

# Arts research in Open Access repositories: sharing practice about practice

## Notes

**Held:** Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August, Chelsea College of Arts, UAL

**Run by:** Stephanie Meece, UAL, and Carly Sharples, NUA.

### **Purpose of the day:**

To bring together repository staff from arts institutions to come together and devise/share guidelines and best practice for depositing practice research into open access repositories.

### **Workshop content:**

The day commenced with a warm welcome from Pat Christie, Director of Libraries and Academic Support Services at UAL. Pat highlighted the need to represent the arts in institutional repositories and that a community approach is pivotal.

Stephanie Meece, Scholarly Communications Manager, UAL, then introduced the workshop, the challenges we face and the UAL approach so far:

- For arts outputs we need to acknowledge that a textual description is not enough.
- Kultur plugin for Eprints took this forward, so the first thing you see is an image (although all the same metadata as a text deposit sits behind this).
- The Kultur and Kultivate projects brought together a community, but with changes politically and economically much of this has now fallen away, and it's time to come back together to work on the challenges we face.
- Repositories play an important role as the only place that holds a permanent digital representation of these works – this is not the role and function of Galleries!
- Researchers do also try to preserve their work for themselves – sometimes with good results, but these sites/blogs etc have limitations, don't share metadata standards, are not interoperable, may not be updated, may not have clear owners etc.
- Our role therefore is to make a digital representation of the work (rather than aim to provide some kind of 'full text') and this representation will be richer for some outputs than others, depending on the data available from the researcher at the point of deposit.
- Stephanie discussed research through practice: including the idea that "creative work is itself a form of research and generates detectable research outputs". Practice-based research may never clearly articulate a research question, and it may never lead to academic publication in the conventional sense.
- Nevertheless practice-led research is not the same as practice itself. Practice-led research must still enhance knowledge or change understanding in some way. It should be informed by other practice or theory, and it must incorporate a scholarly apparatus that allows other researchers to understand and assess it.
- As repository managers, our role includes being editors, so we have the ability to say no to a deposit, or work with a researcher to help them understand how to describe their practice as research. It is beneficial to have a repository policy that is clear and consistent, and adequately states the mission of the repository within its institution.

- At UAL the repository mission is to provide open access research to external users, to preserve the work of UAL researchers, and be a library collection. It is not an internal audit tool.

Workshop attendees were split into four groups and spent time discussing the challenges and questions they have about their repositories and arts-based research. These were noted on flipchart paper to be collated and responded to in the afternoon.

After lunch attendees discussed the challenges together as a group, focussing on the issues that had been raised in the morning (arrangement thematically) and offering help and solutions from their own experiences. These are collated in the 'Issues and solutions: best practice in arts-research repository deposits' document included below.

The day concluded with a tour of the Library and Special Collections at Chelsea College of Arts, led by Gustavo Grandal-Montero.

**Next steps:**

- Notes and slides from the day are to be distributed to attendees.
- 'Issues and solutions: best practice in arts-research repository deposits' to be disseminated to community via UKCORR and ARLIS Jiscmail lists.
- A further event to be planned for a larger group of attendees for January 2020.

## Issues and solutions: Best practice in arts-research repository deposits

*Outcomes of the Arts research in Open Access repositories: sharing practice about practice' workshop held on 30th Aug 2019, at UAL.*

