UKRISS – Feasibility study and proof-of-concept for a shared research information reporting service based on CERIF

Simon Waddington[a] (simon.waddington@kcl.ac.uk), Richard Gartner[a],
Allan Sudlow[b], Karen Walshe[b], Rosa Scoble[c], Lorna Mitchell[c],
Richard Jones[d], Keith Jeffrey[e], Stephen Trowell[f]

[a] Centre for e-Research, King's College London, UK; [b] British Library, UK;
[c] Brunel University, UK; [d] Cottage Labs, UK; [e] euroCRIS; [f] University of Exeter, UK

The UK Research Information Shared Service (UKRISS) project is being funded by JISC in the UK as part of the Research Information Management programme. UKRISS is a 16 month project that started in March 2012. The project partners are King's College London (Centre for e-Research), British Library, Brunel University, Cottage Labs, euroCRIS, University of Exeter and the University of Edinburgh.

The aim of the UKRISS project is to determine the feasibility, requirements and scope of a UK national research information reporting service, and should this prove to be attainable, to build a proof-of-concept infrastructure for the proposed service.

The reporting of research information is a complex and expensive activity for research organisations (ROs). The UK does not currently have a national reporting infrastructure. Instead institutions are responsible for collating and submitting the required metadata to funders. This inevitably results in duplication and increased costs across the sector.

ROs across the UK are at different levels of maturity in managing research information, which needs to be taken into account in designing a national service. Some ROs, particularly large HEIs have invested in commercial CRIS systems such as PURE (Atira), Elements (Symplectic) and Converis (Avidas). Others have developed in-house systems to facilitate the gathering of information. Many ROs, particularly smaller organisations with limited resources, still rely on storing information in spreadsheets and preparing information by hand.

The Common European Research Information Format (CERIF) has emerged as the preferred format for expressing research information across Europe. CERIF has been piloted for specific applications, but not as a format for reporting requirements across all UK ROs.

The project is carrying out an extensive feasibility study, including in its remit a survey of use cases and an examination of the metadata and technical infrastructures necessary to deliver it. The study involves a wide range of stakeholders including research organisations, UK funding councils and charities that fund research. The CERIF standard is playing a central role, and the project is supported by euroCRIS.

Based on the results of the feasibility study, the project will seek to implement a proof-of-concept service which will be used to test the long-term viability and sustainability of a national service of this kind. A detailed evaluation of the service will be carried out with stakeholders to determine the benefits in terms of effort and costs in gathering research information. The project is building on the results of previous JISC Research Information Management projects such as RMAS, R4R, MICE and BRUCE as well as interacting with existing national and international organisations and services.