to their work in new ways, and an open access approach amplifies the impact of their research… The library is a logical place to coordinate all this work and leverage central services to maximize its impact' (Watkinson, 2016).

## Journal publishing at DBS Library

DBS library started its journey into publishing in 2014. During the course of a carefully planned liaison exercise, DBS Arts Faculty (http://www.dbs.ie/courses/arts [accessed: 17 March 2017]) was invited to collaborate in the creation of an open access academic journal publication with a view to opening up interdisciplinary discourse, whilst at the same time breaking down conventional academic hierarchies and boundaries. The vision was to publish high quality peer reviewed papers by undergraduate and postgraduate students alongside those of faculty (Kouker and Murphy, 2015). The outcome of this activity led to the founding of the Studies in arts and humanities journal (SAH), a bi-annual serial publication, which has to date published four issues. SAH is discoverable at article level using DOIs; it is registered with the DOAJ (DOAJ, 2017) and indexed by EBSCO Humanities Source Ultimate (EBSCO, 2017).

SAH journal goes beyond establishing interdepartmental scholarly collaboration opportunities between faculty and the library. It fosters cross-institutional and international relationships, cooperation and collaboration. The journal has reached out to individuals from other institutions, including Dublin Institute of Technology, University College Cork, Dublin City University, Maynooth University, University of Limerick, University of Ulster and Bournemouth University, among others, who have joined the journal's Editorial and Advisory boards. As a result, internal and external library liaison activities now take place in a more collaborative and trusted mutual-interest context (see equivalent collaborations for research and training in text encoding (Green, 2014). A further knock-on effect is that working relationships between DBS librarians and faculty have become more creative and dynamic.

SAH journal enjoys the support of an Advisory Board. Its role is to offer strategic advice to the editorial board on matters around the journal's publication cycle (Berger, 2017). Membership consists of individuals with an established track record in academic publishing. In February 2017, SAH journal held its first annual Advisory Board Meeting. The lively open-forum discussion considered how to build brand identity, approaches to obtaining submissions, marketing, as well as opportunities to secure sustainable funding, since the journal operates on the diamond open access model (Fuchs and Sandoval, 2013).

The library's selling points to all journal participants are:

- an organic and collaborative business approach
- full participatory equality around decision making with regard to the journal's scope and ongoing development
- an opportunity to expand existing and develop new skills for all involved in order to generate professional satisfaction and benefit career prospects (Holland *et al.*, 2014; Pain, 2008).

SAH journal has published a broad range of content in its first four issues. The mix of faculty, practitioner, undergraduate and postgraduate peer reviewed works has been evident throughout, as has the publication of original poetry, plays and artworks. Interviews with a leading historian, an art activist and a leading producer have featured. Articles have covered diverse topics, ranging from Environmental Sustainability and Contemporary Film Production, the Psychology of Disgust, Social Ecology and Aesthetic Criticism, to the Dissenting Voices in the Political Commemoration of the Easter Rising. An experimental film has been published along with a contextualising piece.

An example of a successful scholarly collaboration project in the form of a staff–student co-publication, 'Patrick Pearse: Psychobiographical reflections on an enigmatic, paradoxical personality' (Orr *et al.*, 2016) was published in the Special Issue on the 1916 Easter Rising. Six students and their lecturer (P.M. Orr) co-wrote and eventually published this paper in SAH journal. Student authors in particular have the opportunity to develop transliteracy skills through the intersection of scholarly communication and information literacy. Transliteracy is concerned with mapping meaning across different media rather than developing particular literacies about various media. It is not about learning text literacy, visual literacy and digital literacy in isolation, but about the interaction among all these literacies (Ipri, 2010, p. 532).

SAH journal copy-editors, layout-editors, proof-readers and marketing and events teams are all volunteers, including students, who offer their time and expertise to further hone skills and experience and to contribute to the continuing success of the publication. The journal offers the opportunity to apply skills in a real world context. SAH journal holds occasional events as well as a launch event for each issue. To date, public interviews (Director Jim Sheridan; the creators of *Love/Hate*) have been held, as well as a screening of the documentary The Killing$ of Tony Blair, followed by a live Q & A with its Director-Producer, George Galloway.

SAH journal has achieved its vision of becoming an international journal, with content originating in Ireland, the UK, Italy, the USA, Taiwan and Australia to date. Unsolicited manuscripts have been received and word appears to be spreading. To celebrate the recognition of the Irish Traveller Community as an ethnic minority in Ireland, Volume 3, Number 2, will be a special issue on Minorities and Indigenous People. The flavour of that issue will be truly international.

## Future developments

The launch of the DBS business review by DBS Library is planned for 14 September 2017. The journal will be an annual publication and will mirror the ethos of SAH journal. DBS Library is also in the process of establishing an open access journal-publishing press and is currently working on a proposal to form a coalition of Irish open access journal publishers to promote high quality open access publishing across academia.

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# Research support

## An expanding role for librarians in academia?

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## Introduction: the changing face of librarianship

Academic librarianship has changed greatly over the last few decades. New higher education sector funding systems, new technologies, open access publishing, new working practices such as a greater emphasis on scholarly communications, and digital initiatives have altered the way we work, and how the students and academics whose research we support operate. In addition, workplace opportunities for academic librarians are declining. Stephanie Maatta (2013) reports that in response to this, recently graduated librarians are increasingly following career paths related to their MLS studies, but not necessarily in libraries. Arenofsky (2012) discusses this change and finds that the definition of librarianship is widening to take into account new roles and jobs. Both inside and outside the academic library sector then, the role of librarians is changing. This article focuses particularly on how research support – a traditional feature of what we do – could become one of these areas for change.

While many of us have always seen research support for scholars as part and parcel of our role, it has traditionally been fairly limited. The largest part of our involvement has often been aiding scholars in finding sources and helping with citations. However, this article will deal in detail with a recent initiative that seems to offer a model in which our role is far more integral to the scholarly research process itself. I would like to suggest that if this model were used more widely by academics and librarians, it could help both to improve the quality of research carried out in academia and to elevate the role of librarians by emphasising more fully the contribution we make to the advancement of knowledge. The initiative I shall describe is the production of Graham Cairns's book Reflections on architecture, society and politics: Social and cultural tectonics in the 21st century (London: Routledge, 2016).

## Librarians supporting an innovative project

*Reflections on architecture, society and politics* is of interest in its own right of course. It brings an interdisciplinary set of leading thinkers together and contains the first full engagement with questions of architecture and urban design by Noam Chomsky, for example. Polemical projects in the field of architecture and politics are discussed more broadly. However, the most interesting aspect of this book from the academic librarian's point of view is its development of the 'interview-article' – a fascinating attempt to develop a more scholarly and academically rigorous version of the interview format.

This format is illustrated in a series of interview-articles by Cairns, with support from a team of librarians involved with the open access scholarly journal *ArchitectureMPS*, which, with its broader research group, AMPS (Architecture, Media, Politics, Society), has always been underpinned by collaboration between librarians and academics in which I have been involved from the start. In the early days of the interview-article being trialled I, together with a team of librarian trainees who were on work experience under my guidance, helped source materials, analyse the relevance of sources, fact-checked the arguments and references made by both interviewer and interviewee and later helped with copyediting and dissemination through various online open access channels. This level of engagement in research support subsequently also characterised the production of the book, and enabled it to break new ground in its genre and ensure that the interview functions with the utmost academic rigour as a format.

In these 'interview-articles', interviewees develop discursive answers to questions that are themselves wide-ranging, the aim being to allow an extensive exploration of ideas. Interviewees are able to revisit the text after it has been edited to ensure that they give fully considered responses that do justice to their depth of experience in the field. Furthermore, the interviewer adds to the main dialogue text through wide-ranging discursive footnotes in

which s/he develops their own position more fully, identifies further reading sources and directs readers to third parties with different opinions. Key to this are the comprehensive bibliographies that accompany the interviews which, with the footnotes, are compiled in conjunction with a number of academic liaison librarians, who collaborated with the interviewer from the beginning to the end of the process. This is where we really see both the unique nature of this interview-article format and the role of librarianship in the process.

## Librarian supported scholarship: the wider picture

The research support described above did not happen in isolation. The academic librarian collaborations of AMPS are broader and longer term than that. The librarian support team at AMPS has worked with academics to develop a number of other research support activities and resources. Whilst these are still in development, the results can be seen in the resource repository of AMPS, which uses social media formats, particularly Pinterest, to present relevant research to academics and students in the field. The sourcing of information that was part and parcel of this support exercise results in a bibliography and webliography. The research support offered by the librarian team on this project continues a practice first developed by AMPS on an earlier research initiative. The previous initiative helped to develop scholarly materials relating to the use of architecture in political imagery, and it was supported by an American Library Association grant.

