

Overview

Workflows are a break-down of the administrative tasks needed within a repository. They allow the various activities involved in running a repository to be assigned to the individuals or groups who are best able to deal with them.

The process of defining workflows is closely aligned with a stakeholder analysis of those involved with the repository: once you have identified the benefits and issues relevant to each stakeholder group, the next step is to ask exactly *how* users are going to interact with the repository software, and what specific tasks they are going to complete.

Types of workflows

There are several types of workflow in a typical repository. These include workflows to manage user registration and administration, workflows to manage authorisation and permissions within the repository, and administrative workflows to allow for maintenance and software updates. However, the most significant workflow focuses on the submissions process. This workflow is crucial as it will be used regularly by a wide variety of depositors. The remainder of this paper therefore explores issues around defining a submissions workflow and its typical elements. In recent years, many institutions have integrated their repositories with CRIS (Current Research Information Systems) which may change the order of the workflow identified here. However, the elements will still apply.

Submission workflows

Submission workflows define the steps involved in adding content to a repository, gathering the necessary metadata, permissions and files

associated with the content, and validating these elements prior to making the item accessible through the repository.

The benefits of submission workflows

There are several benefits to creating submission workflows within the repository:

- Streamlines the deposit process – a comprehensive submissions workflow minimises effort and simultaneously ensures capture of all required information without duplication of effort.
- Encourages user deposits – A user-friendly submissions workflow can encourage academics to deposit more items.
- Integrates quality assurance – building checking stages into workflows allows items or metadata to be double checked for accuracy and consistency early in the life of the item.
- Adds value – workflows can add value to a collection or process by, for example, adding subject classification to an object or triggering other actions such as submission to publishers or other repositories.
- Facilitates administration – once content starts flowing into the repository sound workflows enable the repository administrator to manage new deposits, track objects through each stage, and address any problems that may arise.

Elements of a typical submission workflow

A typical simple submission workflow has three basic elements: metadata; permissions and file

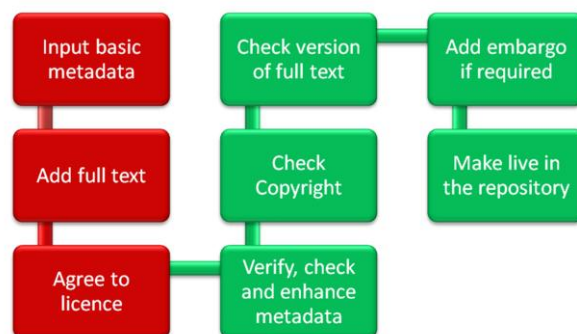
management. The following questions must be addressed to define an effective and comprehensive workflow:

- How will you manage different versions of papers?

It can be useful to develop an illustration of your workflow.

Metadata input

- What metadata is going to be gathered from the authors?
- What metadata (if any) will be generated automatically?
- What metadata (if any) are administrators or other repository staff going to add to each record?
- What are the options for minimising free text fields?



Permissions / copyright and licence handling

- Who is responsible for checking the copyright of each submission?
- At what stage in the process is this check completed and how are the decisions recorded in the metadata?
- When will the depositor sign a deposit agreement or licence?
- How are you going to deal with embargoes?

File management

- What files are you requesting from the authors?
- What formats will you request?
- How will associated files be identified and stored in the repository?

Conclusion

This paper has outlined the importance of workflows within the repository and has illustrated how, in particular, implementing streamlined and efficient submission workflows can re-enforce positive benefits. A repository manager should devote some time to planning, testing and refining their workflows at an early stage of repository implementation. This is a task that sits well alongside configuring your repository software, defining your metadata scheme and implementing your deposit licence. More information about all these topics is available from the RSP web site.

References & Further information

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.