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**Northampton Electronic Collection of Theses and
Research.**

<http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/4282/>

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Bringing a buzz to NECTAR

1. Introduction

NECTAR (the Northampton Electronic Collection of Theses and Research) is the University of Northampton's institutional repository for research outputs. First launched in 2008 (Pickton, 2008), the repository showed a steady growth and by the end of 2010 was recognised as a successful tool for describing and reporting on university research activity.

But it could not really be described as an 'open access' repository.

Despite agreement that

"Entry of bibliographic details (metadata) only will be accepted in NECTAR if it is legally or technically impossible to include the full work (e.g. if copyright prevents submission or if it is artwork or a performance). Full text (or other complete content) is preferred."

(The University of Northampton, 2007)

we found that very little full content had found its way into NECTAR.

The repository was meeting the need for a university research reporting system but not its primary purpose (as far as the NECTAR Steering Group were concerned) of providing open access to research outputs. It was time for a re-think.

2. The project

At the end of 2010 the JISC put out a call for projects for their 'Repositories: take-up and embedding' programme (JISC, 2011). The purpose of this call was to fund projects which would use existing repository applications, tools and good practice to further embed repositories in their institutional workflows.

The timing was just right for us. We had identified some areas where improvements could be made to NECTAR and we had found some tools and services that we believed would help. So we designed a project to cover a range of procedural, technical and promotional activities. We hoped that the result of these activities would be a sleeker, more efficient NECTAR workflow; greater engagement with the research community and, ultimately, an increase in the numbers of full text items in the repository. Our bid for funding was successful.

2.1 Re-branding and the Kultur plug-in

We started by re-branding NECTAR to match the new university website. By visually embedding the repository we were making a clear statement that NECTAR was integral to the university website and as important to the university as any other core service.

Next, with the help of Eprints Services, we implemented the 'Kultur' plug-in to Eprints (Brody and Gray, 2009). Originally developed by a project team from the University of Southampton, the University for the Creative Arts, the University of the Arts London and the Visual Arts Data Service, the Kultur code enhances the way in which images, audio and video outputs are managed and displayed in the repository (Kultur, 2009). It was felt that these improvements would encourage researchers in the creative arts to engage more positively with the repository.

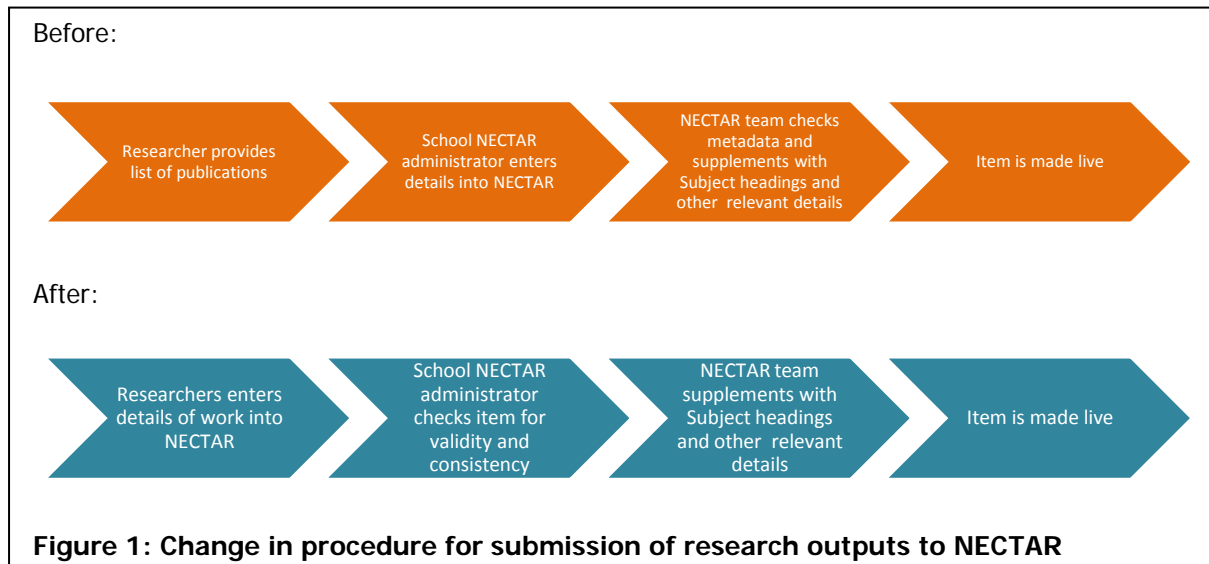
2.2 Procedural change

Alongside these essentially cosmetic changes, we introduced a significant amendment to the procedure for depositing research outputs in NECTAR. When NECTAR was first launched, each School had a NECTAR Administrator who was responsible for entering that School's research details into NECTAR. The data were then checked by metadata specialists in the library and moved by them to the 'live' repository (Figure 1.) This process worked fairly well – especially in gathering comprehensive data from the Schools – but bottlenecks were common.