Further extensions of the definition and practice of research support used in the production of Cairns's book include the creation of materials for Twitter and Facebook: AMPS uses these materials as a form of research guides for scholars and students, as well as more traditional research guides available as downloadable pdfs on the AMPS website which replicate the materials presented through social media. In addition, the support offered to the researcher in this case has become a model for how the librarian team at AMPS supports early career academics in developing papers for publication in book or journal formats. Currently, the team is seeking funding to enable it to develop this initiative fully.

*Reflections on architecture, society and politics* is ground-breaking in its own right – as an innovative genre, and as the most visible demonstration of the collaboration of librarians in research support and scholarly communication. It demonstrates just how far librarians can extend their research support role into research publication and the development of research resources in academia and shows how versatile the librarianship profession is. AMPS is a completely online organisation, in which all scholars and librarians operate remotely in a virtual workplace which, while related to the traditional library context, is actually quite different. AMPS is an international research cooperative with various publishing activities both online and in print. The fact that we as librarians have been able to expand our role to operate in this context with ease is testimony to how adept we are at working with various end-users in various contexts, whether they be students, the public or, as in this case, research-focused academics with whom we interact virtually. In summary, the book we have focused on here is not a 'normal' piece of scholarship, but has come into existence only as an outcome of the wider notion of librarian research support.

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# Reflections on supporting research and being a researcher

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## Introduction

I work at the University of Glasgow where I provide strategic development and management of library services delivery for the College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences. My role focuses primarily on research support, whether that be developing the research collection, researcher training, supporting literature searches for systematic reviews, or bibliometric and altmetric support. I also provide a liaison point between research staff and students and other library services such as the Open Access and Research Data Management teams.

As well as being a librarian, I am also a researcher as a current professional doctorate (DProf) candidate at the University of the West of Scotland.

From the earliest days of my library career I have always had a 'research mindset'. I would often seek to benchmark my service against another, learn from other sectors and professions and bring these experiences back to my workplace, but this never went further than being an internal exercise; I think this is the same for a lot of us.

That all changed when my previous employer offered its first professional doctorate programme – a chance to gain a doctoral qualification. A DProf is work-focused, so there is no need to take time out of work to study. Most study is self-determined and supervised and, therefore, similar to a doctor of philosophy (PhD). However, the DProf programme emphasises inter-professional learning and reflection, so there is an active online community via the university virtual learning environment, and we meet as a cohort four times a year for study weekends. These are a great chance to share professional practice with other sectors and develop inter-professional understanding. I am often surprised that many concerns that I consider unique to librarianship are shared by my fellow candidates in education, accountancy and health sectors, for example.

A DProf also differs to a PhD in that the first two years of study are taught, which gives candidates a supportive framework in which to develop advanced applied research skills whilst also developing an in-depth expertise in our research area. At the heart of a DProf is cultivating a deeper understanding of our profession and reflective practice in order to have a real impact in the profession itself.

## Professional research problem

The second year of my study has focused on research ethics, finalising my literature review and research methodology. Studying at any UK university and being a librarian brings great strength into these areas of research. As a librarian, I am obliged to comply with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) ethical principles and code of professional practice, which have in turn provided guidelines for my own professional and research ethical practices. I also have access to a phenomenal number of resources through university, work and public libraries, through the SCONUL scheme in the UK, and through the British Library inter-library loans scheme for resources from abroad. The world's resources and how to access them really are at our fingertips.

Despite access to all these resources and expertise, one of my main professional reflections has been to ask where is the quality library and information science (LIS) research? My research is on the theme of digital competencies of university teaching staff. Whilst the digital competencies of students are relatively well researched, to date teaching staff have been an under-researched group. Despite this, one would have thought that there would be at least some academic literature on this topic within LIS, given the prominence of information and digital literacy in the sector. However, my literature review mostly contains articles from the education and IT sectors.

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Granted, neither digital nor information literacy is the sole domain of librarians, who are free to publish in journals across any sector, but I question why there is a lack of academic literature written by librarians and published in LIS journals. It would not appear to be a lack of research on my topic per se – there is a small amount of grey literature available, so is it a lack of professional confidence that stops us from publishing in 'academic' journals? Some have noted that LIS is a practitioner-based profession (Robinson and Bawden, 2013), one that sits outside academia. Some have questioned where the library research community is (Blakesley, 2016) and why we hire others to conduct our research rather than developing our own research skills. I would not go as far as to say that we cannot research, but as a profession we need to move beyond single, small-scale case studies and expand the research methodologies we use.

## Benefits of research and publication

There is a simple answer as to why we should engage with research and publish in academic journals – our profession needs it, and it can be a great benefit to you, your work and your career.

As a librarian–researcher, I am now able to relate better to research students and staff. I can share my experiences with students and reflect on my journey so far, helping researchers to become more efficient in their practices – far more than I was able to do in the past. I can also reflect upon the other inter- and cross-professional support available to research students, thus enabling them to strengthen their networks whilst also improving mine. I can sit in a room with academic staff and feel I am an equal, albeit one with more limited experience to date. Anecdotally, I feel that I have become more accepted by my academic colleagues simply because I am on an academic par with them; I am no longer 'just' a librarian or member of the non-academic university staff. Deciding to embark on higher study of any type is difficult, but the benefits of doing so are great. I even have a new job!

To return to my professional reflection: It is notable that CILIP-funded research on the value of trained and professionally registered LIS workers found a large gap in 'published evidence on the effectiveness, impact and value of the majority of library, information and knowledge sectors' (Brettle and Maden, 2015, p. 20) – this despite research skills being part of the CILIP Professional Knowledge and Skills Base (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, 2016). It is quite clear that unless we fill this gap by formally publishing our research and improving our research methodologies, we shall never be able to prove our value, and our profession will always be under threat.

## Towards an academic profession

LIS is a profession based in practitioner research. We are not generally taught 'how to research' in our post-graduate programmes, at least not systematically throughout the curriculum (McMenemy, 2010), and there are many individual and structural barriers to undertaking research (Pickton, 2016).
Academic libraries are in a prime position to conduct research, to work with and learn from our academic colleagues. To this extent, we should be learning from the efforts of the University of Northampton Library and Learning Services to build individual and structural capacity for conducting research (Pickton, 2016). More support for these intiatives is needed throughout academic libraries and the sector more generally.

I have tried to elucidate some of the benefits that I have witnessed from my own experiences of doctoral study. Whilst studying for a doctorate will not suit everyone, it is a route to self- and professional fulfilment. Regardless of whether many follow me into doctoral research, research practices and professional reflection should nevertheless be built into our daily work.

# Reflections on supporting research and being a researcher

I hope that the next generation of LIS students and doctoral candidates will have the opportunity to draw upon a wide range of high-quality academic literature produced by librarians and published in LIS journals, even though I won't be able to see those publications in time to include them in my doctoral thesis.

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# Blending librarianship with research and pedagogy

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Whilst vocational postgraduate qualifications have been the norm in librarianship for many years, postgraduate study has become increasingly common for many career choices over the past decade or two, and it is not particularly unusual for librarians to possess further taught or research postgraduate degrees. However, at least in the United Kingdom, librarians simultaneously engaged in postdoctoral research are perhaps a little thinner on the ground. I contend that the combination of librarianship with research is beneficial both on a personal level and to the library and institution, but that the addition of a third element – pedagogy – brings even stronger benefits.

## Lifelong learning as a librarian

Over the past decade and a half, I've combined various working roles. As a full-time music librarian at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, I funded myself through a part-time PhD over five years, studying in my own time. I was allowed four weeks of paid leave towards the end of my studies, which were spent working on the final stages of writing up. Rather than registering for a PhD in my own institution, the nature of my research made the University of Glasgow a logical choice. I chose a local university for convenience, and a subject that would not only benefit me as a conservatoire librarian, but where the research materials would almost all be within a day's return travel: Scottish song-collecting.

My expanded thesis was eventually published as an Ashgate monograph in 2013: *Our ancient national airs: Scottish song collecting from the Enlightenment to the Romantic era.*

By this stage, the opportunity had arisen to be seconded for two days a week as postdoctoral researcher to the Bass Culture project – an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded three-year project with the University of Glasgow, partnered with the University of Cambridge (2012–15). My own institution employed an early-career librarian to provide cover during my absence, an arrangement which proved thoroughly satisfactory to all concerned, allowing me to flex my research muscles on a new project (still late 18th- and early 19th-century Scottish music, but this time fiddle music rather than songs), whilst my younger colleague gained experience and also brought fresh ideas to the library. For me, having two days a week in which to pursue research now seemed a real privilege, having spent five years getting a PhD the hard way! There were also benefits in terms of having the time to network with special collections librarians and with other researchers; to develop an awareness of the emerging field of the digital humanities; to engage in more conferences and other events; and to write both formal and informal pieces about the research itself.

The AHRC project finished in October 2015, and the major outcome of our research – the www.hms.scot database (Historical Music of Scotland) – was launched a few months later, providing indexed access to 22 fully digitised Scottish fiddle music collections, not to mention historical commentary, bibliographic and location data for another two hundred collections, all of which we had inspected in at least one and sometimes more than one library. An invitation to attend an event based on historical music in the special collections at the University of St Andrews library led me to my present postdoctoral researches into historical music legal deposit collections, for which I'm currently seconded to the Conservatoire's research department for one day a week. Since St Andrews was one of nine (and later eleven) historical legal deposit libraries, I'm seeking grant funding to extend my research to the music received by the other libraries too.

