University of Sheffield Research Committee

Open Archiving policy

INTRODUCTION

1. The University of Sheffield, in association with its White Rose consortium members, the universities of Leeds and York, is a participant in the JISC-funded Sherpa project. Sherpa – Securing a Hybrid Environment for Research Preservation and Access – was established to explore the issues surrounding open access to research literature and particularly how the existence of 'institutional repositories' might assist this process[1].

2. Open access has been defined as the 'free availability [to the research literature] on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, should be to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited.'[2]

3. A parallel development has been the creation of an interoperability standard – the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI PMH) – which enables the harvesting of metadata from multiple international repositories and archives and the searching of these in a single pass.

4. Institutional repositories provide database storage of the full text of the research papers of an institution, searchable locally via a web interface or using the OAI PMH. Content is determined locally and may be post-prints – the final copy submitted to a journal for publication – pre-prints, or a combination of the two. The process of depositing a paper in such a repository is termed 'open archiving'; it may be undertaken by the author or by an agreed intermediary.

5. Open archiving is not an alternative to traditional peer-reviewed publishing, but is a process that can run in parallel to this. It is already supported by the majority of journal publishers though copyright agreements can vary markedly between publishers and must always be respected.

6. The primary advantage offered by open archiving is the 'freeing-up' of the research literature, making it fully and immediately available across national and international boundaries. There is no publishing delay and all interested parties can study the full text of papers without the need to subscribe to individual journal titles. The contents of institutional repositories are increasingly being harvested by Google Scholar, making academic research available via a standard search engine. There is some evidence that

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

[2] Budapest Open Access Initiative, February 2002: http://www.soros.org/openaccess

citation rates for papers that are deposited in institutional repositories are higher as a result of this enhanced visibility and retrievability.

7. Open archiving was supported by the Science and Technology Committee of the House of Commons Enquiry into Scientific Publications in July 2004, and by the Wellcome Trust. RCUK is currently developing a policy on open archiving of research outputs from Research Council-funded projects, and publication of this is expected later in 2005.

8. Since its inception in 2002, Sherpa members have created 17 institutional repositories at major research universities across the UK. The White Rose is unique amongst the SHERPA partners in being the only consortium to create a single, shared repository. At April 2005 there were some 350 papers in the repository[3].

9. During the JISC-funded phase of the SHERPA project, the White Rose project officer is providing a mediated service to researchers, undertaking the depositing process for them. In the medium term it is expected that researchers will want to deposit their own papers directly in the repository, using the guidelines available on the website.

POLICY STATEMENT

10. The University of Sheffield Research Committee fully endorses the principle of open archiving. It strongly recommends that, with effect from the 2005/06 academic year, all academic and research staff and postgraduate students deposit a copy of their peer-reviewed research outputs in the White Rose Sherpa ePrints repository.

11. All academic departments and research centres are encouraged to disseminate information on open archiving to research-active staff and postgraduate research students, and to ensure that they are aware of this policy statement[4].

12. Academic and research staff and postgraduate research students should be aware of publishers' copyright policies when selecting journals for submission of papers for publication, and are strongly encouraged to support journals which allow self-archiving of peer-reviewed research outputs.

13. Research Committee will work with the University Library to monitor external policy developments in scholarly communications and will keep this policy statement under regular review.

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[3] http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/

[4] The University Library can provide further information about the White Rose Sherpa repository and also detailed information on how to deposit. Contact Rachel Proudfoot, the White Rose Sherpa Project Officer: R.Proudfoot@sheffield.ac.uk or Peter Stubley, Assistant Director for Academic Services: p.stubley@sheffield.ac.uk