It was felt that if researchers could enter details of their own work directly into NECTAR then several benefits would ensue:

- More comprehensive metadata would be entered – while previously a researcher would simply have passed a bibliographic reference to the School NECTAR Administrator, now they could enter an abstract, key words, relevant URLs, and a host of other information;
- More full content would be uploaded – the opportunity to upload a file is presented as a routine step in the NECTAR workflow;
- School NECTAR Administrators would spend less time typing in metadata and more time checking it for accuracy, consistency and completeness; this in turn would help the library's metadata specialists in their quality control.

A proposal for this change in procedure was taken to the university's Research Committee and, after some discussion, was approved. The committee were keen that the School NECTAR administrators should continue to perform a 'gatekeeping' role, ensuring that the appropriate research outputs were showcased in NECTAR.



2.3 Electronic theses

Early in NECTAR's lifetime the university's Research Degrees Committee (RDC) had approved a change to the university's thesis submission procedure to require research students to submit an electronic copy of their thesis for subsequent deposit in NECTAR. By January 2011 the first students to have been subject to this mandate were due to complete their theses.

Alongside some work with the Graduate School to review and gain RDC approval for a revised thesis submission process, a sub-project was also started to develop a Northampton theses collection in the repository. The University of Northampton only received its research degree awarding powers in 2005 so it was felt that this would be an achievable goal. To this end each printed thesis in the library had its abstract scanned and a metadata record created in NECTAR. At the same time, software changes were made to ensure that the fields held for theses matched those required by the British Library's EThOS service (British Library Board, n.d.). We then invited EThOS to harvest our thesis metadata.

2.4 Added value services

In order to increase levels of interest in NECTAR we were keen to provide services that added value to the basic NECTAR functionality and to find new ways of attracting full content.

As members of the UK Council of Research Repositories (UKCoRR) mailing list (JISC Mail, 2011) and as regular attendees of repository related events, we had a large network of repository colleagues to call upon:

- William Nixon at the University of Glasgow gave us the idea of automatically generating emails to authors each time their work was made live in NECTAR;
- Sarah Hall at the University of the Arts London advised us to make a point of asking each researcher we trained to provide a file to upload;
- Karen Bates' work at the University of Salford showed us the benefits to be gained from sharing usage statistics with university colleagues. We installed the 'IRStats' statistics package (University of Southampton, 2011; Field *et al.* 2012) to help with this;
- From various contributors to the mailing list we were given ideas for exporting repository bibliographies to researcher web pages.

It was the latter that generated the greatest impact. We implemented two feeds:

- Latest NECTAR entries were listed for each School on its research home page (e.g. The University of Northampton, 2011a). Each list drew one item from each Division within the School, thereby displaying research outputs from a representative range of authors and subject areas (Figure 2).
- For each researcher a list of all their NECTAR outputs was exported to their staff profile page. If the staff member already had a list of publications on their profile then the NECTAR list was hidden behind a link at the top of the page, if no list already existed then the NECTAR list was automatically expanded (Figure 3).

Recent publications

Latest School of Science and Technology output added to the University's institutional repository, [NECTAR](#)

Standardised Radon Index (SRI): a normalisation of radon data-sets in terms of standard normal variables
 Crockett, R. and Holt, C. (2011) Standardised Radon Index (SRI): a normalisation of radon data-sets in terms of standard normal variables. *Natural Hazards and Earth System Science*. 11(7), pp. 1839-1844. 1684-9981.

Morphometric analysis of aeolian bedforms in the Namib Sand Sea using ASTER data
 Bullard, J., White, K. and Livingstone, I. (2011) Morphometric analysis of aeolian bedforms in the Namib Sand Sea using ASTER data. *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms*. 36(11), pp. 1534-1549. 0197-9337.

Predicting leather handle like an expert by artificial neural networks
 Wang, Y., Picton, P., Turner, S. and Attenburrow, G. (2011) Predicting leather handle like an expert by artificial neural networks. *Applied Artificial Intelligence*. 25(2), pp. 180-192. 0883-9514.