Meanwhile, I'm also currently completing a distance-learning postgraduate certificate in learning and teaching in higher arts education – ironically, at my own institution, so not exactly distant! My research project – the final

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component of the certificate – is looking at students' experience of library induction and introduction to electronic resources. Again, I've chosen a subject that will benefit me in my work. An unexpected learning experience has been discovering the substantial contrast between historical musicological research and small-scale research in the social sciences, but over and above this, I've come to understand the significant demands on part-time students registered on taught courses. The independent researcher can work in bursts, but keeping up with taught course deadlines is actually quite challenging.

## Forget the stereotype

In earlier times, it was not uncommon to encounter descriptions of someone as a 'scholar librarian'. Stereotypes are always dangerous, but the term does suggest an earnest scholar in a quiet study, surrounded by books and engrossed in lofty thoughts! The reality of being a research-active librarian is very far from this, for the present author at any rate. In the library, I work in a busy, bustling environment, whilst my research day is spent either in the research base (doing research-related activity or grant-writing), or travelling to other libraries or research events. With one day a week as a postdoctoral researcher, I can generally do one of these activities, but seldom more than one!

## Librarianship advantages to the researcher – and research advantages to the librarian

Being a librarian, particularly in higher education, does bring substantial advantages when it comes to research. There is no excuse for not being aware either of recent publications or of ongoing scholarship, for a start. Literature searches and use of electronic resources come as second nature, and bibliographic citation practices hardly fill us with the terror that many students experience.

Conversely, being a researcher brings significant benefits to my role as a librarian. Whilst I did also engage in research some decades ago, long before I started my Glasgow PhD, there is no doubt that having current experience in research practice is invaluable, both in terms of credibility, and in understanding the various capabilities that research students are expected to acquire. Having in-depth experience of using the electronic resources available to staff and students is also a distinct advantage.

I've given occasional lectures on my doctoral and postdoctoral research topics both to undergraduate students on the Traditional Music course, and to postgraduate research students, and have spoken widely in a variety of settings and contexts outwith the Conservatoire. However, my transferable skills are in demand at least as much as, if not more than my musicology expertise when I'm on home territory, partly because I'm a historical musicologist in an institution that tends to focus on practice-based research. Experience combined with understanding is a winning combination, particularly when it comes to talking about research methodology. Exploiting electronic resources is more meaningful if one has already made extensive use of them oneself, and can encourage students to determine which resources will be relevant to their enquiry, rather than viewing e-resources en masse as a general panacea for all ills.

When it comes to referencing and citation, it is surprising how much students do appreciate advice. Research-active librarians, experienced in literature searches, maintaining bibliographies, using referencing software, and with a librarian's cataloguing background, are well placed to provide assistance. Other transferable skills evidence themselves less obviously; for example, the experience that comes with over a decade of using social media for research networking and public engagement can be shared in conversation with students, and certainly helps with maintaining a library blog! Similarly, producing written and spoken outputs of various kinds leads not only to writing

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fluency, but also to an organised approach to keeping curriculum vitae and social media profiles up to date. Now that I am experienced in a variety of presentation opportunities, any apprehension about public speaking vanished years ago. Meanwhile, time-management skills are honed by balancing study and work over a number of years.

Most notably, research experience offers any librarian the opportunity to experience other libraries as a *researcher*, and an awareness of what may, or may not enhance the user experience!

## Multi-faceted

Whilst librarianship helps me as a researcher, and research helps me as a librarian, the glue that ties the two together is my developing understanding of current pedagogy through my postgraduate certificate studies in learning and teaching. These have imbued me with an appreciation of the ways in which best practice has changed since my undergraduate days, and enable me to talk about the 'flipped classroom', a constructivist teaching approach, or collaborative learning, with an informed understanding of what this actually means. Whilst our efforts at arranging student instruction with faculty course leaders are increasingly successful, it is becoming clear that providing effective training will always be challenging where librarians are parachuted into lecture rooms for one-off sessions with students who would probably prefer to be elsewhere – and with whom we lack the tutor–student relationship enjoyed by our faculty colleagues. Nonetheless, an appreciation of the best circumstances for effective teaching and learning does underline the desirability of small-group sessions with hands-on access to e-resources, where such can be arranged. This is an element of my role in which pedagogical training enables me to maximise the effectiveness of both my librarianship and my research skills.

## Aren't three roles confusing?>

There are genuinely few disadvantages to the balancing act that I've embarked upon. Despite 'out of office' notifications, there will always be occasional emails requiring a librarian response on research days, or vice versa, but these can be managed. Offset against such interruptions are the pleasant surprises of an eagerly awaited response, or an unexpected invitation. Or, in a different context, a run-of-the-mill query or user education session may suddenly spark an idea about either research or, indeed, a new pedagogical approach that might work better than present practice. I certainly do feel more part of both the research community and the pedagogical team, even if my input into the latter is more in offering library, research and educational support than as a teacher of music history or theory.

Most importantly – to me at least – I feel I am making a contribution to the research profile of the institution, despite being based in the library for 80% of my working week. My current dedicated day as a researcher is possibly more than some university teachers are allowed, and for that, I am very grateful. As a librarian wearing several 'hats' simultaneously, I like to think that they all suit me.

## Weblinks [all accessed 27 February 2017]

Bass Culture in Scottish Musical Traditions [AHRC project research blog] http://bassculture.info/

Historical Music of Scotland [AHRC project research output] www.hms.scot

Karen McAulay. Teaching Artist blog https://karenmcaulay.wordpress.com/

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland http://rcs.ac.uk

Whittaker Live [library performing arts blog] http://Whittakerlive.blogspot.com

# Researching my own practice:
## doing a professional doctorate as a librarian

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I started working in academic libraries in 2001, qualified as a librarian in 2003, and have been in the role of academic liaison librarian since 2008. In that time there has been a lot of opportunity for learning, especially when I decided to do the PostGraduate Certificate in Academic Practice at my workplace, which gave me Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy as well as a taste for research. Half of the final mark was decided by a short research project (5,000 words) on my practice, and I decided to look at how academics and librarians could work collaboratively to further embed information literacy (IL) in the curriculum. Actually, it turned out to be an investigation into the academics' perceptions of my role and what I could do to promote our working in partnership (McCluskey, 2011). That was in 2010, and is something that has informed my practice ever since.

I carried on doing small bits of research, and was invited to join practitioner research groups based in the education subject area at work (I was their liaison librarian). Gradually I was included in more and more research projects. In addition, I was appointed a designated librarian for postgraduate research students across the university, a role I fulfilled while still carrying out my subject area liaison duties. Academic colleagues began to ask if I might be interested in studying for a PhD. My initial reaction was that it was too big a commitment and not something I'd be able to integrate into my life, but the idea kept returning.

The thing I enjoy most is working with staff and students from across the university, but as I reached my sixth year as an academic liaison librarian I felt I needed a new challenge. I had begun to re-discover my political outlook (my first degree is in politics) and wanted to do something that may make a difference beyond my immediate workplace. I did not want to become complacent, and wanted to challenge my own view of my role and information literacy in universities and beyond.

This led me to investigate options for further study. I still was not sure about a PhD, but I came across the distance learning Professional Doctorate in Information Science (DInfSc) at Robert Gordon University whilst researching my options. It appealed because it had a taught element, so I would be accruing credits while I was studying, and I could choose topics to study that had changed significantly since I had done my MSc, or were not included in it. Two research methods modules were compulsory for all those doing PhDs and professional doctorates, and I had to choose four other modules from the distance-learning provision across all subjects. This had enabled me to study the areas of data curation and records management, both of which have evolved significantly since I first trained.

My thesis centres on my practice at York St John University. It is my belief, from my experience and previous research (McCluskey 2013, 2012 and 2011), that there are shared concerns linked to IL across the different academic areas in the institution. However, no one has investigated this community of practice in order to develop the understanding of IL amongst academic staff and, in turn, to influence the curriculum via this route. My research has four objectives linked to this:

- To explore the terminology, meanings and values assigned to IL in different academic subject areas in year 1 (level 4) of undergraduate programmes at York St John University and how academics experience and evaluate these in their teaching practices

- To establish whether there is already evidence of the emerging forms of IL (social construction of IL [Lloyd 2010] and critical IL [Elmborg 2012]) in the practice of academics at York St John University, or whether the foundations for their growth can be established

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## doing a professional doctorate as a librarian

- To examine how academics experience and evaluate IL in their teaching practices and to ascertain whether there is common ground in IL provision already embedded in the curriculum in these programmes

- To examine whether there is a Community of Practice (Wenger 1998) at YSJ in terms of IL provision. To implement and evaluate a platform for IL dialogue amongst staff at York St John University, to promote the evolution of collaborative IL provision in line with emerging theories, to improve the researcher's own practice and inform the practice of other academic librarians in relation to a collaborative approach (between librarians and academics) to the development of students' IL via curriculum development

Just over two years in and I have learned a lot. My understanding of research methodologies and ethical concerns in particular has improved. When students and staff bring me queries linked to literature searching for their research, I am able to connect all the threads much more easily than previously. Furthermore, my research into the different forms of IL evident in the literature has changed the way I approach it, especially when it comes to students being given agency for their research experience and making it appropriate to their own experiences and expertise.

