


euroCRIS - Autumn 2019 Strategic Membership Meeting  
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## CRISs under scrutiny: some recent trends

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[oc.lc/rim](https://oc.lc/rim)



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March 27, 2019

**JANET NAPOLITANO, PRESIDENT**

**MICHAEL T. BROWN  
PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT**

**Re: Concerns Regarding the Use of Research Information Management Systems (RIMS)**

Dear Janet and Michael,

At its March 20, 2019, meeting, the Academic Council reviewed the attached report and recommendations from the University Committee on Academic Computing and Communications (UCACC) and the University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (UCOLASC) concerning administrators' use of research information management systems (RIMS) to assess faculty.

The UCACC and UCOLASC report echoes concerns expressed by UCAP last year about

<https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/reports/rm-jn-mb-rims.pdf>

Investigates RIMS on campus to better understand how they are used, in particular in the context of faculty assessment.

Cross-campus **survey** of RIM systems purchased or used resulting in (incomplete) overview.

Follow-up efforts to be expected.

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# CONCERNS RAISED

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# Data related concerns

- **Generation** of analytical data:  
Issues with quality, reliability, transparency of data and algorithms
- **Use** of analytical data:
  - Control of use, appropriate vs. inappropriate use, ethical questions
  - Specific use cases: the use of data analytics for faculty advancement, strategic priority-setting, and resource allocation
- **Ownership** of the data:  
intellectual property rights, privacy of individuals, data lock-in

*“[California faculty governance bodies] are of the strong opinion that universities must exert **control** of the use of their data“*

But:

*“**Governance mechanisms** to assure protection of privacy, academic freedom, intellectual property, information security, and compliance with regulations **in the uses of such data are either non-existent, out of date or nascent at best**”*

# Role of commercial entities

Sentiment that core university infrastructure better not be in the hands of commercial entities.

*"Why do these systems pose a threat? It is not the commercial nature of these products per se, but rather their proprietary nature and the lack of protections for the university's intellectual property and the privacy of its individuals that pose the greatest concern"*

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# TRENDS SHAPING THE REPORT

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# Lack of definitions

*The UC report notes a "lack of consensus on which systems should be included in the survey".*

- No internat. accepted definition of RIM / RIM systems
- Typical of the American RIM landscape; diversity of nomenclature and systems covering part of the RIMS workflow (oc.lc/RIM)
- System supporting RIM  $\neq$  RIMS (SciVal, Scopus,...)
- RIMS  $\neq$  CRIS. (RIMs much wider set of systems)



# Low awareness of open source RIMS

*“being marketed by commercial entities”*

- RIMS described as commercial endeavours by evil companies (sort of – not how they phrase it)
- VIVO mentioned briefly, but not e.g. DSpace-CRIS
- Low awareness, or lack of focus?

# Previous distrust in specific product

- “[Academic Analytics](#)”: Harvesting and providing data on faculty productivity from a multitude of external databases – not a CRIS
- Specific report on AA (July 2018):  
*"UCAP members vigorously discourage the use of this service in any personnel-related assessments and decisions."*
- Sparked and informed broader investigation & survey of RIM & assessment systems on campus (the 2019 report)

# Lack of systemwide approach (1)

- >16 different RIM systems across 9 UC campuses (low estimate)  
*"most RIMS are used by a single unit for a specific purpose, without plans or strong interest in connecting with other RIMS, data sources, or initiatives"*
- Decentralized adoption of systems and practices
- Fairly typical of highly decentralized US institutions

## Lack of systemwide approach (2)

- No single stakeholder leading RIM adoption efforts
- Difficult for any one stakeholder on campus to **control** or only **review** system implementations holistically
  - opens avenues for system providers to gain entry in spite of (partial) resistance
  - (perceived) lack of control

## Lack of systemwide approach (3)

Report illustrates difficulties of mapping the RIM landscape

- at a complex institution
- in isolation, without systemwide involvement or support

(At UC, a follow-up effort with strong cross-stakeholder involvement is planned.)

# Role of the Library

- Report compiled under leadership of the library.
- Library not always seen as a relevant stakeholder in RIM (US & Europe), impacted survey results & report findings  
*“Questions about RIMS are not expected to come from the library; units that are running RIMS for the scoped purposes of their work don't necessarily see the connection to and value of the services and skills the library has to offer.”*
- Libraries struggle to fully understand distinctive needs of stakeholders on campus, to demonstrate value they could undoubtedly bring to this area. (→ current [oc.lc/stakeholders](https://oc.lc/stakeholders) project to explore)

# Community owned & controlled infrastructure

- Acquisition of bepress (institutional repository platform) by Elsevier 2017 → shocked library world
- Resulting sentiment that **core infrastructure must not be left to commercial entities**

# Community owned & controlled infrastructure

- Heather Josef and Kathleen Shearer, “Elsevier Acquisition Highlights the Need for Community-Based Scholarly Communication Infrastructure,” *SPARC* (blog), September 6, 2017, <https://sparcopen.org/news/2017/elsevier-acquisition-highlights-the-need-for-community-based-scholarly-communication-infrastructure/>.
- David W. Lewis, “The 2.5% Commitment,” September 11, 2017, <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/handle/1805/14063>. (& debate)  
“every academic library should commit to contribute 2.5% of its total budget to support the common infrastructure needed to create the open scholarly commons”
- Claudio Aspesi et al., “The Changing Academic Publishing Industry – Implications for Academic Institutions,” *SPARC Landscape Analysis*, March 28, 2019, <https://sparcopen.org/our-work/landscape-analysis/>.



## Community owned & controlled infrastructure

- Acquisition of bepress (institutional repository platform) by Elsevier 2017 → shocked library world
- Resulting sentiment that **core infrastructure must not be left to commercial entities**
- Preference for open source platforms & **community governance**
- Europe: Open Science community

*"if we are not careful in the systems we choose and how they are used, we risk repeating some of the significant and unsustainable problems with our current scholarly communication systems. In particular, [California faculty governance bodies] urge extreme caution in entering deals with 3rd party vendors that would cede control [...] of even more of UC's scholarly and data assets without appropriate protections."*

# Summary: Trends shaping perceptions

- Lack of definitions (RIM & RIMS)
- Low awareness of open source RIMS
- Issues with specific product lowering trust in product category
- Lack of systemwide approach to RIM adoption
- Isolated effort led by library
- Library preference for community owned & controlled infrastructure

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# POTENTIAL TAKEAWAYS

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# Potential takeaways

- Definitions matter (facilitate conversations)
- Data related concerns, policies and ethics merit discussion. (GDPR!)
- Role of commercial systems and policies of use merit discussion
- Systemwide collaboration in RIM (as in other areas) is crucial, although cross-stakeholder engagement can be a challenge
- Libraries are RIM stakeholders – but neither alone nor leading

# What next?

- **Read the UC report.**
- Follow our work. [oclc.org/rim](https://oclc.org/rim) & [oclc.org/stakeholders](https://oclc.org/stakeholders)
- Anything your **institution** needs to discuss or adjust?
- Anything **euroCRIS** as a community and organization should be initiating, leading, or communicating?

“Concerns Regarding the Use of Research Information Management Systems (RIMS)”  
(University of California, March 27, 2019)

[https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/\\_files/reports/rm-jn-mb-rims.pdf](https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/reports/rm-jn-mb-rims.pdf).


# Thank you!

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**Because  
what is  
known must  
be shared.®**