Investigation of morphological and electrical properties of the PMMA coating upon exposure to UV irradiation based on AFM studies
 Darowicki, K., Szocinski, M., Schaefer, K. and Mills, D. (2011) Investigation of morphological and electrical properties of the PMMA coating upon exposure to UV irradiation based on AFM studies. *Progress in Organic Coatings*. 71(1), pp. 65-71. 0300-9440.

[All School of Science and Technology NECTAR publications](#)

Figure 2: Export of publications from NECTAR to School research web page

Contact About Research **Publications**

Publications on NECTAR

Jump to: [2011](#) | [2010](#) | [2008](#) | [2007](#)

2011

- ▶ Pickton, M. (2011) [Editor](#). *Library and Information Research*. London: Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). 1756-1086.
- ▶ Pickton, M., Morris, D., Meece, S., Coles, S. and Hitchcock, S. (2011) [Preserving repository content: practical tools for repository managers](#). *Journal of Digital Information*. 12(2) 1368-7506.
- ▶ Pickton, M. (2011) [Reaching researchers through their data: a Data Asset Framework case study](#). Invited Presentation presented to: *Repository Support Project (RSP) Winter School, Bassenthwaite, Lake District, 09-11 February 2011*.

2010

- ▶ Pickton, M., Hitchcock, S., Coles, S., Morris, D. and Meece, S. (2010) [Preserving repository content: practical steps for repository managers](#). Paper presented to: *5th International Conference on Open Repositories, Madrid, Spain, 06-09 July 2010*.
- ▶ Alexogiannopoulos, E., McKenney, S. and Pickton, M. (2010) [Research Data Management Project: a DAF investigation of research data management practices at The University of Northampton](#). Northampton: University of Northampton. (Unpublished)

Figure 3: Export of publications from NECTAR to staff profile

2.5 Advocacy and promotion

The project activities were supported throughout by a programme of advocacy. This took the form of training sessions for researchers; presentations to School research groups; talks to professional colleagues; and a variety of written advice and guidelines.

Our greatest effort though, was focused on a major event to celebrate Open Access Week 2011. We gave advance notice of the event as early as June, and sent out personal invitations (Figure 4) to researchers from September onwards. We invited prestigious external guest speakers and even our Vice Chancellor was keen to attend. Unfortunately, the timing of the event (in October) proved to be inconvenient for the majority of staff and uptake was so low that we eventually postponed the event.



Figure 4: Postcard style invitations to our Open Access Week event

3. Project outcomes

By the end of the project we had seen a 50% increase in the number of live NECTAR items displaying open access content. Even more items were awaiting processing (e.g. copyright checking, author permissions and coversheets) in the review area. These will eventually translate into further full text availability.

With the exception of the quieter summer period, NECTAR visitor statistics had shown steady growth throughout the year, as had the number of full text downloads. Two of the university's six Deans had put in requests for NECTAR usage statistics and exploratory discussions had been held with the Research and Strategic Bidding Office regarding the reporting of NECTAR activity.

By January 2012, almost 300 researchers were registered NECTAR users and one third of these had recorded details of their work in the repository.

Strong positive feedback had been received from researchers following the addition of NECTAR bibliographies to staff profiles and, as a result of this new visibility, there had been a significant increase in the number of queries from staff regarding their work in NECTAR.

In terms of both researcher engagement and full text availability the 'Bringing a buzz to NECTAR' project was therefore a success.

4. The way forward

One element of the project is yet to be completed. Eprints Services are working on new software which will enable NECTAR (and other Eprints repositories) to assemble and submit the necessary publication information to the Research Excellence Framework (REF). When implemented, this will further reinforce the value of NECTAR to the university's research community.

As a result of a recent restructuring of professional services at Northampton, the Research Support team has gained a new member of staff. This person will spend at least half of their time supporting NECTAR, in particular focusing on the processing of full content and the development of new repository services.

The University's Vice Chancellor is a powerful advocate of open access (Petford, 2011) and under his leadership we hope to continue to advance the open access agenda. As well as the repository, we already have a (small) collection of open access journals (The University of Northampton, 2011b) and a research data policy that promotes open access to research data (The University of Northampton, 2011c). With such high level support we are optimistic that the future of open access at The University of Northampton is assured.

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The University of Northampton (2011a) *Research in the School of Science and Technology* [online]. URL: <http://www.northampton.ac.uk/info/20521/research-in-the-school-of-science-and-technology> [accessed 02.02.12].

The University of Northampton (2011b) *Northampton open journals* [online]. URL: <http://journals.northampton.ac.uk/> [accessed 03.02.12].

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University of Southampton (2011) IRStats [online]. URL: <http://wiki.eprints.org/w/IRStats> [accessed 03.02.12].