Issue	Solution
<p><b>REF</b> Portfolios</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deposit individual items with linked urls.</li> <li>• Create templates for portfolios (in conjunction with Research Office?) so researchers know what is required of them.</li> <li>• The repository is not designed to be a REF deposit tool, so it's important not to be too helpful - limit the amount of support and time you can provide.</li> <li>• Completed portfolios could be updated after the REF as examples of how the institution produced its REF portfolios – this could be beneficial to the wider practice-based research community as well. Just need to be mindful of copyright restrictions if doing this.</li> <li>• REF encounters with researchers about portfolios provide the opportunity to engage with researchers about the repository, and to explain what it is beyond the confines of REF (turning the REF positive!)</li> </ul>
<p><b>REF</b> Compliance and data</p>	<p>We can only do so much here! Check what you can Create the best records we can Then stand back!</p>
<p><b>REF</b> Repository being seen as a REF tool</p>	<p>Slippage in repository mission means the institutions may take repository from libraries to Research Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does this disrupt the value of the repository as a collection?</li> </ul> <p>We need to amplify the message that repositories are OA collections <b>not</b> REF only tools. Try to collaborate more with Research Offices on this point, especially to send harmony of message on use of repository to senior managers.</p>
<p><b>Engagement</b> Incentives for researchers to engage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are the only ones offering the opportunity to permanently preserve your work.</li> <li>• Work will be indexed in CORE – so capacity for your work to have a wider impact/reach.</li> <li>• It's a promotional tool for your research.</li> <li>• It creates short urls which are easy to share (via twitter for instance!)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's a place where you can collate all your work in one place – and (if set up this way) will populate your staff profile.</li> <li>• Can be used to demonstrate career progression.</li> <li>• Share good news stories you know of – e.g. where work has been found and taken forward after being discovered via an institutional repository.</li> <li>• Sell mediated deposit option – offers a chance for researchers to upload their material without having to worry about getting it all 'right'.</li> <li>• Puts us in the light of 'helper' rather than 'demander'.</li> <li>• Share repository usage stats with researchers (promote a bit of healthy competition).</li> <li>• The more you talk about it the more researchers will start to share with each other the repository benefits (could also ask them what they like about it to help with further promotion?)</li> <li>• Don't give up!</li> </ul>
<p><b>Engagement</b> Overcoming technological challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remember the big picture.</li> <li>• Focus on what it <b>can</b> do.</li> <li>• Tell people (keep telling them).</li> <li>• Tinker where you can – sometimes editing labels/page phrases can be a simple but effective change.</li> <li>• Don't take it personally (<b>you are not the system</b>).</li> <li>• Count your allies – remember your star depositors who are success stories.</li> <li>• Keep on writing those papers to management about required funding/improvements. This requires patience and tenacity as it can often feel fruitless, but you may be surprised one day.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Engagement</b> How we communicate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What to do when rejecting a deposit – think about the wording of rejection letters, you want to keep researchers on side.</li> <li>• Engage with them about research outputs – have they simply failed to articulate the research aspect of their work in the material they have send you?</li> <li>• A clear mission for the repository can mean clearer/easier communication with staff</li> <li>• Making the repository a carefully curated place – a more 'exclusive' club as it were – can be attractive and work as a motivator to staff!</li> <li>• Call on research staff for help...?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Engagement</b> Getting the data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't call it data!</li> <li>• Make it clear what you are asking for – e.g. guiding researchers on what material might adequately describe their work.</li> <li>• Remind them this is their opportunity to have their work digitally preserved.</li> <li>• Suggest they start with the work they have produced most recently and work backwards (can be daunting if researchers try and start with their older work and don't readily have information about it to hand for deposit).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Specific deposit challenges</b> Websites</p>	<p>You can't deposit a website! In what way is the website itself actually a research output? This is highly unlikely. (If the researcher can truly argue the website is a research output then the British Library can archive websites). Ask for the original material the researcher has used on the website to be sent to you to make up your deposit.</p>
<p><b>Specific deposit challenges</b> Moving events e.g. exhibition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a number of ways of doing this.</li> <li>• Exhibition = output</li> <li>• You can list exhibition locations in additional info but do not need individual records for each location (REF requirement of when work was "first in the public domain" may be useful here for deciding which exhibition location to use at the first location).</li> <li>• BUT related exhibition posters/catalogues etc. are also individual outputs that require their own record.</li> <li>• Can link by url.</li> <li>• <b>You can add/change deposits</b> – in fact you probably have to do this to properly represent an artists work.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Specific deposit challenges</b> Copyright</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In some ways this may be simpler for practice-based research as the creator is usually the person giving you the data.</li> <li>• <b>It is a low risk area!</b> There are not likely to be severe repercussions for getting this wrong!</li> <li>• Have a takedown policy.</li> <li>• Researchers often aren't concerned about the details of copyright requirements – this therefore is an area where we have agency to make decisions.</li> <li>• Show researchers how to use CC licences to amplify their research (and impact?)</li> <li>• You <b>can</b> choose to upload data but keep it restricted – then people can see it is there and contact you if they want to request it. This is perfectly acceptable.</li> </ul>

**HELP!**

- Get in touch with the community.
- UKCORR (<https://www.ukcorr.org/>) is very friendly so get on the list and post to it.
- Make the most of your other networks in this area e.g. ARMA (<https://arma.ac.uk/>)
- PRAG-UK (<https://prag-uk.org/>) are leading the charge on defining practice-based research for the whole community and enhancing the reputation of practice-based research.
- Draw on other support networks available to you e.g. ARLIS and GuildHE Research.