The Open Archives Initiative: application and exploitation

An overview of the UKSG seminar held at the Royal College of Nursing, London, 14 May 2003

All the papers presented at the May UKSG seminar showed that the issues with OAI (Open Archives Initiative) are not technical but cultural. The focus was on institutional repositories with practical papers from projects, many part of the FAIR Programme (Focus on Access to Institutional Repositories). The PowerPoint presentations are available in the 'Events' section of the UKSG website (www.uksg.org) and some of the papers are published in this issue of *Serials*.

Kathryn Toledano opened with the publisher point of view, giving an overview of how Emerald is participating in the initiative with the shared goals of value for money, reduced costs and innovation.

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Bill Hubbard, the SHERPA Project Manager at the University of Nottingham, was proud that his acronym isn't too contrived (Securing a Hybrid Environment for Research Preservation and Access). With a wide range of participating universities, plus the British Library and AHDS, they have a repository with e-prints linked through OAI-PMH (Protocol for Metadata Harvesting).

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Susan Ashworth from Glasgow University talked about the practical aspects of the DAEDALUS Project (Data Providers for Academic E-content and the Disclosure of Assets for Learning, Understanding and Scholarship).

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Paul Meehan of PSIgate (the physical sciences gateway funded by JISC) at the University of Manchester covered the technical issues of OAI, especially the interoperability standards that aim to facilitate the efficient dissemination of content. PSIgate use OAI for three distinct purposes: exposure of their records for harvesting;

harvesting records from IPO, and exposure of their records to their LTSN partners. His conclusion was that OAI is already offering PSIgate a significant means of collaborating with external sources as it is fast, has a fairly simple methodology, is gaining widespread usage, and the harvesting processes can easily be automated, but there is still some work to be done with storage and searching.

Steve Hitchcock of Southampton University had some lessons from the Open Citation Project with Citebase: a citation-ranked search and impact discovery service which harvests metadata using OAI-PMH.

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Lizzie Gadd from Loughborough University took us through the complexities of IPR issues facing open access, and the surveys they have carried out amongst academics, journal publishers, data providers and service providers.

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Finally, *Bas Savenije* of the University of Utrecht presented the EU FIGARO project (Federated Infrastructure GAp ROquade) which provides e-publishing services to individual scientists and scientific organizations through the use of a shared organization structure and open source and standard software tools. They are different from a publisher, in that they assist self-publication, have no central branding, have a decentralized structure and are not for profit. FIGARO is also testing different financial models, including open access. Bas has the dilemma that although it is easy to construct a new economic model for academic publishing, it is difficult to imagine how the present model may evolve to the new model. He summed up with his favourite quotation from the racing driver Mario Andretti:

"When everything is under control, you are going too slowly."