When it came to the literature review, working at one university and studying at another proved very beneficial. I had access to the specialist databases and collections of two universities (there was a crossover, but both had key resources not found at the other) and I found myself using interlibrary loans very rarely. Undoubtedly my background as an academic librarian made this process much smoother than it was for some of my fellow researchers; I had a RefWorks account up and running with lots of references already in it and was very familiar with its use, which saved time as I produced the review; I have been active on Twitter for many years and find my network invaluable for discovering conference papers and other reports; part of my job involves advocating for open access, so looking for alternative pre- and post-print versions of research was already part of my search process. I am also in a position to be critical when issues such as metrics are introduced as evaluative tools in the taught sessions. (Impact factor seems to be raised regularly.)

Overall I am using an action research approach (Herr and Anderson 2015) with mixed methods for data collection and analysis. I am currently carrying out interviews with members of academic staff, using the critical incident technique (a method rooted in organisational research), which allows the interviewee to recall their experiences (Flanagan 1954). In this case I have asked them to describe their experiences of delivering modules that have learning outcomes linked to IL. This is proving effective at uncovering innovative practice in terms of active and social learning linked to IL. As part of the action research approach, I am also incorporating reflection into my research and linked practice using a model designed by Sen and Ford (2009). This has made me much more aware of linking my practice to research more generally.

Being a member of two universities also has its practical downsides. Rightly there are rules in place about where and how my research data is stored. However, I am unable to download the remote access software for my study institution to my computer at work. I have spent many hours waiting for large audio files containing my interview data to transfer to the remote, secure, research drive via my personal laptop, only for the process to fail. This eats into very valuable study time.

My workplace has been great at ensuring I have the time to carry out the data collection aspect of the research, as it is obviously linked to my role. However, study days are taken up with the compulsory study weeks when I have to visit Aberdeen for face-to-face lectures and tutorials. So I end up using annual leave, flexi-time and my weekends to get analysis and writing done. I have a

rule that at least one day of the weekend should be free for 'normal' life, so wasting time I have set aside for study just trying to get technology to work is particularly frustrating. I now have more empathy when students report such issues to me.

On balance, working at one institution and studying at another has been the best choice for me. I considered applying for a PhD where I work, but given that the study is based there too, an external view in terms of ethics and checks and balances on the research is valuable. The specialism of IL linked to education in my supervisory team at Robert Gordon University is also something I would miss. Working with my supervisor and doing the DInfSc have made me interrogate my understanding of IL and how it links to my practice in a way I would never have done otherwise.

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# Librarians as academic authors:

## Experiences of editing a themed issue of an academic journal

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This article recounts my experience of editing a themed issue of the peer-reviewed Taylor & Francis journal *New review of academic librarianship* and presents tips on writing for a themed issue of a journal and a short reflection on the process.
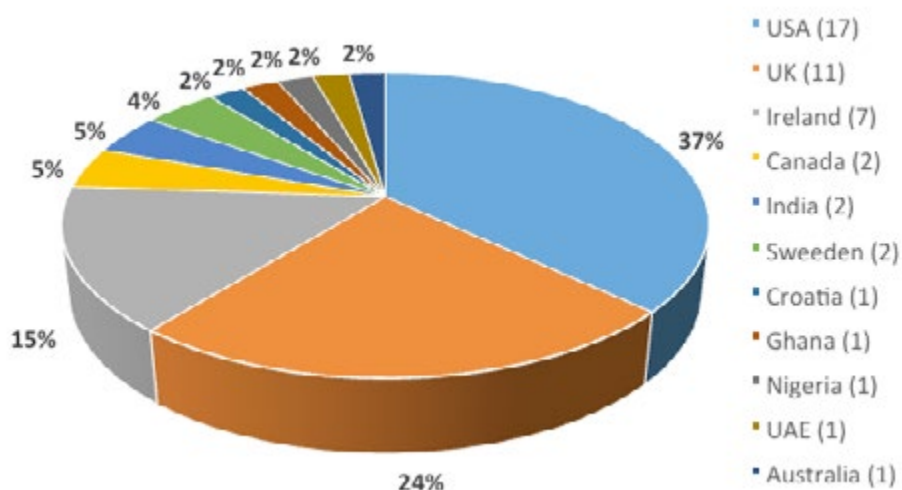
## Background

In 2013 I published an article on librarians writing for publication in *New review of academic librarianship* (NRAL) (Fallon, 2013). I was pleased to be invited to be on the editorial board and subsequently to be guest editor of the 2016 themed issue of NRAL. There are four issues NRAL each year, and since 2014 the themed issue has been a double issue.

## Call for abstracts

At the initial discussions with the editor-in-chief, potential topics were discussed. My initial thinking was to have the theme of librarian as researcher/academic author. Following consultation with the editorial board we concluded that this theme was somewhat narrow, so we broadened it to librarian as communicator. In May 2015, the call for 500-word abstracts was posted. It was publicised broadly via e-mail, social media outlets, listservs, Taylor & Francis's distribution networks and NRAL's editorial board members. I also posted the call to my academic writing blog *academicwritinglibrarian.blogspot.ie*

The pie chart shows breakdown by country of the 46 abstracts received.



- USA (17)
- UK (11)
- Ireland (7)
- Canada (2)
- India (2)
- Sweeden (2)
- Croatia (1)
- Ghana (1)
- Nigeria (1)
- UAE (1)
- Australia (1)

*Abstracts by country*

## Selection of content

The next stage was to send these abstracts out for peer review. Each one went to two reviewers, most but not all of whom were on the editorial board of NRAL. Reviewers were asked to rate abstracts based on the following criteria:

- relevance to scholarly communication and academic libraries
- clarity, coherence and organisation of writing
- likelihood that final product will be of high quality
- originality and innovation of the work

There was quite a variety of topics and methodologies. Those that made the final selection had to have the potential to make a significant contribution to the themed issue. Because NRAL is an international journal, it was necessary to ensure a wide geographic spread of contributions, and communication needed to be central to all abstracts selected. While case studies predominated, those that were selected had to have a research base backed up by evidence. Study groups for case studies were, in some cases, too small. Some abstracts

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covered very routine topics that were not new and/or were extensively covered elsewhere. Where research was planned but not yet carried out, the relatively short timeline – six months – made it unlikely that an acceptable article could be submitted within the timeframe. In some of the abstracts communication was a peripheral issue rather than a central theme. Where the topic of the abstract was deemed to be of potential interest to readers of NRAL but not significantly related to the theme of communication, contributors were invited to develop their article and submit to an open issue through the regular channels. English language was an issue for some of the authors. The majority of respondents were from countries where English is the first language and were likely to have access to an extensive body of literature, resources and expertise in their home institutions. I offered mentoring to two potential contributors who did not have this level of support, but whose proposals were deemed to be of significant value to the collection.

Twenty-five abstracts were selected. Sixteen contributors were asked to develop their abstract into a 5,000-word article and nine were asked to develop it into a 3,000-word case study. All contributors were notified in July and those accepted were given a December deadline for submission. The full timeline is given below.

## Timeline

Call for abstracts issued *mid-May 2015*
Closing date for abstracts *mid-June 2015*

Notification of acceptance *17 July 2015*
Production of papers by authors from selected abstracts *July 2015 – 4 Dec 2015*
Peer review and feedback *7 Dec 2015 – end of Jan 2016*

Final manuscripts due date *31 March 2016*
Proofs date *21 May 2016*
Publication month *June 2016*
Publication month for print edition *November 2016*

## Peer review process

Contributors submitted via the ScholarOne system, which is used by a number of scholarly journals and is straightforward to use. Most met the December deadline. During the following two months articles went through a double blind peer review process. Most, but not all of the peer reviewers were on the editorial board of NRAL. Others were invited because of their known expertise in a particular area. The reviewers made one of the following recommendations:

*accept*
*minor revision needed*
*major revision needed*
*reject*

Where there was a difference in opinion between reviewers – i.e. one suggesting major revision/another suggesting minor revisions – I made the final decision.

None of the papers was accepted without revision. Fifty percent of the papers required major revision; one person did not submit; three papers were rejected or required such a level of revision that the author(s) decided not to resubmit. Between authors receiving their feedback and the final manuscript submission at the end of March, I answered a lot of questions from authors, most of which related to the feedback from peer reviewers. I reread all articles as they were resubmitted and the ultimate decision on what to include lay with me.

