

Institutional Repositories -  
Policy and Risk Management  
*Breakout Workshop*

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This workshop was subtitled "*or, how to run a repository and keep your balance*". It looked at the idea of policy development for running an institutional repository and the way that many of the decisions that have to be made in repository administration can best be approached as managed risks.

Repository management is a complex and fairly unexplored environment with few established working practices. The differences in particular institutional environments can radically alter the approach that has to be taken in managing a repository. This puts us all in the position of explorers, working within individual institutions, trying to identify general principles and developing the working practices that will become standard in the future.

Institutional repositories affect many people and there are a considerable number of stakeholders that have to be accommodated within the design, establishment and expansion of an institutional repository. This workshop recommended that we should learn from those who have established and have run institutional repositories over the past few years in order to get some insights into the management issues which are involved. It recommended that it pays to think things through and to perform some standard stakeholder analysis and risk analyses before going forward. However, this cannot be done at the expense of any actual progress: there is always the danger of "paralysis through analysis"!

One of the key recommendations was to establish an agreed primary purpose for the institutional repository which would help guide decisions as they arose in the course of management, to create a consistent repository service.

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For example, different participants felt that their repositories should: focus on providing publicity for research outputs; primarily respond to institutional needs for information management; act as a service to funders to support dissemination of their funded research; be used as part of a countrywide initiative to enhance a research environment on a national level; or should be seen within the wider context of re-establishing some measure of control over institutional outputs.

Taking any of these particular perspectives will greatly influence the future direction and management of a repository and have significant impacts on the day-to-day questions and decisions which need to be made.

For example: What policies should be followed for the efficient running of a repository? How do these affect relations with authors, researchers, service providers and institutional managers? Where does the Repository Administrator stand in the balance between publishers' and author's rights? To what extent should authors be shielded from the practicalities of dealing with IPR? To what extent should a Repository Administrator take on risks in order to get a workable system?

To better deal with these decisions, the workshop looked at risk management as a process, and how to choose between possible responses to identified risks.

Bill Hubbard