

Repository Staff and Skills

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Overview

Most research institutions in the UK have or are developing repositories. Increasingly repositories are also emerging for other materials such as data or educational resources. These repositories are typically managed by teams based in the institution's library.

Libraries continually develop and adapt and likewise the roles of information professionals also evolve. Less often however, do entirely new positions develop. With the advent of Open Access (OA) and OA repositories that is exactly what has happened in research based organisations worldwide. However, the knowledge and skills required to develop and manage a repository are highly specialised and not automatically found among existing library staff.

Job descriptions

With the growing number of repositories in the UK, the CRC and the RSP are frequently asked for examples of job descriptions for repository manager positions and other roles associated with a repository. There seemed a need for a generic list of common repository roles listing the skills essential to developing and managing a repository. To respond to this need examples of actual job descriptions were collected and the repository community asked for their input on the subject. This work is now in its third edition and is available [online](#). The key findings and skills identified are summarised below.

Key issues highlighted

Repositories in the conventional sense provide access to the full text of research articles, reports, etc. However with some thought and ingenuity, repositories can and do serve other purposes as well such as assisting in REF exercises, often partnered

with a CRIS (Central Research Information System). As the remit of a repository expands so too do the staffing levels needed and the knowledge and skills required to integrate the repository with existing technical systems and cultural practices within the institution.

Hence the exact requirements of a particular repository position (e.g. repository manager) will depend on specific institutional needs. Likewise the actual skills set possessed by repository managers and workers can vary considerably between institutions.

Repository staff

In general, two repository positions can be clearly identified; repository managers and repository administrators. Repository managers typically manage activities such as the advocacy, training and outreach of the repository while repository administrators typically quality check metadata and copyright. They may oversee the technical implementation, management and upgrade of repository software and associated software. These roles, whether filled by two individuals or as a composite skill set across a team, seem to be fundamental for repository support.

In the wider institutional context there is likely also a strategic third role, usually fulfilled by a Director of service or similar senior manager; whom provides support, insight and representation within an organisation's senior hierarchy.

Finally there is likely to be a technical support or development role, the skills of which fall outside the scope of this document.

Repository skills set

Rather than try to identify the skill set required of a particular repository post this document seeks to identify all the knowledge, aptitudes and abilities required for the instigation, development and management of a successful institutional repository. Summarised below are the main skills identified:

- **Management** – an ability to manage the set up, development and ongoing maintenance of the repository including strategic and financial planning and engagement with relevant groups, individuals and stakeholders.
- **Supervision** – for the manager an ability to oversee the work and day to day activity of any colleagues directly working on the repository.
- **Software** – familiarity with relevant web-based systems and repository software. The ability to implement and modify systems and software to meet the needs of the repository and institution, often in collaboration with a technical developer.
- **Metadata** – familiarity with relevant and emerging standards and an ability to monitor and ensure metadata quality is maintained.
- **Curation Preservation** – familiarity with current best practice and an ability to liaise with other departments to ensure storage and digital preservation and curation procedures meet best practice.
- **Rights**– familiarity with current IPR and related copyright issues, interpretations and best practice. Possesses an ability to develop content policies and engage with key stakeholders to maximise quality and quantity of content.
- **Advocacy** – an ability to liaise and advocate with various groups, departments and individuals both within the institution and externally to promote the deposit and use of items in the repository.
- **Training and Support** – an ability to meet the needs of the repository and its users in terms of training and awareness of OA, the repository, deposit routes and continuing scholarly communications evolution. Additionally the IR must be able to provide support for users requiring assistance or information in using the repository's resources and other open access sites.
- **Current Awareness and CPD**– familiarity with current trends, standards and emerging best practices in the repository and research community. It is essential to maintain an awareness of developments in repository software and associated technologies.

Conclusion and the future

When the first version of this document was written most repository workers were ploughing their own furrow. Today the range of skills and responsibilities of repository personnel is dependent in part on the scope and requirements of the repository itself as well as external influences like the REF and CRIS. In this document we identify the two predominant roles which need to be covered. Individual institutions should identify how these roles are to be addressed in each institution. The skills listed can be used as a pick-list to compile job descriptions, or to identify the individual contributions needed from a team of staff to support the repository.

References & Further information

Wickham, J (2011) based on the original by Robinson, M (2007). Repository Staff and Skills document
<http://www.rsp.ac.uk/help/publications/#briefing-papers>

Repositories Support Project <http://www.rsp.ac.uk/>

The Repositories Support Project (RSP) aims to co-ordinate and deliver good practice and practical advice to HEIs to enable the implementation, management and development of digital institutional repositories.

Centre for Research Communications <http://crc.nottingham.ac.uk/>

The Centre for Research Communications (CRC) is based at the University of Nottingham and helps support and inform these changes and new ideas. The CRC houses the portfolio of open-access projects, services and initiatives currently undertaken by the University. These include the home of the SHERPA partnership; the open-access services RoMEO, Juliet and OpenDOAR; the JISC Research Communications Strategy project, Repositories Support Project (RSP), and the University contribution to the European and international projects OpenAIRE, Dart-Europe and NECOBELAC. Project and service funders include JISC, the European Commission, the Wellcome Trust and SPARCEurope.

UK Council of Research Repositories UKCoRR

UKCoRR is a professional organisation managed for and by UK based Open Access repository administrators and managers. Their mission is to promote repository management as a recognised and respected profession, provide a forum for discussion and exchange of experience and best practice, as well as representing the views and concerns of those who work with repositories at an organisational, policy and strategic level.