Impact2: Through power of collaboration. How we increased our impact by helping researchers to increase theirs

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IMPACT²: THROUGH THE POWER OF COLLABORATION. HOW WE INCREASED OUR IMPACT BY HELPING RESEARCHERS TO INCREASE THEIRS.

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Abstract

Strategic planning and delivery of services at the University of Auckland's Libraries and Learning Services (L&LS) is underpinned by institutional collaboration and consultation. L&LS continues to strengthen its specialist research support services with an enhanced focus on strategic partnerships. L&LS is the institutional owner of Research Outputs (Symplectic Elements), the system used by University of Auckland (UoA) researchers to record and manage their research publications and professional activities. Research Outputs is also a key data source for services that support UoA researchers increase their visibility, track and measure their research impact, and generate data for performance reviews. A reference group of senior academic and professional staff, chaired by the University Librarian, is a forum for strategic decision making on best practice use and development of Research Outputs. The UoA external facing university directory and academic profiles use a publication feed from Research Outputs and is one example of L&LS collaborating on an enterprise wide project to increase the visibility of researchers. L&LS actively contribute to several working groups including an initiative to promote ways to enhance academic reputation and profile, and increase citations. One outcome was a marked increase in deposits to the UoA research repository. A research impact publication service was launched by L&LS in 2014. The multi-faceted BiblioInformatics Service, developed with input from strategic partners and stakeholders, offers researchers consultations with librarians on how to track and maximise the impact of their research outputs and is supported by online guides. A self-service platform, drawing on Research Outputs as a data source, provides information such as h-index and top cited publications. To support strategic decision making the service also delivers benchmarking and collaboration reports to Senior Management on research and citation performance.

Keywords: Academic librarianship, bibliometrics, bibliometric services, collaboration, research impact, research support, Symplectic

Introduction

Academic institutions and researchers around the globe are facing pressure to demonstrate accountability in an increasingly competitive environment [Fitzgerald et al., 2012]. Funders expect evidence of return on investment and in a culture influenced by changing scholarly publishing patterns, World University rankings, and publisher conditions and mandates, researcher performance is often assessed on measures of productivity and impact. Many institutions have invested in systems and services to support researchers maximise the visibility of their research. In recent years, many academic libraries have prioritised the development of new specialist library

services to support research, such as bibliometric and impact reporting, and evolved their staff capabilities to meet and support these new service areas [e.g. Drummond & Wartho, 2009]. A survey conducted by Corrall et al. [2013] of 140 New Zealand, Australian and UK Libraries demonstrated that a majority of libraries were actively offering or intending to offer services in the bibliometrics and data management space with a need to ensure staff capability and skills developed to meet these new areas.

Background

The University of Auckland (UoA) is a New Zealand world-ranked research intensive university that like many other institutions is continuing to build and extend support for its researchers. This has been reflected by new strategic objectives and researcher focused institutional working groups, projects and initiatives. With business ownership of two key enterprise level systems, Research Outputs (Symplectic Elements), the system used by the institution, and in particular by the researchers, to record, manage and report on research outputs, creative works and professional activities, and ResearchSpace, the institutional research repository; Libraries and Learning Services (L&LS) at UoA is well positioned within the enterprise to collaborate with and provide support for researchers. Ownership was assigned to L&LS in 2011 in recognition of L&LS' technical and information management skills to effectively manage, support and develop the system.

These two systems were critical in the preparation for the New Zealand Performance Based Research Funding exercise (PBRF)[1] in 2012. A newly formed L&LS Research Support Services team consisting of a Research Support Services Manager and two Research Support Services Librarians worked within and alongside an enterprise PBRF team to provide dedicated support to UoA researchers on the Research Outputs system and the research repository. The team coordinated and managed the verification and quality checking of publication records for PBRF evidence portfolios, and advised on best practice use of Research Outputs. Two of the Research Support Services team were seconded to the Research Office to assist with the provision of advice, training and support.

Since PBRF strategic priority has been given to the development of new specialist research support services with an objective to extend the impact of researchers. Acting on an opportunity to leverage off investment in key enterprise systems, the buy in and momentum gained throughout PBRF continues to be maximised with the team expanding from three staff in 2010 to a team of eight professional librarians/specialists, as of May 2015.

With roles dedicated to providing application support and advising on best practice, the team works closely with and across L&LS, developing capability within subject librarian teams to ensure the successful delivery of new services. The Research Support Services team is further functionally complemented by a close relationship with the Library Digital Development Team to ensure continuous technical system development and support whilst facilitating a seamless interface with Information Technology Services (ITS) and external vendors.

This paper sets out how Libraries and Learning Services at UoA identified and acted on an opportunity to leverage investment in enterprise level systems, develop and expand innovative research support services, grow capability and collaborate across the enterprise to become recognised as a trusted partner in researcher support and services.

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[1] http://www.tec.govt.nz/Funding/Fund-finder/Performance-Based-Research-Fund-PBRF-/

Governance

The ownership of Research Outputs and ResearchSpace has seen L&LS come to occupy a hub position within the institution, sought after for integration and inclusion in many collaborative ventures. There are two tiers to governance of research outputs management at UoA with a reference group governing decisions around Research Outputs and an Electronic Research Management Advisory Group governing a wider range of systems supporting research at UoA.

The Research Outputs Reference Group, consisting of senior academic staff from each faculty and librarians and chaired by the University Librarian, was established in 2013 to oversee the support, development and enterprise use of Research Outputs. This group has acted as a forum for strategic decision making whilst allowing opportunities for L&LS to learn more about the environment, challenges and opportunities faced by UoA researchers. In addition to providing input into strategic decisions, the group has also provided valuable feedback on enhancements and new functionality designed to streamline and improve researcher workflows.

