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Building Swinburne Research Bank: an engaged, user-centred approach to content recruitment

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Abstract
The now-defunct Research Quality Framework (RQF) required all Australian higher education facilities to build open access institutional repositories for the storage and archival of university research outputs. Most universities followed the University of Southampton-supported model of open access by pursuing mandates for authors to self-deposit to their repositories. This well-established workflow places the onus for depositing research, managing copyright and creating metadata on authors, and as a consequence has typically achieved low contribution rates. Swinburne Research Bank repository managers have pursued a different, more involved, service model—bringing the repository to the researchers, rather than waiting for them to come to the repository. By maintaining responsibility for content sourcing, metadata creation, copyright permissions and deposit, Swinburne has been able to provide a more personalised service to its researchers. This model increases the workload for repository managers, but allows them to build valuable working relationships with individual researchers and research groups, and to gain access to a breadth of research material beyond the scope of HERDC requirements. This engaged, user-centred approach to content recruitment has seen high rates of contribution, and authors have even begun to actively contribute work for deposit. In this paper, we describe the rationale and outcomes of our unique approach, and propose a way forward for content recruitment in institutional repositories.

Keywords
case studies; institutional repositories; open access; service models, user-centred design

Introduction
Institutional repositories are increasingly becoming a hallmark of the academic library landscape (Genoni, 2007; Lynch, 2003; Smith, 2004). A series of government-funded schemes, including the Australian Research Repositories Online to the World (ARROW) project and Australian Partnership for Sustainable Repositories (APSR, have provided assistance to higher education facilities to develop software and support the growth of university research online. The architects of the planned Research Quality Framework (RQF) envisaged that these institutional repositories would provide the technical infrastructure for conducting a new style of research assessment exercise. Despite the cancellation of the RQF and the absence of a clear role for institutional repositories in the evolving Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA)
initiative, the open access institutional repository movement that began with the full support of the Federal Government and parent institutions is a valuable method of showcasing and promoting research within Australian universities, and it must not be allowed to atrophy. Swinburne University of Technology considers the development and population of its institutional repository a major area of concentration for the Library now and into the future. In this paper, Swinburne repository managers demonstrate the value of building strong working relationships with academics early in the planning stages of an institutional repository to ensure a smooth transition into the implementation and content recruitment processes. We explore some of the decisions made at Swinburne on the basis of feedback from our researchers, and provide a roadmap for a method of content recruitment that differs substantially from established repository theory but has proven successful in building a dynamic and responsive institutional repository at Swinburne. The diversity of research areas at Swinburne makes our repository an effective mechanism for demonstrating some of the common challenges that face repository managers in the early stages of repository development, and suggesting how to overcome them. The success of Swinburne Research Bank (http://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au) within the Swinburne research community supports our belief that there is more than one way to implement an institutional repository, but that repository managers must ensure that the needs of their users always remain the key motivation for policy and content decisions.

Open access: the current state of play
Librarians, academics, publishers and other key content stakeholders have now been engaging with the concept of open access for the better part of a decade. Yet it is clear from two recent surveys of Australian academics (Austin, Heffernan, & David, 2008; Mercieca, 2008) that there is still some ambiguity over the many definitions and implications of open access to knowledge.

The Budapest Open Access Initiative (2002) only acknowledges the existence of two paths to open access: self-archival and publishing in open access journals. Stevan Harnad, one of the architects of the Initiative, maintains that open access must be defined as narrowly as ‘free online access to all peer-reviewed journal articles’ (Harnad, 2005). Yet over the course of the decade, a series of other (or rival) definitions have emerged to describe models that support degrees, or ‘flavours’ (Willinsky, 2006), of open access. The term is further complicated by the emergence of ‘paid open access’ agreements between authors and publishers. One such example is Springer Open Choice™ (http://www.springer.com/open+choice), which allows authors to archive the published version of a journal article in perpetuity on payment of an additional $US 3000 per article. Given that universities have already in effect paid for the work twice, once by hiring the author and a second time by paying to subscribe to the publication, this further cost is unreasonable. And, as Harnad (2007) hastens to point out, ludicrous, since Springer already allows authors to archive postprints of their publications on their websites and in institutional repositories (University of Nottingham, 2006).

