

Repositories have a number of uses within the institution. An overview of the purposes and advantages of a repository are provided in our [Briefing Paper on Institutional Repositories](#) . The main uses - and the ones to highlight when making the case for a repository - are:

Providing access to research outputs

In a survey of European repository managers carried out in 2007, almost all of them put the issue of making the research outputs of the institution freely available to all as the top reason for establishing a repository. Clearly, the Open Access agenda is a strong driver for repository developments.

Showcasing institutional output

Showcasing the outputs from an institution is also important. Simply collecting as much content as possible in a repository can have a [huge effect on an institution's visibility and impact](#) . But having a burgeoning repository does more: it provides a shop window for people interested in what the institution has to offer. These include researchers who might like to join the institution, prospective students, people who might be considering providing sponsorship or an endowment. A full repository shows the institution off in the best light and provides an easy route to the institution's research production. Two examples of initiatives to showcase the institution - or its departments or individual researchers - using the repository are here.

Preservation

A repository provides the means properly to preserve the products of the institution's research programme. If preservation is an explicit goal of the institution then specific procedures need to be developed to ensure that there is a long-term view of repository operations, including ensuring that there is secure support for the long term from the institution. Measures must be taken to ensure a secure back-up process (see the [LOCKSS initiative](#) , for example). Undoubtedly, preservation of research outputs is an aim that resonates with researchers: repeated surveys and studies have shown that long term access to the literature and long term

care for their own outputs are issues about which researchers are concerned. Considerable research and development work is going on in the area of preservation, including on information lifecycle work and on preservation metadata.

Research monitoring and assessment

In their repositories, institutions have the means to monitor and manage their research programmes. If all the research outputs are collected in the repository, analyses can be carried out to see the outputs of departments, research groups or individuals, to monitor trends over time and, through citation tracking, to understand better the patterns and impact of research going on in the institution. Prediction of future activity and directions can also be attempted. The repository also provides the locus for producing the data required by the national assessment exercises that take place in some countries. See [institutional repositories for research management and assessment](#)

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Monitoring research output by funders

Research funders are becoming increasingly interested in monitoring what is produced as a result of their funding and in analysing research performance. Repositories provide a means for doing this so long as funder information is included in the metadata of outputs where appropriate. Some large subject-based repositories, such as UK PubMedCentral include such information and a growing number of institutional repositories are adding provision in their metadata schema for funder data. When most repositories include funder data (which generally encompasses the name of the funder, the project name, project number, and other details such as start and end dates for the project and so forth) funders will be able to search across repositories to aggregate all the data pertaining to research that they have funded. Institutions will also be able to analyse their own research outputs on the basis of projects and funding streams.

Further information

Chuck Thomas and Robert H. McDonald, [In Search Of A Standardized Model for Institutional Repository Assessment or How Can We Compare Institutional Repositories?](#) (2008). Proceedings of the ARL 2008 Assessment Conference. 3, Article 10. Postprint available free at:
<http://repositories.cdlib.org/postprints/3240>