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After peer review Taylor & Francis make available the Accepted Manuscript Online (AMO), and this can be deposited in an institutional repository. Contributors are also given fifty free downloads of their article – where there were four authors that was a total of 200. This is useful for promotional purposes and was particularly useful for those institutions that do not have access to the journal.

Eighteen papers made the final volume, which was launched at Maynooth University on 20 October 2016 at a seminar called *Librarian as communicator*. A number of the contributors came and presented briefly (ten minutes) on their article topic. This gave a flavour of the issue to the eighty people who attended the event. The themed issue is currently going through the final stages of production as an edited collection and is due to be published by Routledge in October 2017, which is a nice bonus for all involved.

## Reflection

This was a very positive experience for me and I learned a lot from the process. Reading articles across a wide range of topics and gleaning perspectives on topics from different countries was very useful. While regular professional reading is something I aspire to do, work and other schedules mean I rarely achieve this aim. Reading critically helped me develop my skills as a peer reviewer and as a writer. Managing the process, which involved eighteen articles, with over 40 contributors in total, was a really interesting and new experience for me. Most communication was via e-mail. I have never met most of the authors face-to-face.

Informal feedback indicated that the process was a positive one for the contributors. For a number it was their first peer reviewed article. Writing the article helped them to:

- develop their writing skills
- research and write about a topic and situate it in the context of the literature on the topic and their own data
- experience the peer review process and develop the resilience to deal with it
- become familiar with ScholarOne
- complete a piece of writing in a structured and supportive environment
- understand better the challenges and experiences of their lecturing colleagues who also grapple with the challenges writing for academic journals presents.

The opportunity to present at the seminar and publish the article as a chapter in a Routledge book was perhaps an unexpected bonus and a nice reward for all their work.

Overall this was a very positive experience and made what I hope is a significant contribution to the literature on librarians as communicators.

## Ten tips for those considering contributing to a peer-reviewed journal

1   Study the call for abstracts carefully, noting the key themes/concepts and the date for submission. The length of abstracts for NRAL was 500 words, which gives an opportunity to clearly present what your article aspires to do.

2   Ensure your contribution relates to the theme of the issue. It may be more relevant to a general issue and possibly have a better chance of acceptance. Calls aren't issued for the two general issues of NRAL, so there will be fewer submissions. If you are not responding to a call for abstracts, send a query

e-mail to the editor briefly explaining your idea for an article, rather than submitting the full article.

3   Study the general guidelines for submissions on the journal website and read a few articles from previous issues to get a flavour of content and style. The journal guidelines will tell you the target audience for the journal and its purpose. It's important you write the abstract with this in mind.

4   The abstract should have a title. This may not be the final title but it should be informative and reflect the content of the paper. If the paper is a case study, say so; and if it refers to a specific institution, say so.

5   Your abstract should distil the essence of the article you are planning to write. It is not a summary or introduction. It should give the objectives of your research, information on the methodology used and the main findings/results.

6   Before writing the abstract, study abstracts of published articles in your target journal. They will generally be shorter than the abstract required but they will give you a flavour of approaches and language. Consider the verbs used in the abstract.

7   English has to be clear and to an acceptable standard in the abstract. If English is not your first language it is a good idea to get someone who is fluent in English to read your abstract before submitting.

8   Draft and redraft the abstract. Reread the call for abstracts and ensure it meets the criteria

9   If your abstract is accepted work closely with the editor to ensure you deliver what the journal is looking for within the stated time frame.

10 If your abstract is not accepted don't despair, review your abstract and consider whether it might be suitable for another purpose.

And, most important of all keep writing.

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# Open journal systems and undergraduate research

## How an open journal system can facilitate digital literacy and a research culture

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## Background

In August 2016 Leeds Beckett University launched its first open access undergraduate student journal, *Critical reflections: a student journal on contemporary sociological issues*. The journal is the first of its kind at the university and includes student reflections upon everyday scenarios viewed through a theoretical–sociological lens. As well as delivering many opportunities for the students, the purpose of the journal corresponds with the strategic objectives of the university as a whole. Firstly, to grow and develop a research culture by recognising the contribution of undergraduate research, and the impact this has upon the digitally literate graduate. Secondly, to allow students to capitalise upon their time at university by facilitating the experience of writing for publication, and the consequent effect upon both employability and their academic career development. The following summarises the beginnings of the journal and its relevance to the student experience, as well as outlining practical considerations for librarians, information specialists and academic staff.

## Beginnings of a journal

Several key events led to the creation of the journal. During 2014 the repository support team, based in the library, were looking to expand the scope and awareness of their service, with a particular focus on open access. It was recognised that staff within the team could also enhance the promotion of open access by trialling new systems outside traditional repository software, with the aim of encouraging further engagement from both academics and students alike. It was also noted that the growth of smaller independent university publishing platforms was potentially a way of overcoming the 'serials pricing crisis'– or sidestepping the cost of journal article publication.

The Open Journal Systems (OJS) platform, developed by the Public Knowledge Project, fits with this ethos, particularly as it is open source software requiring little start-up costs other than staff time and a small amount of university server space. During 2014 and 2015 the repository support team played an active role in implementing and promoting the OJS with the intention of securing a number of interested parties throughout the university. It was anticipated that the use of OJS and the creation of a journal would not only provide useful experience for all concerned but also enable thorough investigation into the in-house publishing process as a whole. By 2016 the team had received around six expressions of interest in hosting a variety of open access journals and conference proceedings, of which three have so far made it to full publication.

The journal, which is the first of its kind at the university, has developed from a third-year module assessment task in which students apply their sociological toolkit and theories to everyday situations, thereby making an original contribution to the wider knowledge pool. Upon introducing this assessment some of the students' work was of such high quality that the module tutors thought it a shame that it would be merely archived, so they started to publish the best pieces. In its second year, the tutors decided that, rather than editing the contributions themselves, the students could be involved in the editorial process, and they have been for the last three editions. In 2016 the move to OJS was made, and future issues will use the platform for the whole editorial process.

The use of OJS provides a good opportunity to disseminate student work to a wider readership. Whilst the student journal existed in print format, opportunities to circulate student work were limited and costly. The option of developing a blog to distribute the articles had also previously been discussed. However, given that as part of digital literacy sessions, students are advised to evaluate the credibility of their sources, the use of a blog seemed inappropriate and contradictory. Therefore the OJS platform seemed a suitable conduit for dissemination.

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In a similar vein the contribution of undergraduate research has recently been discussed. The British Conference on Undergraduate Research (2015) advocated the use of open journals to promote undergraduate work alongside practical information on establishing an in-house journal. Stone, Jensen & Beech (2016) outline the benefits for undergraduates in terms of improving the quality of student writing, and the consequent opportunity to increase employability by including publication details in prospective job applications. This was reflected in the feedback received from participating students who added the journal to their LinkedIn page and commented on how the creation of the journal had improved their academic writing skills. Importantly Garde-Hansen and Calvert (2007) outline the pedagogical advantages of publication as a means of developing higher order learning by encouraging students to develop a more reflective, evaluative attitude rather than a 'passive, spoon fed approach'. They also identified the importance of creating a 'research-culture' amongst undergraduate students. This is a particularly current consideration given both the Research Excellence Framework (REF), which recognises the importance of cultivating a research ethos, and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which emphasises the importance of delivering high-quality teaching and student engagement with their learning.

## Institutional strategic drivers

As well as delivering many opportunities for students, the purpose of the journal corresponds with the strategic objectives of Leeds Beckett University as a whole. The Strategic Planning Framework 2016–21 (Leeds Beckett, 2016) comprises four key elements: an excellent education and experience; leading research and academic enterprise; a community of great people; sustainable resources. It provides an opportunity for collaborative working amongst the students themselves through the peer review process. In addition, the knowledge transfer of their research contributes to the wider knowledge base around their subject beyond an institutional level.

The creation of the journal afforded many opportunities for discussions around sharing research, open access, the cost of information, the ethical use of information, copyright and creative commons licensing. Digital literacy skills, which had previously been theoretically discussed during lectures, were put into practice, with noticeable results. The graduate attributes of digital literacy were met through the development of student awareness in these areas and by encouraging students to apply their knowledge to their article.

## Practicalities and results

As with most journals, we needed to think of the target audience. In the case of Critical reflections, this was potential and current undergraduate students. The journal has been used at university open days as a marketing tool to promote the sociology course to students who may be unsure what a sociology degree entails. It was also promoted to our current final-year undergraduates to demonstrate the high level of work expected. As the journal had no resources to support marketing, this was done via social media, through face-to-face encounters at open days and during lectures.