It may come as a surprise to many librarians and repository managers (as it did to us) that the only open access journals many of the respondents to the OAK Law survey (Austin et al., 2008) had encountered were ‘author-pays’ models. This is very disappointing; the need for payment of fees by any user represents the antithesis of our aspirations for open access publishing, making authors less likely to publish in open access journals and pushing them away from our own stance on open scholarship and enhanced access to research.

Paul Mercieca (2008) registers a disconnect between ‘actual “practice” and “promise” ’ (p. 9) in the attitudes of Australian academics towards publishing in open access journals. While in his
study, 67.6 per cent of respondents were not entirely opposed to the idea of publishing in open access journals, only 9.2 per cent had actually submitted their work to an open access journal in the past. From our experience of academics’ understanding of publication processes, Swinburne repository managers believe the result from this representative sample might be higher than actual figures for Australian research published in open access journals. There is some debate as to whether the academics surveyed understood the concept of ‘open access journal’ correctly in the first instance. On a university campus, it can be difficult for novice and experienced library users alike to discern whether they are accessing journals made available through a university library paid subscription or viewing free resources on the Web. It is likely as a result of this confusion that the outcomes of both surveys are slightly skewed.

In the current university research funding environment, it is difficult (and perhaps even unethical) for us to encourage academics to submit their research to open access journals. Borgman (2007) notes that the current models of research assessment exercises take into account ‘not only what a scholar has published but also where’ (p. 81) [our italics]. In the past, articles published in open access journals have been excluded from eligibility for research funding. Planning for the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative is only in its preliminary stages, but it is clear that at least one of the metrics established for quality review will be ‘discipline-specific tiered outlet rankings’ (Australian Research Council, 2008). We can assume without too much cynicism that few open access publications will appear on these lists of top journals.

For many academics, open access journals are synonymous with mediocrity. One respondent to the OAK Law survey, while not altogether resistant to the idea of open access publishing, regards OA journals in his or her field as ‘rubbish … simply an avenue for poor practitioners to side-step quality and rigorous peer-review processes and publish poor and incorrect results’ (Austin et al., 2008). Many respondents to the OAK Law survey indicate the need for citation impact factors on open access journals as a prerequisite for submission; others consider the format and publishing model of the journal irrelevant as long as its quality is assured. Many also express concerns that alternative scholarly publishing models pose a threat to peer review; plenty of subscription journals are also subject to criticism over the rigour of their refereeing processes, but the apparent ease and speed with which articles can be accepted, reviewed and published online in an open access journal make authors instantly suspicious.

We cannot presume to tell academics where they should publish their research. It seems that many academics may support open access publishing in the future, but only as an adjunct to the more traditional subscription models recognised by research funders, and only when the journal represents a high quality forum for research in their field. Until open access journals reach the stage where they are seen—not only by researchers, but also by research quality assessment audits—as equivalent to subscription journals and a major part of the scholarly publishing infrastructure, it appears that authors will be reluctant to publish in them.

Clearly the open access movement has a lot of work to do, particularly with regard to promotion and awareness. Harnad (2005) is correct in his assumption that ‘it makes no sense to keep waiting for or focusing on … [open access journals] as the main source of OA.’ For Swinburne, the promotion and expansion of our peer-reviewed, open access journals service using open source software is planned, but it is not our uppermost priority at present. In the meantime, rather than risking alienating researchers by attempting to dictate where they should submit their research, we will lobby for publishers of research disseminated through traditional scholarly methods to be made available on open access and increase the awareness and
impact of research. As long as open access journals do not represent the future of open access to knowledge, our focus needs to be on building a vast and solid network of trusted, university-based research repositories.

**The best laid plans ...**
The development of Swinburne’s institutional repository has been a largely organic process, informed heavily by research cultures at Swinburne and incorporating feedback from our researchers as a catalyst for change. When we started planning for our institutional repository, we had every intention of following industry best practice and established theory. Our involvement as partners in the Australian Research Repositories Online to the World (ARROW) project ensured that we would be at the forefront of institutional repository software development, and that we would have a network of Australian university repository managers and technical staff to support us.

