Promotion

Overview

To embed your repository successfully as part of the institution requires significant **cultural change,** including integration of deposition within workflows and operational procedures. Promotion is one of the most powerful tools to achieve this.

Core message

A core message or **strapline** is essential for promotion and this should reflect the repository's ethos and tangible advantages. This message should be incorporated into all promotional literature, every essential talk and be embraced by repository staff. There is a need to tailor aspects of your message to particular audiences so make them challenging, engaging and informative. Simple examples of a strapline are:

Deposit in the repository and increase the visibility of your work

The success of the university is built upon its research – build a firm foundation today with UniRepoPrints

Think local, reach global.

An expansion of this idea is to consider reducing the central message or unique selling point (USP) of your repository to just 25 words. It is a powerful focussing technique, and may well help you to identify or refine your core message, offering a snappy but accurate response to the chance encounter with a key academic staff member who asks *'So what does this repository do?'*. For example:
The repository collates, preserves and makes readily available to the global community the most valuable output of this institution – its research.

Building informed awareness

Each contact, briefing and event you organise helps to build an awareness of the repository, forming part of the overall promotional framework. Commonly repository managers will promote the **intellectual benefits** of the repository, but should not neglect the **emotive aspects,** such as personal reward. It is beneficial to address the issue of 'What's in it for me?' to stakeholders. Most audiences have limited time and attention. Potentially, all they will initially remember is the strapline.

The marketing mix

For effective promotion it is best to adopt more than one approach, ensuring stakeholders hear about the service from as many different directions as possible. There is a need for **bespoke adaptation** to take account of each institution's particular social, political, strategic and operational environments. Some examples include the following:

Top down
- Explore institutional requirement for deposit **(mandates).**
- Obtain **supporting statements** from the very highest level of the institution.
- Invite stakeholders to join repository **steering groups** to assist in exploring unique institutional challenges; influencing the strategic position of the repository.
- Keep the Pro-VC for research (or similar) and key committees informed of developments and successes. This ensures the repository is **embedded** in the organisation.

Bottom up

- Locate **repository champions.** Enthusiastic early adopters can act as change agents, taking your messages out on a peer-to-peer basis.
- Demonstrate how new researchers can contribute, and gain a flying start to their careers. **Repository usage statistics** can provide powerful encouragement.
- Engage students, especially graduates, by promoting the use of open access research material. In turn they will **influence** their peers and mentors.
- Inform and **involve support staff,** ensuring they understand the importance of the repository to the institution's strategy.

Events

Repository promotion is often conducted at an individual or small group level. Larger events can also make for effective promotion. It is important to reach out to as many members of the institutional community as possible. You may wish to enlist a head of service to approach senior staff directly. Events should be **informative, digestible** and wherever possible **tailored** to the attendees' professional interests. Repository team members should attend with the express purpose of engaging individuals. Capitalise on success by rapidly following up on leads and contacts generated.

Time Resource

While institutions have noted that it has been possible to speak and interact with all departments in a matter of months, do not underestimate the time it will take to embed the repository in your institution. Promotion is an **ongoing effort.** New staff and priorities arise, and there will be a need to repeat much of the effort. Make use of other staff (e.g. liaison librarians) to spread the load. Equipped with your core message and backed by your experiences, they should be able to keep the repository message firmly on the agenda.

Conclusion

Keep talking. Do not be afraid of repeating and reiterating. Find new contexts for and continually adapt your message. Ultimately you are working towards giving institutional repositories the same weight as other academic activities and priorities (e.g. examinations and applying for grants). The recently introduced research funder mandates [JULIET[1]] should ensure the matter is at the forefront of the authors' minds. Now might be a good time to face the challenge of cultural change.

References & further information :

[1]JULIET http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/juliet/

Research funders' open access policies.

Repository Support Project http://www.rsp.ac.uk/

The Repository 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.

SHERPA http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/

SHERPA (Securing a Hybrid Environment for Research Preservation and Access) is investigating issues in the future of scholarly communication. It is developing open-access institutional repositories in a number of research universities to facilitate the rapid and efficient worldwide dissemination of research.