Once the platform and mandate for the journal had been established, individual responsibilities were assigned. As the team consisted of three people, and the peer review process had been previously completed, we proceeded without section editor and reviewer roles. Key roles were journal manager and editor, which were assigned to the academic staff and academic librarian respectively, journal content being added to both the current and archive issues of the journal within a two-week period. This involved uploading pdf versions of the original and creating a metadata record for each article to enhance discoverability. Once the journal was established, interested academic staff, students and alumni were contacted directly via email and social media. Although the journal has been established for less than a year, data received

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via OJS for pdf downloads seem incredibly positive, with a total of 1553 downloads across all editions. This compares favourably with many of our subscription resources. The top three downloaded articles are: 'Who cares about Kim Kardashian?' (199 pdf downloads); 'Is surveillance really that bad?' (107); and 'At what cost? Consumerism vs sustainability' (102) (see figure).
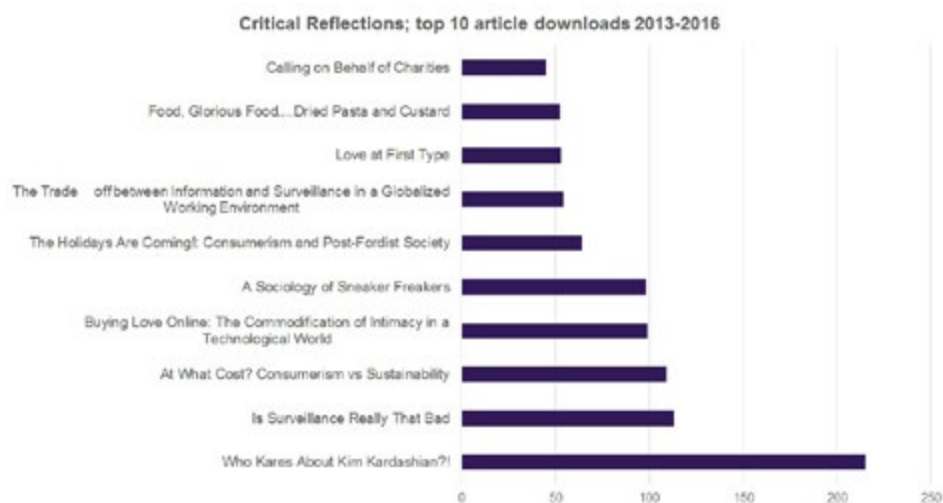


*Top ten article downloads 2013–16*

Given the limited time for the journal to become established and the lack of any marketing funds, the team felt extremely optimistic. The number of downloads received proved that this had been a valuable exercise and that it was worth encouraging other course leaders to create their own journal.

## Areas for consideration

Whilst the benefits of establishing a student journal are numerous, there are also many issues to consider. The first consideration was about copyright and intellectual property. The university policy on e-theses was applied to the journal publication as it was felt that the scenario was similar. If undergraduates retain copyright of their work, academic staff need permission from them before publishing. However, should the student wish to publish elsewhere, the article would need to undergo a significant re-write in line with established publishing policies.

As the sociology course does not have a professional body, adherence to professional body requirements was not a concern in this instance. However, other health-related courses with professional bodies have expressed an interest in establishing a journal. Therefore academic staff would need to ensure that professional body codes of conduct were followed, especially around matters of anonymity and ethics.

## Reflection and moving forward

Plans are afoot for the OJS to be adopted by other courses and there have been expressions of interest from occupational therapy and physiotherapy. To encourage others to take the initiative, the library has produced a series of open access video tutorials to assist with any queries around establishing a journal.

A review of the student journal landscape shows that several universities are in the process of establishing, or have already established, their own journals on a variety of undergraduate or postgraduate multidisciplinary subjects. It was felt that as Leeds Beckett is a large organisation, with schools retaining individual autonomy, the use of OJS itself should reflect the overall university structure and focus on subject specific rather than multidisciplinary content.

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Creating the journal facilitated discussions around key aspects of digital literacy and contributed towards important elements of the university strategic plan. Moving forward, data gathered from student contributors, in the form of focus groups or questionnaires, could provide information to establish the usefulness of the exercise from a student perspective, and how their involvement helped develop their skills.

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# Mass digitisation at the University of Edinburgh

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## Introduction

The University of Edinburgh library is currently undertaking a large-scale in-house theses digitisation project. Digitisation at the library has, until recently, largely focused on the creation of high-quality digital images of collection items in response to reader requests, for project work or for documentary purposes. Two full-time professional photographers have, over the last ten years, built up a collection of approximately 40,000 digital images, of which many can be viewed in high resolution online and downloaded from http://images.is.ed.ac.uk.

In the past the library would outsource large-scale digitisation projects, the largest of which was the digitisation of 5,000 duplicate science and engineering theses in 2015–16. This resulted in approximately one million digital images.

## The project

The library holds in the region of 27,000 PhD theses dating from the early 17th century to the present day. Approximately 10,000 are in digital format already. The new project seeks to digitise the remaining 17,000 so that this entire collection of unique Edinburgh research is available for anyone, anywhere in the world, to download free of charge.



Fig. 1 The collection

To carry out the digitisation, the library has invested in equipment and software, and has recruited a team of digitisation assistants to scan, process and upload 13,000 volumes; a further 4,000 will be outsourced. The in-house element will be completed by May 2018, with a target of having all theses online through ERA (Edinburgh Research Archive), our digital repository, by the end of 2018.

Of the 13,000 scanned in house, around 10,000 currently exist in duplicate form in print, meaning they can be scanned destructively; the remaining 3,000 are unique items which require careful, non-destructive digitisation. Duplicate theses have their boards and spines removed before being fed through a Kodak i4250 document scanner, while unique theses are scanned using a manual i2s Copibook Cobalt scanner. All scanned theses are then processed, made keyword searchable and quality reviewed with LIMB server processing software before they are uploaded to ERA.

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Fig. 2 Non-destructive scanning



Fig. 3 Spine removed for destructive scanning



Fig. 4 Document scanner for destructive scanning

## Conservation and cataloguing

Image capture is only one component of the project. Around 2,000 PhD volumes require conservation treatment and another 4,000 uncatalogued theses require catalogue records.

## Conservation

Conservation treatment ranges from basic cleaning and dusting, a task performed by the scanning assistants and volunteers, through to more specialist conservation work to reattach boards, repair damaged volumes, loosen tight spines and, on some occasions, remove theses entirely from their bindings and re-house them in boxes. A full-time Projects Conservator has been appointed to complete this work and to train scanning assistants

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in handling rare and unique collections. The Projects Conservator provides conservation guidance and expertise as and when required.

The inclusion of a qualified conservator in the project has been vital in ensuring that best practice in handling is adhered to and that no damage is done to volumes as they are scanned. The vital role the conservator plays in the team highlights how conservation must be a fundamental element of any digitisation project.

## Cataloguing

4,000 PhD theses in the collection have no MARC catalogue records, their bibliographic information being accessible only through the paper catalogue held in the Centre for Research Collections (CRC). For these theses, metadata is being created at the point of scanning and converted into basic MARC records by cataloguing staff.

By incorporating conservation and cataloguing into the project, we shall ensure that at project end, all University of Edinburgh PhD theses will exist in physical and digital format, will have undergone conservation work and will be catalogued and discoverable on our library Discovery system DiscoverEd.

## Benefits of our approach

Arguably, it might have been simpler and cheaper to outsource the entire collection of 17,000 theses – an approach adopted by colleagues at a number of universities. Anecdotal feedback and our own experience of outsourcing have suggested that this approach has its own complications and is far from straightforward.

We decided for a number of reasons to undertake a hybrid approach, scanning some theses in house and outsourcing the rest. First, there is a strong digitisation agenda among research libraries, as exemplified through the National Library of Scotland's goal to have a third of its collections in digital format by 2025, and the University Library is keen to develop its skills and experience in this area in order to inform future projects. Secondly, the software, equipment and materials used on this project will all be available for future mass and high-quality digitisation initiatives.

While this project is large in scale, in many ways it is also a pilot project as we explore our options and develop the best approach to mass digitisation within the organisation.

## Thesis scanning service

Alongside this project, the library offers a thesis scanning service that allows readers to pay for a thesis to be digitised on demand. While our project will ultimately negate the need for such a service, demand continues to be strong for this direct service. Since the project team took on responsibility for the service in October 2016, there have been 35 requests, which is in line with the hundred or so requests per year before the project began. Undertaking this request service as part of the project has provided the team with a customer-focused dimension to their work, and service turnarounds have shortened considerably thanks to our more specialist scanning equipment.

## Progress

The scanning team is on course to complete the in-house scanning element by May 2018, and it is anticipated that the first batch of outsourced theses will be collected in early April and returned by July 2017. As of 3 February 2017, the in-house team had scanned 4,500 volumes (out of an in-house total of 13,000), 3,500 University of Edinburgh theses now being available through ERA.

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## Use of digital theses

There is strong demand for digitised PhD theses among the academic community: digital copies are downloaded from our repository an average of thirty times each per month, whereas the total number of physical volumes consulted in our reading room rarely surpasses a hundred per year. To put that in perspective, one individual digital thesis is accessed more times in three months than the entire collection of physical theses is accessed in a year.