Swinburne University of Technology is a small academic institution with a unique history. The institution has a long association in Australia as a technical college and TAFE with close links to industry; since 1992, Swinburne has also incorporated a higher education sector with a prominent national ranking in learning and teaching (Illing, 2005). Swinburne’s vision for the future focuses on the expansion of the existing research culture in the University (Chancellery, 2005), especially in our world-class research concentrations such as astrophysics, creative industries, neuroscience, optics and photonics, psychology and software engineering.

It was deeply important to us that our repository, now known as Swinburne Research Bank (http://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au), should reflect the wider goals of the University. We envisaged an open access institutional repository that was easy to use, supported a self-deposit mechanism for authors and had the overarching goal of providing increased access to Swinburne research. As early adopters of institutional repositories in the Australian higher education sector, we were going to lead the way for other universities and show them how they could use this innovative technique to preserve, promote and showcase their research. Our first discovery was our naivety: VITAL, the repository solution developed by VTLS Inc from ARROW specifications, was still in its infancy and needed dramatic development, enhancement and customisation before we could use it to build a robust repository framework. In the meantime, we began to export data from Swinburne’s research data management system, Research Master, to serve as a basis for our repository’s descriptive metadata. We also began to send repository staff out to other areas of the University to talk about open access.

While the support of the ARROW project has been invaluable at all stages of Swinburne Research Bank’s development, the project’s focus has always been on repository software (Groenewegen & Treloar, 2008), not on repository content. We looked instead to existing repositories for inspiration, particularly those based within a higher education setting. We collected unpublished works generated by Swinburne research centres and not otherwise available on the Web. And, most importantly of all, we asked our academics what they thought an institutional repository could do for them, and how they might want to use it.

**When best practice is not best practice**
We have been hearing for years that the best method for populating repositories is self-deposit of research publications by their authors. The workflow supported by the University of Southampton’s canonical EPrints software places the onus for depositing, clearing copyright permissions and creating descriptive metadata for publications on academics. It is held up as the exemplary model—indeed, Stevan Harnad believes it is the only model (Harnad, 2005).
The slogan ‘if you build it, they will come’ has been used regularly in the institutional repository community for years (Brown, Holmes-Wong, & Tompson, 2006; Fried Foster & Gibbons, 2005; Prosser, 2004; Riley, 2005; Singarella & Bellamy, 2006; Westell, 2006). Yet looking at the poor contribution rates for self-deposit to institutional repositories, estimated at roughly 15 per cent (Harnad, 2006), the community must have been wondering for some time where it was going wrong. Recently, Dorothea Salo from the University of Wisconsin openly debunked the myth that authors bring content to repositories themselves (Salo, 2008). Borgman (2007) acknowledges that ‘[t]he content layer of the scholarly information infrastructure will not be built by voluntary contributions of information artifacts from individuals’ (p. 225), mainly because ‘the incentives are too low and the barriers too high’ (p. 225).

L’Hostis and Aventurier (2006) put forward a number of plausible reasons for the generally low contribution rates to institutional repositories. These include lack of clarity about open access, fear of deposit in contrast to the established peer review system, fear of wasting valuable research time on tasks perceived as essentially administrative, and distrust of—or indifference to—the legal framework for deposit (pp. 21–22).

At Swinburne, we believe these and other myriad protestations boil down to a single conclusion: self-deposit is too hard. We are not alone in our belief that there are too many keystrokes for our researchers to follow to complete the self-deposit process. Cranfield University does not think relying on self-archiving is ‘viable’ (Bevan, 2007) as an efficient mechanism for populating its repository; it has built a librarian-mediated (Bevan, 2007) repository instead. Similarly, St Andrews University’s eprints archive (http://eprints.st-andrews.ac.uk/) boldly proclaims ‘Let us archive it for you!’ and recommends authors submit files via email without any descriptive metadata attached.

