

Setting the standard for research excellence



Rob Green (@CILIP_Reporter, rob.green@clip.org.uk) is Senior Reporter, *CILIP Update*.

Rob Green talks to **Dominic Tate**, Scholarly Communications Manager at the University of Edinburgh's Main Library, about his involvement in a Jisc pathfinder project to test best practice in Open Access for academic libraries.

THIS April saw the Higher Education Funding Council for England (Hefce) introduce its new Open Access (OA) policy for its Research Excellence Framework (REF).

During a two-year build-up to the policy implementation, Jisc created and supported a number of pathfinder projects to help test best practice in the OA field for academic libraries. CILIP Reporter Rob Green talks to Dominic Tate, Scholarly Communications Manager at the University of Edinburgh's Main Library, about his involvement in one of those – The Loch project.

Hefce's new policy means that to be eligible for inclusion in the post-2014 REF, certain research output must be deposited in an institutional or subject repository. The aim is to give impetus to the Open Access movement by ensuring research is discoverable and free to read and download.

Hefce has consulted heavily on its proposals and has garnered broad support from both institutions and the research community.



Dominic Tate

Libraries and librarians will have a significant role in implementing the changes, which came into effect on 1 April.

Pathfinder projects

To help libraries find the best ways of supporting the policy and researchers in institutions, Jisc launched its OA Good Practice Project in March 2014. That led to the creation of a number of pathfinder projects, with the first eight launching in June 2014. The Loch (Lessons in Open Access Compliance in Higher Education) project – a partnership between University of Edinburgh, Heriot Watt University, and University of St Andrews – launched a few months later.

The aim of the project is to develop and collate a set of shareable resources that can be used by other institutions as they develop their own response to the Hefce changes.

The three universities involved in the Loch project each have strong research backgrounds, so it is no surprise that they wanted a robust



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

“

The aim of the project is to develop and collate a set of shareable resources that can be used by other institutions.

set of policies in place well in advance of the changes coming in to force. Their geographical proximity and the fact that they have worked closely together before, meant that partnership working on the Loch project would prove straightforward.

Senior level buy-in

Dominic says: 'In Edinburgh we are a large research-intensive university, so REF is very important to us. We are making sure we are as ready as we can be for the next REF.'

Dominic points out that senior buy-in early on was a crucial starting point. Having a strong research background helps achieve that, as the importance of REF is well understood. However Dominic says that there is still a need to engage with managers and suggests developing strategies to do that. He said: 'From our point of view, the first thing to do was make sure you have senior level buy-in for this within the institution. The University Senior manager responsible for research should be aware of the policy and its implications. You should probably treat this as a project with an implementation plan.'

As well as senior level buy-in, there needs to be active support from faculty. Library professionals can help put the structures in place for depositing in institutional repositories, but responsibility for actually doing it needs to be held elsewhere. Dominic said: 'There is a risk that administrators and librarians try to take on all the responsibility themselves. But the way this policy works with academics having to deposit on acceptance, it necessitates academic engagement. It was designed in that way and you need to be at the stage where the onus is on academics to take action the moment their publications are accepted.'

Opportunity for libraries

That does not mean that once the processes for depositing are in place, librarians should remove themselves completely from the procedure. As well as the day-to-day management of repositories, library staff have a wealth of relevant expertise to share. Dominic sees an opportunity for libraries to assert their importance to institutions. He said: 'Librarians tend to be the experts in open access and through the project we have found that there are incredibly helpful and knowledgeable research administrators who are involved. But in general, the staff in the library are seen as the go-to people for information on open access.'

'It makes sense to use library staff and our familiarity with the policy; familiarity with potential sticking points; expertise in dealing with publishers; processing articles and charges. This is something where every university library will have at least one member of staff who knows about this.'

'This is an opportunity for librarians to support their institutions through a period of quite significant change when it comes to publications.'

Of course, this should be nothing new to librarians who assist faculty and students in any number of ways already. Increasingly,

Open Access Good Practice



Pathfinder Projects

Find links to all OA Good Practice Pathfinder blogs [here](#)

Search

TWEETS FROM @OA_GOODPRACTICE

All Jisc's OA Good Practice Pathfinder projects can be found at <http://bit.ly/1WC0GaA>.

librarians in research institutions are integrating with research teams, providing expertise when it is needed.

'For quite a long time now in research-intensive institutions, libraries have played a significant role in supporting researchers and this is just one more area where we are able to provide services that add value,' says Dominic. 'If you look at the research data agenda, there are a number of external policies that directly affect the work of researchers. Librarians are well placed to support and deal with those and also offer services that help make people's jobs easier. We are able to build on relationships that have been formed over a number of years.'

'We have to be a little bit careful, because we are quite keen to point out that we are not here to tell people what to do. Having said that, it would be negligent to not let people know what the external policies are. Part of our role is providing that information and letting people know what the requirements are and then providing high quality services to support them.'

'We don't see ourselves as being responsible for compliance with these policies and that would not work anyway. That responsibility needs to lie with research leaders in schools and senior managers within the university to be effective.'

Cultural change

The University of Edinburgh has been treating its research output as if the Hefce rules are already in place so that it can iron out any issues. That means running compliance reports and reporting back to the directors of research schools in a bid to have 100 per cent of eligible papers submitted to REF once the April deadline arrived.

Dominic adds: 'The key thing we noticed was the size of the cultural change required in moving to the position that academics are

taking some kind of action at the point they are accepted for publication by a publisher. In big universities with a lot of staff, you can go out and talk to everybody, but having them then do that is a separate thing.'

Engaging with publishers

And while internal institution changes can be influenced and controlled, publishers are a different matter. External bodies are putting pressure on publishers to move to an OA model – as evidenced by the Hefce changes and numerous funders making OA a requirement. However, the method and speed of change by publishers is variable.

Dominic believes this could be the biggest stumbling block in a smooth transition to post-2014 REF. He said: 'It's a mixed picture with publishers. There are some that are clearly starting to look at changing their model and to transition towards open access, or to do more to support it – or at least cease to be obstructive.'

'However there are some notable large publishers that don't seem to be engaging still. I think that will cause problems over the next year – both for the publishers and the institutions. But ultimately it will cause problems for authors. If publishers continue to fail to engage with OA, then it's not going to end well for them either.'

'We are not expecting publishers to change their entire business model overnight, but we are starting to see a split between those who are being helpful – either through the gold or green route – and those who are not engaging at all. It's almost like they have got their head in the sand.'

Jisc's Open Access Pathfinder projects are delivering resources that any university can use. A number of them are looking at ways in which libraries can assist researchers and move to models that support post-2014 REF.

All of Jisc's pathfinder projects can be found by visiting <http://bit.ly/1WC0GaA>. [7]