That is not to say that creating digital files is the end point. Now that our scanning processes are embedded and workflows established, we are considering ways in which we can increase awareness and use of the collections. We have begun working with the university's Wikimedian in Residence to explore how the PhD thesis collection can be linked to author pages in Wikipedia, particularly making sure that a link to their thesis is included in the author's Wikipedia info box (which appears at the top of Google search results). One example is the Wikipedia page of Ernest Bashford, whose page was created three months ago and has been viewed 214 times. At this stage the process is entirely manual, although there is scope to explore whether it can be automated.



*Fig. 5 Wikipedia infobox for Ernest Bashford*

We are also exploring uploading older theses into Wikisource, Wikimedia's online library of out-of-copyright texts. Again this is still a largely manual task, but it would be interesting to explore whether any of the processes can be automated. At February's History of Medicine Wikipedia editathon, we imported T.S. Jehu's thesis 'Some problems in variation and heredity' into Wikisource as a test for future works.

In addition, we intend to start exploring advanced research techniques such as data visualisation, text mining and image recognition and to look at areas such as geolocation and the demographic breakdown of authors.

## Future projects

We hope that the expertise and equipment gained from this project will put the library in a strong position for future mass digitisation initiatives. While this project specifically deals with the digitisation of PhD and other doctoral level theses, the library holds several thousand non-doctoral theses, including a visually diverse collection of dissertations from Edinburgh College of Art, which could form a standalone project. Scoping work is under way for a large-scale project to digitise the Scottish Session Papers held by the University of Edinburgh, Signet Library and Advocates Library, and there is potential for the mass digitisation of out-of-copyright general collections. We are also beginning to investigate the possibility of using our document scanners to provide an internal digitisation service for university departments.

## Conclusion

The PhD digitisation project is the library's first attempt at mass digitisation and has provided many opportunities for learning and development. Digitisation activity is on schedule and the creation of 17,000 digital theses will provide a huge corpus of text for traditional researchers and for those who wish to employ advanced research techniques.

Keep up to date by visiting our project blog: http://libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/phddigitisation/

# Changes in the research support landscape over the last ten+ years:
## reflections on the DARTS conference series 2005–2018

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### DARTS: a potted history

The 'DARTS' conferences began back in 2005, instituted by the South West branch of what was then the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals' University, College and Research (UC&R) Group (now 'Academic and Research Libraries Group' – ARLG) with the aim of providing a dedicated event for librarians and information professionals with an interest in research support. The topic had been covered as a one-day conference in the West Midlands, but there hadn't been a research event in the south west, or anything residential. It seemed appropriate to put the 'R' back into UC&R!

We chose Dartington Hall on recommendation. This is a beautiful fourteenth-century estate with stunning mediaeval architecture. The snappy name 'DARTS' went with Dartington of course, and we eventually thought of some appropriate words to fit – 'Discover Academic Research Training and Support'.



For DARTS1 in 2005, the librarian of the then on-site Dartington College of Arts organised a musical interlude given by some students. Generous sponsorship enabled us to have a champagne reception, and a raffle with prizes of Dartington crystal. It was a very special event in flaming June with a relaxed vibe, attracting attendees from across the country.

Delegates at that first conference said they wanted more, and DARTS2 happened four years later. Musical interludes and champagne ceased to feature once we got to DARTS3 in 2012, but the tranquil and inspiring setting, along with the intimate and enthusiastic vibe of the event, means DARTS has continued to be very special.

Themes that have emerged over the course of the conference series are explored below, with links to speaker presentations provided where available.

### The RAE to the REF: open access, bibliometrics and impact

How has the research landscape changed since the inaugural DARTS conference? One consistent thread has been research assessment. At DARTS1, it was the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), but by DARTS2 we were hearing about the development of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) from Graeme Rosenberg (Higher Education Funding Council for England[1]), whilst Nicola Cockarill explained how the REF had been piloted at the University of Plymouth. At DARTS3, Anna Dickinson (HEFCE) provided an update on how impact, outputs and the environment would be key elements of the new REF.

# Changes in the research support landscape over the last ten+ years:
## reflections on the DARTS conference series 2005–2018

As a result of REF2014, open access and impact were high on the research agenda by DARTS4, which included related talks from Neil Jacobs of JISC, Yvonne Budden of UKCoRR (United Kingdom Council of Research Repositories), and Miggie Pickton from the University of Northampton. Neil discussed the complexity of funder compliance when publishing open access, the Finch Report's recommendation of the gold route, and Research Councils' support of both gold and green. Not to mention the rise of the dreaded APC (Article Processing Charge)! Yvonne gave much-needed practical advice and top-tips on how to be compliant at the local institutional level, providing context through the eyes of the University of Warwick. The key messages were how to support confused researchers, encourage engagement with the repository and make use of the block grant from RCUK. Essentially, advocacy, advocacy, advocacy!

Miggie demonstrated how libraries could support researchers to evidence and measure impact through traditional methods such as bibliometrics and new routes such as altmetrics. She explained how impact summaries must address the questions of who will benefit from a piece of research and how (socially, economically or environmentally), suggesting that we as librarians could use similar impact measurements (such as usage statistics, user feedback and uptake of new services) to prove the value of our own practitioner research.

At DARTS5, open access was still a hot topic. Martin Eve (Birkbeck, University of London) provided an update on the current state of play and the continuing challenges we face with implementation and advocacy. Meanwhile Katie Evans (University of Bath) looked at the use of bibliometrics to improve institutional rankings and to prepare us for REF2020. She demonstrated the use of research analytics for benchmarking, improving our publishing strategy, cultivating impact and winning research funding.

## Research data management

Research data management (RDM) has become an increasingly important area of research support, especially since the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council issued their requirements for data management in 2011, for enactment by 2015. 2011 also saw the launch of JISC's second Research Data Management programme, which funded a series of projects to lay the foundations for effective RDM across a range of institutions. Participants in the JISC programme were more than willing to share their experiences, and RDM featured on the agenda of two of the DARTS conferences.

At DARTS3 in 2012, two complementary talks looked at the place of librarians in the development and delivery of institutional research data management services. Jill Evans, Gareth Cole and Hannah Lloyd-Jones (University of Exeter) focused on 'Creating and maintaining a sustainable research data management service'. They gave an overview of what research data and research data management are, why they are important, and how librarians fit into the service delivery. They also shared some research that they had carried out demonstrating the areas in which researchers themselves felt they needed training in order to engage effectively with RDM. In her paper 'Why is the library leading on this? RDM and university libraries', Judith Stewart (UWE Bristol) looked at the skills that equip librarians perfectly to lead on the development of this cross-institutional service, and some of the benefits and challenges that this area of work could bring to library services.

DARTS4 in 2014 also hosted two speakers on RDM. Jenni Crossley (UWE Bristol) considered the development of RDM services in university libraries since 2012. Additionally, she gave an overview of how RDM had progressed in her institution in a paper entitled 'Research data management: where are we now?' Leigh Garrett (University for the Creative Arts) gave a very entertaining and thought-provoking paper: 'Stuff and data: challenges of RDM in the visual

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arts'. One of the most appealing elements of DARTS is that papers usually have a practical audience participation section; Leigh's was no different, and everyone was challenged by the task of managing data for a project relating to the development of a chair and a vase.

## The role of the librarian

The changing nature of librarians' involvement in research support has been reflected in both DARTS conference content and the roles of those attending. Early DARTS delegates rarely had dedicated research support roles, whilst by DARTS5 the reverse was true. By 2016 many libraries had developed research support teams, with librarians taking responsibility for institutional repositories, open access, metrics and RDM as well as research collections, archives and information skills support for research students and staff.

A trend towards the use of e-learning to support researchers clearly emerged over the years. Elizabeth Martin (De Montfort University) and Jennifer Coombs (University of Nottingham, DARTS3) shared their experience of creating online tutorials for researchers, a theme which Nazlin Bhimani (Institute of Education, DARTS5) and Sian Bayne (University of Edinburgh, DARTS5) developed further in their sessions on creating online InfoLit resources for PhD Students and embedding digital research in online teaching. The rise of social media also became increasingly significant, with speakers at later conferences highlighting its relevance to the research support context. Jez Cope's practical, hands-on workshop identified ways of connecting researchers through social media (University of Bath, DARTS4). Meanwhile Frances Ryan (Edinburgh Napier University, DARTS5) gave an eye-opening paper about issues around managing personal online reputations: our own, and those of our researchers.

Support for publication has been another area of ongoing interest. Moira Bent and Pat Gannon-Leary (Newcastle University and Northumbria University, DARTS2) emphasised the importance of librarians' role in helping researchers to publish. Miggie Pickton (DARTS3 & 4) built on this by encouraging delegates to engage in more practitioner research themselves.

Talks on researcher library space from Sheila Corrall (University of Pittsburgh, DARTS4) and improving the research student experience from Annie Maddison Warren (Cranfield University, DARTS5) further emphasised the expanding and changing nature of librarians' research support activities. Elizabeth Gadd (DARTS5), meanwhile, highlighted lessons learnt by way of her move from Loughborough's University Library to their Research Support Office. Research support roles were becoming increasingly outward facing, and we were encouraged to look beyond library walls.