This attitude has been openly criticised by Stevan Harnad on the American Scientist Open Access Forum (Harnad, 2004), which may account for Salo’s (2008) observation that repository managers adopting mediated deposit styles rarely publish in the open access literature. Harnad (2004) contends that repository managers who archive on behalf of their authors are making it easier on themselves by not agitating for authors’ direct involvement in the open access movement. The Swinburne approach proves the contrary. Our current workflow (albeit not as streamlined as we would like) often requires us to: (1) add an initial record to the repository; (2) revisit and enrich it later; (3) request permission from the publisher to provide open access to the document; (4) contact the researcher to ask for a final draft to upload to the repository; and (5) update the record with the publisher’s permission statement—all using raw XML without a web interface for editing. It would be much faster and less complicated for repository staff if we mandated that authors should do this for us. However, 84 per cent of researchers across disciplines in the OAK Law study rated timely access to current research as an important benefit of open access (Austin et al., 2008); on the basis of the low self-deposit rates at other universities, if we waited for researchers to deposit their own work, in most cases this need would go unsatisfied.

Harnad also claims that authors who do not self-archive voluntarily are ‘lazy’ (Harnad, 2004). Again, this is a misconception. There has been no attention paid to the usability of repositories for depositors (McKay, 2007), and this, combined with academics’ known concern about complicated technical systems devouring their time, contributes to a technological barrier to self-archiving that has nothing to do with authors’ laziness or motivation, and everything to do with poor software design. Based on server logs from the EPrints software, Carr and Harnad
(2005) make a blanket statement that depositing in open access institutional repositories is ‘not a very time-consuming investment … about ten minutes per paper’ (p. 6). There is no evidence that Carr and Harnad have tested this process using other repository solutions, yet judgements about the quality of the user experience are inextricably linked to the choice of software. Carr and Harnad have also not taken into account the universally acknowledged fact that academics ‘resent any additional activity that cuts into their research and writing time’ (Fried Foster & Gibbons, 2005), especially when that activity is perceived as essentially administrative.

Not all researchers fit Harnad’s ideal of what an academic author should be—for starters, some academics work in humanities fields. Humanists are not as tied to the same traditional models of scholarly publication as scientists, yet Harnad’s narrow view of open access—which limits the scope of institutional repository content to peer-reviewed journal articles—particularly marginalises humanities disciplines, where journals are not the preferred method of research dissemination. For humanists, ‘scholarly monographs remain the gold standard for publishing’ (Borgman, 2007), which means that those working in humanities research fields have ‘access to the smallest proportion of their literature online of any discipline’ (Borgman, 2007).

It is hardly surprising, then, that humanities researchers are frequently not very well served by their universities’ institutional repositories. In most cases, publishers are not amenable to authors archiving the full text of a book or book chapter in case open access copies throttle their revenue. According to the sample set in the OAK Law survey, humanities researchers are more than twice as likely to examine the number of times their works are downloaded from their institutional repositories than their colleagues in the sciences (Austin et al., 2008). Without the benefit of journal impact factors and citation counts—the hallmarks of research quality in the scientific fields—humanities researchers need to find a meaningful alternative metric to measure the value of their research. This is one role that institutional repositories might be able to play to prove their worth to universities (and academics) in the future.

The same survey suggests that humanists are significantly more likely than their colleagues in the sciences not to use institutional repositories because they find the process too challenging or time-consuming (Austin et al., 2008). This is hardly surprising, given that the sciences (and even some of the social sciences) have existing practices of depositing preprints in subject repositories like ArXiv.org from Cornell University (http://arXiv.org/) (Borgman, 2007). Yet if such mechanisms are in place for humanities academics, they are certainly not widely used.

Swinburne repository managers believe this is precisely why we should pay particular attention to humanities research at the University. We ran our inaugural pilot study on contributing content to Swinburne Research Bank with researchers from our Institute for Social Research, a Swinburne humanities research centre supporting housing, immigration, citizenship, media and information policy research. Despite being the least likely research centre to publish peer-reviewed journal articles, they are now our chief contributors with approximately 25 per cent of the repository’s content. So what are they contributing?

**Content to be different**

Many of the key players in the institutional repository community have strong opinions about the types of research material that should be deposited in institutional repositories. To Stevan Harnad, the definition of open access is ‘free online access to all peer-reviewed journal articles’ (Harnad, 2005) [our italics]—archiving anything else merely pollutes the ideal. While the skyrocketing subscription costs of peer-reviewed journals are a clear barrier for access to research, there are also many other legitimate scholarly communication formats that merit
preservation, and enhanced findability and access. Conference papers, while relatively ephemeral in many of the sciences, are the bread and butter of social scientists and humanists. Yet across disciplines, conference proceedings frequently have very small print runs (if an official proceedings is published at all), and conference websites have a habit of disappearing overnight, taking with them the only avenue for access to these papers.

