Supporting Research Notebooks at the University of Glasgow

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Our Timeline

• 2012 & 2016
  • Asked to look at ELN options by vice-principal
  • Hosted ELN event / demos and canvassed for opinions
  • Lots of interest and enthusiasm from researchers
  • Not sufficient commitment from University to progress to trial

• 2018-present
  • Funders starting to talk about retention, preservation and sharing of notebooks
  • Greater top-down interest from University
  • Secured Jisc funding to explore researcher requirements for ELN tools (part of the Jisc Open Research Hub project).
Our Plans

• Local and national knowledge
  • What is already happening?
  • What do researchers want?
  • What are the use cases locally?

• Jisc project

• ELN trial

• Digitisation
  • can digitisation of existing notebooks help?

• Engage with other institutions
  • TU Delft – shared information on their planned roll-out of ELN tool
  • Cambridge – shared results of extensive researcher survey
  • Edinburgh – sharing info on ELN landscape
The aim of this work is to provide evidence of requirements for ELN tools for the Jisc Open Research Hub.

- Open national workshops
  - Explore current issues and attitudes in electronic and paper lab notebook usage
  - Identify possible process solutions and best practice
  - Explore requirements for interoperability between active storage and repositories
  - Demonstrate and gather views and guidance on ELN software
  - Gather requirements including metadata requirements and examples of subject specific metadata

- Provide some use cases of ELN usage
- Digitise some samples of lab notebooks and report observations and issues encountered
- Encourage engagement with Jisc project
  - Testing integration of ELN with the Open Research Hub

Outputs from our initial workshops are publicly available [https://bit.ly/2O26UDA](https://bit.ly/2O26UDA)
ELN trial

• Testing RSpace ELN
• Project managed by team from IT services and RDM
• Delayed several times
• Range of participants
  • summer students
  • research groups
• User training scheduled for March / April
• Trial will run June – August
• Feedback will be collected by questionnaire and focus groups
# Initial Outcomes

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper notebook concerns</th>
<th>ELN concerns</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handwriting / legibility / language differences</td>
<td>Data security – back ups / access / data protection</td>
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<td>Preservation issues - physical space; who is responsible</td>
<td>Portability – format of exports</td>
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<tr>
<td>No version control</td>
<td>Provider goes out of business – what now?</td>
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<td>Big initial time / cost investment</td>
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<td>No one tool supports all fields of research</td>
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What next?

- Demos and Case studies
  - Workshop in Glasgow on 18th March
  - Workshop in Sheffield on 5th April

- Rspace trial

- Requirements document

- Engagement with other institutions (Delft; Cambridge; Edinburgh ?...)
  - We’re keen to work with other institutions
  - Can we gather examples of best practice in different research fields?
  - Can we develop case studies of ELN use beyond those used in Glasgow?
Thank you!

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https://researchnotebooks.wordpress.com/