## The future of DARTS

Planning for DARTS6 is now well under way and Dartington Hall has been booked for the 24 and 25 May 2018. Requests from DARTS5 delegates for future presentations included basic research methods for librarians, basic RDM and even more practical strategies for bibliometrics.

These suggestions gave us the idea of going 'back to basics', taking research support as the theme for DARTS6. Given changing government policies and new developments, the research environment has become increasingly complex to navigate. We're hoping that DARTS6 will help delegates to steer a course, with speakers on topics such as staff development for research support librarians, supporting PhD/early career researchers, as well as something on research support and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

# Changes in the research support landscape over the last ten+ years: reflections on the DARTS conference series 2005–2018

Booking for the conference will open later this year, but we would welcome ideas or suggestions for specific topics or speakers. For further information and to get in touch please see the DARTS website and use the contact details below:

DARTS website: https://arlgdarts.wordpress.com/
Twitter: @arlgdarts, #darts6
Email: arlgdarts@gmail.com

## Note

1    All affiliations given are correct at the time of the conference noted, but may since have changed.

# Make It Snappy:
## The Edge Hill University Library Snapchat Story!

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## Introduction

Learning Services at Edge Hill University (EHU) has a strong commitment to staff development in the workplace, and in 2015–16 we undertook a service-wide project to strengthen this ethos, with a collective mind-set dedicated to developing a learning culture where learning is the rule, not an exception, barriers to learning are removed and staff are empowered to embrace learning, innovate and take risks.

Social media is just one area of innovation where we like to continually push boundaries and experiment with new ideas. Learning Services has been active on social media for a number of years, having joined Facebook in November 2010 and Twitter the following month, and in March 2016 we launched an Instagram account to increase our social media reach. We use our social media accounts to promote our many services, interact with EHU students and staff and to network with other libraries/organisations across the country and globally.

In June 2016 Learning Services staff attended a training session on *Learning at work week Eextra: how to tell a Snapchat video story!* hosted by an external digital communications specialist Imran Azam.[1] In this session staff were encouraged to engage with Snapchat and create their own story. It is incredibly simple to do yet beautifully effective, and there are a host of filters, images/texts and video-editing tools readily available to use alongside any photo or video created. Staff felt inspired and motivated to take a risk, prepared to try something new and supported when experimenting with visual storytelling as a new way of engaging students with the library.

## Why Snapchat?

Snapchat is one of the world's most popular and fastest-growing social media platforms for authentic storytelling. We know our students are using it.[2] We know other universities are using it.[3] Whilst Snapchat is currently dominated by 13–25 year olds, it is clear that its user base is rapidly becoming more widespread.[4] As of February 2017, Snapchat has over 161 million users and 10 billion daily video views, so it is no surprise that major brands and social media marketers are taking Snapchat extremely seriously. At Learning Services we felt the platform and content ability could assist us in reaching students on a new and dynamic level to encourage engagement with our support services.



*Make It Snappy*

## Strategy

Our plan was to launch a University Library Snapchat account ready for the new term in September 2016 and to pilot using the platform during first week(s) of term to promote the university library and its ongoing events. The key events we wanted to promote during first week(s) were the student-led library tours and Learning Edge technical support sessions, both of which took place in the university library.

We needed to consider content, who would record it and on what device, and how to promote our new account before we went live. We knew what we

# Make It Snappy:
## The Edge Hill University Library Snapchat Story!

wanted to record (tours/drop-in sessions) and wanted the students delivering these sessions to be involved as much as possible, so a small task group was assigned to take photos/videos each day during the first two weeks. This included me, a graduate trainee and our Learning Spaces Co-ordinator. We used our own smartphones (Apple and Android) and/or library tablet (Android).

We wanted the stories to be relaxed in delivery but inviting in content, so we used videos and photographs, often employing filters and editing tools for added interest. We were promoting the tours/drop-ins while also providing a glimpse, before the students even stepped through our doorway, of what they could expect to see if they visited the library during the first week(s). Each day our first story would introduce the students delivering the sessions by providing photographs of them with their first name, in order to break that initial barrier.

In terms of promotion, we relied heavily on our already well-established social media platforms and updated our profile images on Twitter and Facebook to our Snapcode image and posting regularly throughout the first few weeks in September on all platforms to raise awareness of our new account. We used posters in our main foyer, the meeting area for library tours and drop-in sessions, and asked the students delivering the daily sessions to encourage new students to follow our Snapchat stories, and invite them to take part in our posts and create their own stories.
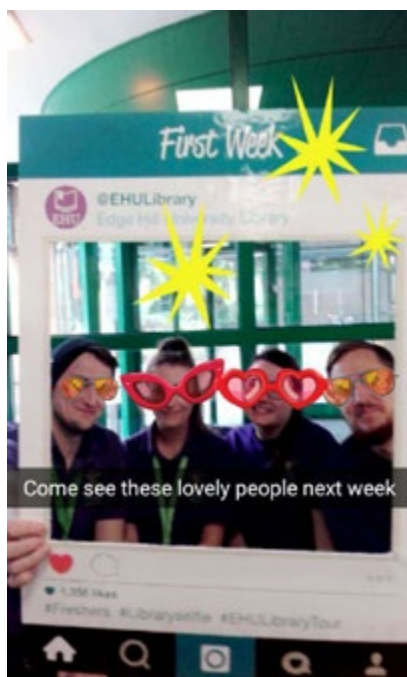


*First week tour guides*



*First week drop in*

## Evaluation

Evaluating Snapchat is not as easy as evaluating other platforms as it requires a lot of manual interaction, and there is only a short window of opportunity to collect statistics. As soon as a story is posted, a 24-hour countdown begins until the story disappears forever… along with all the data. We posted a collection of photos and short videos every day during first and second weeks of term and each subsequent day we collected as many statistics as possible. There was no way (at the time[4]) to discover which stories were more popular as Snapchat played stories continuously, so if you viewed one it would run through them all.

We recorded the day, date, new friends, total friends, number of stories posted, number of views per story and number of stories screen shot. During first week(s), through student word of mouth and social media promotion, 105 new friends were following our account. We didn't post during the

weekend but surprisingly still gained new friends. Overall we posted 60 stories during first week(s) and had a total of 2811 views, an average 46.9 views per story.

| Total Friends | Total Stories Posted | Total Story Views | Average View Per Story | Stories Screen Shot |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 110 | 60 | 2811 | 46.9 | 15 |

After the success of first week(s) promotion we decided to continue using Snapchat to showcase our National Poetry Day promotion. On 6 October 2016 we delivered a poetry walk in celebration of National Poetry Day and we 'snapped' the event as one story. Overall 22 stories were posted (a mixture of photos and videos) with a total of 1246 views, an average of 56.6 per story.

| Friends | New Friends | Stories Posted | Stories Views | Average View Per Story | Stories Screen Shot |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 117 | 7 | 22 | 1246 | 56.6 | 0 |

## Future

To date, we have a total of 159 friends, and our intention is to use Snapchat in a similar way for special events/promotions. It is unlikely that we shall lose friends because of inactivity, but we shall monitor this. We have discovered that to use Snapchat for promotional purposes requires more consideration than using other platforms such as tweeting or posting an image on Instagram. We shall continue to plan ahead and use Snapchat for more visual 'live' events rather than posting sporadically, as our other platforms work better for this method of communication.

We shall also consider using Instagram Stories, but most likely alongside Snapchat (you can now upload to both) as we have found Snapchat's editing tools to be far superior to Instagram's – and who doesn't love a dog filter! Now that Facebook owns Instagram, additional filters that are available in Facebook Messenger may gradually be introduced to Instagram. We look forward to seeing any new developments on these platforms as they fight to compete with Snapchat's success.

It has been exciting to start working in a new arena, and as the first UK university library to use Snapchat we took a risk in launching the EHULibrary Snapchat account. Overall, we feel our initial steps into this social media platform have been a success!

## Notes

1   Imran Azam is the founder of the company called thisisreel.co, the video storytelling agency that provides brands with social media focused production, training and strategy. See Snapchat-as-a-service. (2016). Available from: http://thisisreel.co/services/snapchat-as-a-service [accessed 28 July 2016]

2   77% of UK Snapchat users are over 18. Titcomb, J. (2017). How can Snapchat lose $515 million and be worth $25 billion? Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2017/02/03/snap-ipo-can-snapchat-lose-515-million-worth-25-billion/ [accessed: 13 February 2017]

3   We follow other universities and libraries on Snapchat!

4   Snapchat update on 12 October 2016 altered the platform so you can now watch one story at a time, or play them in the sequence you prefer – we have yet to see any affect to our stories/views from this update.

# Guidance for authors

Before submitting an article for consideration, please consult the Guidance for Authors information which can be found at:
http://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/sconul-focus-guidance-for-authors

# Editorial information

Please send articles for publication to Steve Rose: steve.rose@bcu.ac.uk