Fried Foster and Gibbons wondered back in 2005 what was ‘amiss’ (Fried Foster & Gibbons, 2005) with institutional repositories that was making the content contribution rates so low. They concluded that ‘institutional repositories fail to appear compelling and useful to the authors and owners of the content’ (p. 2) and that there was an ‘apparent misalignment between the benefits and services of an IR with the actual needs and desires of faculty’ (p. 2). One of the very first lessons we learn as librarians is that our services need to be driven by the needs and abilities of our users, not measured by the level of effort expended on our part. When we speak to our researchers about what they want from Swinburne Research Bank, some of their needs deviate from, or are even in direct opposition to, established theory about institutional repositories. We need to ask ourselves: who is the target audience of our repositories? Is it open access advocates, or those interested in discovering research published at Swinburne? Fried Foster and Gibbons (2005) argue that an institutional repository without content is ‘just a set of empty shelves’. While the usability enhancements we have made to Swinburne Research Bank to improve its look and feel will ensure an agreeable experience for our users, Swinburne repository managers believe it is the content that will encourage our users to return.

We have already mentioned that humanists are not regular contributors to institutional repositories. This is not just because they find the process complicated and unfamiliar, but also, we believe, because institutional repositories have traditionally accommodated journal articles in linear formats such as PDF. Humanists are eager to experiment with new forms of scholarly communication (Borgman, 2007), but they are unlikely to contribute this work to institutional repositories unless they have some guarantee that it will be described and presented in a meaningful way.

Swinburne repository managers quickly discovered that many of our humanities researchers’ most valuable contributions to the field occur outside the traditional realms of scholarly publishing. If this research established their reputation in the discipline and they cite it in their own publication histories, surely it belongs in their institutional repository? Contrary to established best practice for repositories, Swinburne Research Bank now accepts all research Swinburne researchers wish to contribute, irrespective of format. This increases the likelihood that we will receive works that are complicated to describe and require extra time and effort (despite Harnad’s belief that we are making the task easier by mediating deposit). However, crucially, it means that we will, in fact, receive works—the top 20 most accessed papers in Swinburne Research Bank for August 2008 were all from the humanities research centres and faculties at Swinburne (Google Analytics, 2008).

Not even those in the most scientific of disciplines publish exclusively in journals. At the time of writing, Swinburne Research Bank hosts almost 10000 works falling under more than 25 different resource type categories, from traditional dissemination formats such as book chapters and conference papers, to newspaper articles, online exhibitions, catalogue essays, and the most difficult of all to describe: radio broadcasts. We collect a series of unpublished works for each discipline, including business working papers, information technology technical reports and Psychology Honours theses, research that might otherwise be lost to the University.
As Borgman (2007) notes, researchers often ‘shape and reshape the same content for different audiences as oral presentations, technical reports, conference presentations, or papers, and later as journal articles or books’ (p. 49). For some disciplines, only the final published account of research is regarded as definitive, and this is the only copy that researchers will allow to be archived in an institutional repository and made publicly accessible. However, for other disciplines, each stage of the scholarly communication process is relevant and carefully documented; these researchers are more likely to contribute the same data iterated in a range of formats for inclusion in Swinburne Research Bank. For example, in one researcher’s case, we were asked to archive a technical report in addition to the accompanying peer-reviewed conference paper, as the report contained extra extrapolation removed from the final publication due to restrictions on its length.

Other repositories around the world are beginning to collect other types of material. Repository managers at the University of Glasgow have also opened up their collection policy to include unpublished works (Mackie, 2004). However, they have made the decision to provide separate repositories for published and unpublished material. One of the major selling points for Swinburne Research Bank has been the convenience of providing a single, central point for discovering all Swinburne research. So while Swinburne repository managers have set up a separate repository for images relating to the history of Swinburne (Swinburne Image Bank http://images.swinburne.edu.au), we have no intention of breaking our research works into discrete collections like the University of Glasgow repository.

