Setting up a research repository: the Sheffield Hallam experience

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outline

• Research at Sheffield Hallam
• Background to the project
  – decision to use Digital Commons
• Research repository project
  – early engagement with Faculty staff
• Future work
Research at Sheffield Hallam University

• Post 1992 University
• 27781 enrolled students
• 9232 taught PG
• 241 research PG
• 1,200 academic staff ?? research active
• Majority of research outturn is contract/consultancy, as opposed to pure/academic research

• 2001 RAE
  – Entered 19 UoAs.
  – Grade 5 in Metallurgy and Materials; History; Art and Design
Research at Sheffield Hallam University

• Faculties
  Organization and Management
  Arts Computing Engineering and Sciences
  Health and Well-Being
  Development and Society

• 2 Research Institutes and 20 Research centres
• Enterprise Centre
• Learning and IT Services: converged department
Research at Sheffield Hallam University

- Research and Business Development is key growth strategy in 2003-2008 Corporate Plan
- 2005 discussions on Virtual Research Environment
  - Existing support processes for research fragmented
  - RAE 2008
  - Management information about research activity
  - Expertise management: knowledge about staff and specialisms
  - Identified need for an Institutional Repository
- New Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research
Research repository development

• Business case for VRE and repository in Annual plan for 2006-2007
• RR proposal contained costs for options
  – Developing open source system
  – Buying commercially available product and server
  – Leasing commercially available software with off-site hosting and maintenance
• Image Database software selected
• July 2006 money made available for leased option
Research repository project

• Project objectives
  – Well-populated repository
  – Culture of self-archiving established
  – University requirements for a repository analysed and understood
  – Software evaluation completed

• Project approach
  – LITS working in partnership with the research community
Project timescale

- **Phase 1 (October 06-March 07)**
  - Set up repository site
  - Agree policies
  - Test with sample population
  - Communication and promotion

- **Phase 2 (April 07-October 07)**
  - Populate repository
  - More communication and promotion

- **Phase 3 (November 07-March 08)**
  - Evaluate (content, process, software)
  - Develop requirements specification for a University research repository
Digital Commons

- Produced by ProQuest and based on publishing software from Berkeley Electronic Press
- Two-year lease initially to December 2008
- Quick and easy to set up, configuration by ProQuest staff
- Hosted off-site: minimal technical setup
- Global product: Surrey, Warwick and Roehampton are UK customers
- Features include personal researcher pages, journal publishing
- Able to handle variety of file formats and supplementary information
- Repository site is live at http://digitalcommons.shu.ac.uk/
Issues to be addressed

• What we call the repository / branding

• What types of research outputs will be included

• Include bibliographic details for all outputs (some won't have the full text)

• Establishing responsibility for quality control within subject areas
Engaging with Faculty

met with:

• PVC (Research)

• Assistant Deans (Research and Business Development)
  Heads of Research Centres / Institutes

initial survey:

• Questionnaire for staff engaged in research
Survey results – issues identified

Of concern to respondents
- extra work
- adequate quality control

Also identified
- requirement to deposit would be burdensome
- confusion / misunderstanding
  - about the purpose of the repository
  - about current ease of access to articles
  - about the potential audience – "is it worth the effort?"
what next?

Our priorities are

- agree name; adapt the design
- add research papers
- develop advocacy materials
- promote to faculties