

## **360° review of a CRIS environment and recommendations to increase the value of the system – a case study from Aalborg University**

### **Background**

A well driven and proper staffed CRIS system has been in operation for 20 years at Aalborg University (AAU)<sup>1</sup>. They are using the system Pure by Elsevier. AAU was the first customer running a commercial CRIS system globally.

In November 2021, the head of the CRIS team at AAU asked AT-CRIS to do a 360° CRIS review of their CRIS environment. The primary purpose of the review is better alignment with the university strategy and optimise the CRIS operation.

AT-CRIS is an independent CRIS consultancy and implementation company with numerous years of proven knowledge and expertise in the domain. The AT-CRIS staff has significant experience building and running commercial CRIS systems.

### **Review method**

AT-CRIS has developed a standard framework for reviewing a CRIS system in operation - based on our extensive experience within the domain.

It is necessary to identify all components within a CRIS system to design the 360° review, such as infrastructure setup, ownership and resources, common use cases, data flows, support structure, business procedures, and the services delivered by the system.<sup>2,3 4,5</sup>

The review has been designed to include the following activities: a meeting to establish the context and expectations; collecting existing written materials; collecting qualitative and quantitative data; conducting a set of interviews with key stakeholders; analysing the results; and lastly, presenting the current state of the CRIS, the review results, and recommendations.

Our analysis included looking at the growth in content in the CRIS last year, along with the number of modifications in that period and comparing that to the total number to identify focus areas and gaps. Validating hypotheses with data queries and questions to team members after testing assumptions through interviews, and finally identifying strengths and gaps based on the current status and future plans.

The review process took six weeks with a 25 hours workload for the CRIS team.

### **Results and recommendations**

We will present those findings that we believe can be beneficial for other institutions. We will also highlight risks and vulnerabilities in the system and our suggestions to minimise or eliminate these.

One of the main components of a CRIS in operation is defining and agreeing upon the essential and desired data quality for each entity in focus – based on the various use cases. Do it on attribute level – else, you will never be able to tell if your operation is successful.

The findings and recommendations for Aalborg University cover a set of tangible recommendations divided into four main areas: Focus on the institutional prioritised goals for 2022; Operational optimisations, Greater impact on knowledge sharing; Contributions to the overall AAU strategy for 2022-26 called “Knowledge for the world”.

## Discussion

An external review - what is it suitable for, and is it worth the effort? Can the review change ingrained habits? Can the review change the awareness and increase the value of the CRIS at the institution?

Can you define a set of measurable criteria defining a well driven CRIS system to measure the quality of the CRIS operation and create a common set of rules and standards across CRIS systems?

The CRIS can be a goldmine of assets, but is it used as the common stock of knowledge at the institution or only for particular use cases?

Our hypothesis is that operational CRIS environments, in general, have a lot of unused potential. How do you move the needle so that the CRIS becomes a significant asset for research assessments, decision support, and the exchange of open knowledge at the institutional level and contribute on a larger scale to the common good?

## References

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