**Content to discover**

Over the last two years, Swinburne repository staff have devised a series of methods other than self-deposit for recruiting content to Swinburne Research Bank. As we forwent the self-deposit workflow and were initially uncertain of the software’s capacity to support large amounts of full text, we proposed to begin by creating descriptive metadata for research objects and then begin the task of sourcing the full text and gathering permissions later in the implementation process.

Our major source for data about research publications is the wealth of library bibliographic databases. These allow us to easily compile bibliographies for works with a Swinburne University of Technology affiliation, as well as complete publication histories across academic careers and institutions, as (particularly in Scopus) documents are filed under the authors’ names as well as their affiliations. These databases also have configurable alert services so that we receive advance notice of articles still in press but already available online, taking into account our desire to provide timely access to Swinburne research.

We are grateful for access to the data recorded for the annual higher education research data collection (HERDC). However, unsurprisingly, the University’s research data management system only contains information about publications eligible for submission to the Government for research funding—and only one publication eligible for each research project, despite the potential for multiple iterations as reports, conference papers and then journal articles. By talking to researchers and consulting publication lists on faculty websites, Swinburne repository managers have come to realise just how trivial a slice of the scholarly communication and publication that occurs within the University is actually captured within the HERDC parameters.

While we do not want Swinburne Research Bank to be viewed as a space to park research items that are of insufficient quality to meet the HERDC requirements, Swinburne repository managers have made it clear that work ineligible for funding on the basis of format, previous
publication or peer-review status is still welcome in Swinburne Research Bank. As Borgman (2007) observes, ‘[t]he content layer is likely to be built more quickly and successfully if it works for the interests of the scholars and other stakeholders than if it works against those interests’ (p. 233). One humanist contributed an article of merit with the disheartening statement ‘it is not one that brings in money to the university’. Swinburne repository managers do not consider this an adequate reason not to preserve and provide access to research; it is our policy that all works are a valuable part of Swinburne’s research output, whether or not they have generated funding for the University or been published in a highly-ranked research forum. There is enough focus on research performance from other areas of the higher education sector without academics feeling that their libraries scrutinise their work, too.

The April 2008 Research Quality Framework (RQF)—abandoned less than six months before its start date—was a research performance audit designed to balance quality and quantity in university research. The Government ostensibly expected to use institutional repositories as an instrument to facilitate the audit across continents and time zones, and consequently provided extra funding to all higher education facilities to help implement the new systems. While we had already begun the implementation and population of our repository at Swinburne with the support of the ARROW project, there were still many content recruitment benefits for us in the preparation and trial phases of the RQF. The links forged between the Library (which houses Swinburne Research Bank) and other areas of the University during preparation for the RQF have been beneficial in many ways. However, from a content management point of view, they allowed us to gain insight into our top research areas and our top researchers, and to discover what they consider to be the most influential research they have published across their academic careers. These works have become a priority for addition to Swinburne Research Bank.

Other corporate resources have proved unexpectedly beneficial in sourcing content for Swinburne Research Bank. We have begun to pay more attention to newsletters and media publications generated at Swinburne, as they often contain useful information about grants, new researchers and impending publications. It is hoped that eventually, our publication notification practices will be so efficient that we will be able to provide links to full text content from Swinburne Research Bank before these publications are released to the media, thereby generating increased attention for our researchers and the University.

At Swinburne, repository managers have also benefited substantially from the knowledge of our liaison librarians. While they tend to have more contact with teaching staff than with researchers, their knowledge of the cultures within individual research centres and faculties is invaluable. Paula Callan from QUT has found that a standard approach when promoting institutional repositories within Australian universities is to target deans and department heads (Callan, 2004). However, at Swinburne, this has not always proved to be the most successful method of promoting our institutional repository. Rather, in some disciplines, it has worked better to contact the early career researchers and archive their entire publication histories before asking them to put us in touch with their senior fellows and supervisors. There have also been examples where our liaison librarians have pointed us towards individual researchers for whom Swinburne Research Bank could have a particular advantage, and we have been able to set up meetings and presentations with their colleagues to help gather content in a flexible, ad hoc manner. Our liaison librarians also give us advice on the level of formality required in our dealings with academic staff. In some cases, an email to a top-level researcher and an offer to present at a research administration meeting will be the best means of initiating communication. However, early career researchers and/or those who already have a clear
understanding of the purpose and goals of open access may be better suited to an informal chat over coffee.

