IRUS-UK Case Studies and Improving Open Access Support

Understanding usage of Institutional Repository content is important

Being able to track how many people are accessing repository content and to be able to identify the usage of particular items offers many benefits and provides valuable evidence of the potential impact that a repository is having. In addition, being able to compare repository usage between a selection of other institutional repositories enables benchmarking and additional measures of performance IRUS-UK data can also be useful for promoting the Institutional Repository and its successes. In an environment where providing Open Access to research papers and other materials is increasingly important, having access to consistent data on repository usage is vital.

What is IRUS-UK?

IRUS-UK (Institutional Repository Usage Statistics) enables UK Institutional Repositories to share and expose statistics based on the COUNTER standard. It is part of the suite of Jisc services supporting Open Access. IRUS-UK collects raw usage data from UK IRs and in return provides repositories with comparable, authoritative, standards-based data.
IRUS-UK provides standards-based download statistics, which can be used to report to institutional managers, researchers and research funders. In keeping with the ethos of openness, IRUS UK also allows UK institutions to look at data from other UK repositories in order to provide benchmarking and make comparisons.

Learning about how institutions are using IRUS-UK statistics in practice

The growth and development of IRUS goes from strength to strength and it currently represents 113 participants or >76% of eligible repositories in the UK. It handles data from over 600,000 items and downloads of over 69 million so far. As membership of IRUS-UK has grown it has provided the opportunity to produce case studies illustrating how particular institutions are using and deriving benefit from IRUS-UK statistics. The case studies all include information on how the institution is using IRUS-UK, which IRUS-UK reports have been used, what the outcome is, and any next steps. Below we provide more information about each of the case studies.

Imperial College London
At Imperial College London, the team of staff supporting Open Access have been involved in developing materials to support advocacy within the institution. This includes advocating for their institutional repository, Spiral. One way the team have been doing this is by producing infographics, which highlight headline repository statistics, including usage statistics. They are able to use IRUS-UK data to highlight full-text downloads and details of the top five downloaded articles by month. Combining this data with internal statistics the infographics are published via the 'Open Access and Digital Scholarship Blog' and social media. Liaison

librarians have also been able to share with academics and notifying authors who have featured in the top five: Open Access Infographic - Imperial College London

Leeds Beckett University

Staff at Leeds Beckett University have been keen to encourage use of the research repository. One way in which they have done this is via a LibGuide into which IRUS-UK data is incorporated. The Statistics page includes total downloads each month and the top ten articles by month. These are combined with other data sources and added in tabular format and updated every month. They are investigating ways to show longitudinal data and more visual representation for communicating with stakeholders based on the IRUS-UK data: Using IRUS-UK for a Statistics Libguide Page - Leeds Beckett University

Combining IRUS-UK and Altmetric data (White Rose shown as an example)

One of our participants, from a different institutional repository, was working to learn more about alternative metrics of top downloaded papers. Already using IRUS-UK data he wanted to bring them together with alternative metrics. This case study shows how you can display top downloaded articles, along with their Altmetric donuts, by combining data from both IRUS-UK and Altmetric. Altmetric were happy to be involved and are linked to in the case study. The example shown here uses data from White Rose Research Online, just as an example, but with links to a step-by-step guide, making it openly available for any institution to try with their own data: Combining IRUS-UK and Altmetric Data - example using White Rose Research Online data

Aberystwyth University

At Aberystwyth University, staff working on the CADAIR repository want to promote Open Access activity and ensure the staff and students understand the systems available to support Open Access. To aid this they create a regular newsletter incorporating statistics from IRUS-UK. They use the data to display top downloaded articles, theses and authors in a monthly newsletter promoting Open Access, as well as in university-wide bulletins: Using IRUS-UK to develop an OA newsletter - Aberystwyth University

University of Reading

Staff at CentAUR, the university's repository use IRUS-UK data to termly report to a senior management research committee. These reports demonstrate the value of the repository and highlight activity relating to Open Access. The staff say it is vital that these reports are concise, visual and easy to interpret and using data from IRUS-UK allows this. The reports have been well received by the committee. Being able to easily identify patterns such as the regular peaks and troughs in annual usage provides committee members with confidence in the statistics as they clearly related to recognisable points in the academic year. The data comparing usage with other institutions has been valuable and has generated considerable interest. It provides additional context for the statistics and a way of assessing performance. The statistics are also used for comparative analysis of downloads and advocacy for etheses: Using IRUS-UK to report to senior management - University of Reading

Open University

At ORO: Open University Open Research Online, the university's repository, staff use IRUS-UK data to show the benefit of their repository including benchmarking in quarterly reports.

IRUS-UK data is used in many ways including providing infographics, which highlights key points and displays them quickly and efficiently. Benchmarking data is also shared via their research blog that regularly goes out to a range of stakeholders including associate deans, departmental managers and academics: [Using IRUS-UK data to support benchmarking - Open University](#)

Closing remarks

We are extremely proud that IRUS-UK members are sharing how they are using IRUS-UK data to understand more about their repositories and to support their efforts in promoting and enabling Open Access. We would encourage you to look at the case studies in more detail. If you are an IRUS-UK user, we would be really interested in hearing more about how you are using the data as it may help promote what you are doing and provide inspiration to others.

If you are not already a member of IRUS-UK and in the UK, please contact us to see if your repository is eligible to join. We look forward to hearing from you. Equally if you have any questions then please get in touch irus@jisc.ac.uk.