One of the most valuable methods Swinburne repository managers have discovered for immediate notification of new research sits outside the scholarly publication arena altogether—in fact, it involves Google, the habitual enemy of academic libraries (and academic librarians). The Google Alerts service ([http://www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)) allows users to configure an automatic email notification whenever Google indexes a resource containing a specified search term, in our case ‘Swinburne + University’. This is particularly useful for humanities researchers at Swinburne’s Institute for Social research, as a significant proportion of their research contribution involves communicating their findings and expert opinions to the community via the media. Newspaper articles, radio interviews, seminar papers and other grey literature are not easily discoverable via traditional library content alert services and databases but are widely available through Google.

The Google Alerts have also unexpectedly proven useful as a mechanism for discovering which Swinburne research is of particular interest to the community beyond the university environment. We already know that our top tier astrophysicists have a loyal amateur following, and that many backyard stargazers follow their work very closely. However, through our Google Alerts, we have also discovered that a single journal article from our Psychology Department about the positive effects of blogging on stress and low self-esteem (Baker & Moore, 2008) was mentioned well over one hundred times across a broad range of resources, from personal websites to the blog of a Welsh member of parliament (Jones, 2008). While institutional repositories essentially exist to facilitate wider access to research within and outside Swinburne, one of the perceived benefits of open access to research is increased public access to and awareness of developments in research. Unfortunately this article was published in a journal with a negative stance on open access, and we were not even allowed to archive a draft of the paper. Consequently, the only part of the paper available to would-be readers without subscription access through a library was the abstract, and this pattern of informal, uncontrolled, word-of-mouth had a tendency to distort the results.

Content without a mandate

Individual university cultures play a significant role in the success (or otherwise) of institutional repositories. Self-archiving advocates such as Stevan Harnad downplay the impact of research climates on the development of open access repositories, but it is vital that repository managers know and understand the cultures at play in their own universities. To date, QUT’s Eprints Archive ([http://eprints.qut.edu.au](http://eprints.qut.edu.au)) is one of the most successful institutional repositories in Australia, in no small part because its repository team adapts to each emerging trend within the university by ‘work[ing] with it and tailor[ing] support mechanisms to suit’ (Callan, 2004). While the decision to mandate self-archival of research publications has proven successful for QUT (Callan, 2004), Swinburne repository managers believe that the climate of our university is not conducive to enforced processes. In her survey of researcher data practices at Swinburne, McKay (2007) discovered that Swinburne researchers had the potential to be intimidated by the ‘blunt nature of institutional rules’ (p. 20) in sharing research data sets. It is likely that we can also apply these concerns to other aspects of scholarly communication and publication.

There will always be some people who are opposed open access; it is unfortunate that some of them happen to be academics (Nicholas & Rowlands, 2005). At Swinburne, we have been fortunate to meet with very few barriers in the promotion of our institutional repository that could not be overcome with further dialogue about the values and impact of open access. However, it
is certainly the case that some researchers welcome our assistance more than others. Swinburne repository managers have learned that sometimes we have to be prepared to let go, and work instead with researchers who are enthusiastic about the benefits of open access. Hopefully in some cases, their positive experience might convince their more reluctant colleagues to contribute their research too.

**User centred design is not just about software**

One of the great benefits of Swinburne’s long involvement in the ARROW project has been the opportunity to tap into the knowledge of repository managers, librarians, technical and business analysts and a usability expert. The ARROW usability and user experience consultant based at Swinburne provided valuable advice to improve the usability of not just repository technology, but also repository terminology. Library terminology is frequently impenetrable, and repository language is certainly no exception. The assumption has been made with institutional repositories, as with many other library concepts, that our users understand our terminology. But is this true? University of Rochester academics are unanimously perplexed by the term ‘institutional repository’ (Fried Foster & Gibbons, 2005), and we believe this is also the case with Australian researchers.

The ARROW usability expert investigated our use of terminology and isolated some particularly problematic terms and jargon that Anderson (2005) might facetiously label ‘librarianese’ (p. 35). These ranged from the term ‘institutional repository’ to ‘resource type’ and ‘handle’, and even affected our decision on what to call Swinburne’s institutional repository. The brand ‘Swinburne Research Bank’ is deceptively simple; in fact, a number of considerations went into choosing this name. While it is probably too long to be catchy, it avoids any of the terms such as ‘repository’, ‘institutional repository’, ‘digital repository’ and ‘digital library’ that users might find confusing. It is also software-independent; many universities have used ‘EPrints’ or ‘DSpace’ in the title of their repositories, leaving little room for major developments in repository technology. While Swinburne’s repository is (like most institutional repositories) in fact maintained by the Library, we deliberately chose not to add the Library brand to the repository, preferring instead to associate it more broadly with the University itself. We also elected not to use ‘ARROW’ in the title, as the project had a finite end date—one that we hoped Swinburne’s institutional repository would significantly outlast.

Swinburne repository managers believe the association between Swinburne Research Bank and Swinburne ‘small-R’ research is vital to the success of the repository. University of Rochester academics believe the term ‘institutional repository’ ‘implies that the system is designed to support and achieve the needs and goals of the institution, not necessarily those of the individual … [and] suggests that contributions of materials into the repository serve to highlight the achievements of the institution, rather than those of individual researchers and authors’ (Fried Foster & Gibbons, 2005). This is a disconnect we wish to avoid.

Swinburne repository managers also investigated the standard metadata representations of research objects in institutional repositories to see if we could better describe our content by moving away from some of the legacies of cataloguing. While taxonomies for publication types already exist in cataloguing, they do not always meet the needs of our more atypical content. Rather than attempting to squeeze innovative research into the standards provided by the MACAR ([http://macar.wikidot.com](http://macar.wikidot.com)) group, we chose to consult our researchers and ask them how they would classify their work. This has given rise to the catalogue essay, essay and seminar publication types in Swinburne Research Bank; these may not conform to standard terminology but they are much more meaningful to our researchers and their colleagues in the
field.

The future of the Swinburne approach: is it sustainable?
In many ways, Swinburne repository staff and Swinburne Research Bank contravene industry 
best practice for maintaining institutional repositories, particularly around content inclusion and 
self-deposit. Yet the user-centred approach that Swinburne repository managers follow has 
helped us develop what might be termed a 'successful' repository. From a review of the 
institutional repository literature, it appears that success is still very rare and eludes many 
institutional repositories.

However, the personalised service we provide to researchers to enable them to make the most 
of their open access repository requires considerable time and labour. Will we be able to 
sustain it beyond the first two years? The increased access we now have to Swinburne 
research through our unique content recruitment strategies is reflected in the much larger 
number of publications represented in the repository for the period of 2000 to 2008. The 
broader our inclusion policy, the more content we will receive. Is the amplification of our 
workload due only to our recruitment efforts? Or is it a reflection of researchers feeling the 
pressure to publish or perish, both here and overseas, and generating more research 
publications each year? Since we launched Swinburne Research Bank publicly to the 
Swinburne research community in May 2008, academics’ interest in contributing content has 
skyrocketed, so much that it is difficult for one full-time and two part-time content librarians to 
keep up with the demands without having to compromise our high metadata quality standards. 
The Google Analytics statistics for Swinburne Research Bank in the month following the launch 
indicate that traffic to the site more than tripled (Google Analytics, 2008). By the end of 
December 2008, we had welcomed 36,974 visitors from every continent on the globe.

How can we measure the success of an institutional repository? Can it be done with figures? At 
the time of writing, Swinburne Research Bank holds almost 10000 records, 17 per cent of 
which are full text. Links to Swinburne Research Bank can be found on Swinburne faculty and 
research websites, and some researchers are even linking to their Swinburne Research Bank 
publication archives on their personal websites. We consistently receive helpful and positive 
feedback from our researchers, particularly those in the humanities areas, who maintain that 
Swinburne Research Bank helps them to feel that their research contributions are valued. To 
us, the greatest measures of the success of Swinburne Research Bank will be its ability to 
make Swinburne research more discoverable in Australia and worldwide, and the extent to 
which it becomes an essential part of the research practices of Swinburne academics.

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