The Electronic Research Management Advisory Group is chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and holds responsibility for governance over all research management activities at UoA. The group, of which the University Librarian is a member, receives regular reports on Research Outputs development and ensures L&LS work retains a high level of visibility with continued support and buy-in to Research Outputs at the most senior level within the institution.

Research Outputs data integration

A report commissioned by the Association of Research Libraries in 2013 (see Jaguszewski & Williams), involving interviews with administrators at five American libraries, identified collaboration as one of six important trends in developing new library liaison roles and influencing the ability for the academic library to develop and expand services. Areas such as e-science were seen as requiring input from various campus units and the most successful projects leveraged institution-wide relationships and expertise.

Collaboration has been a key factor in the development of new research support services and initiatives at UoA. As the recognised system for UoA research publication information, Research Outputs is a key data source for numerous institutional systems, services and processes. This has meant opportunities for many large scale collaborations with both academic and professional units across the institution.

Annual Academic Performance Reviews (APR) at UoA require researchers to include details of their publications within a curriculum vitae (CV). A L&LS developed self-service interface allows researchers to generate an academic CV with publications data from Research Outputs since 2010. In 2015, taking advantage of new functionality in Research Outputs, L&LS have been working closely with Human Resources to review options for streamlining the creation of enhanced CVs. The outcome will provide researchers with a one stop shop for both managing their research outputs and creating CVs for use in their APR, or other activities, such as grant applications and promotions.

In 2013, L&LS was approached by ITS to consult on a project to establish a publication feed from Research Outputs to the new University Directory and staff profiles. Beyond the purely technical aspects of the integration, L&LS, ITS and the Communications Office collaborated on business

rules around the citation display of the publications within staff profiles; processes for managing user queries; enhancement requests; enterprise wide communications; user guidance and training.

The new University Directory is an example of an initiative that has had enormous impact on increasing the visibility of UoA research and researchers internationally, whilst raising L&LS visibility with ITS and across the institution.

The Planning & Quality Office monitors and reports on institutional performance to assist with resource planning and development. As a trusted source of information on research patterns and behaviour, Research Outputs became a feed into a newly developed UoA reporting dashboard in 2014. This initiative was a close collaboration between L&LS, the Planning and Quality Office and ITS with Library developers creating the publication feed which is updated on a monthly basis. The L&LS Research Support Services team offers on-going insight into the data structure and interpretation.

Projects such as the Reporting Dashboard not only facilitate strong relationships with other professional support divisions but also highlight and ensure awareness of common objectives. For example, it has been critical for L&LS to have visibility of departmental reporting work undertaken by the Planning and Quality office to plan for and understand questions that might arise regarding Research Outputs data. An awareness of this work has ensured consistency of messages received by stakeholders and appropriate channelling of queries.

As Research Outputs has become more integrated with other institutional systems and services it has become very important that stakeholders can trust Research Outputs as a reliable data source. The vendor for Research Outputs, Symplectic, has a very proactive software development lifecycle with a new software release every quarter. L&LS manage all the application testing for Research Outputs and assist ITS with technical testing prior to upgrades. To maintain stakeholder trust, any proposed changes in Research Outputs are clearly communicated to all impacted parties in advance.

Vendor Relationships and product development

To ensure appropriate planning is in place for the on-going development of Research Outputs, UoA have maintained a close working relationship with Symplectic.

As the first adopter of Symplectic outside of the United Kingdom, UoA has been afforded substantial input into product development. Symplectic representatives regularly travel to UoA to meet with L&LS and relevant stakeholders, providing valuable insights into the product roadmap, environmental trends and recommendations for adoption into the UoA environment. This relationship has also provided an opportunity for UoA to demonstrate how Research Outputs is being used, integrated and built on within the institution, providing context for suggested new functionality and interface refinement.

UoA is also very active within the online community of Symplectic adopters internationally, supporting the sharing of best practice between customers and bringing common issues to the forefront so that they can be prioritised by Symplectic for resolution.

BiblioInformatics (Research Impact) Service

The multi-faceted BiblioInformatics Service was launched by L&LS in 2014. An impact reporting service, informed by the University of New South Wales Library (Drummond & Wartho, 2009) and

similar offerings in Europe caters to doctoral candidates and individual researchers through to UoA senior decision makers. The BiblioInformatics Service builds upon the University's ongoing investment in the Research Outputs and ResearchSpace systems as well as publisher research intelligence tools such as Elsevier's SciVal and Thomson Reuter' InCites. The service assists researchers to demonstrate and maximise the value and impact of their research outputs whilst providing tailored institutional benchmarking and collaboration reports to support strategic decision making.

The BiblioInformatics Service was developed with input from researchers and senior stakeholders across the institution. An L&LS project group, led by a Research Support Services Librarian and consisting of subject librarians from all faculties, worked together to gain an understanding of researcher requirements, tools and approaches in each disciplinary area. The group undertook an internal skills development and carried out a comprehensive faculty-wide requirements gathering exercise. The findings clearly demonstrated the need for an impact reporting service, with much interest in alternative forms of impact, particularly for the Humanities and Creative Arts. A report summarising all findings was delivered to senior stakeholders, including the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research, demonstrating the value of the proposed service and obtaining necessary buy in and continued support. This engagement led to further opportunities for L&LS to work on later impact and citation related initiatives at the institutional level.

Development of BiblioInformatics

To ensure the delivery of a service that would truly meet researcher needs, an initial pilot impact service was developed in 2013. The service offered individual researchers a range of options:

- Consultations with a subject librarian and BiblioInformatics project team member
- Research impact reports
  - A basic report drawing on Research Outputs data ('Snapshot') and including metrics such as the researcher's h-index and citation rates for top publications.
  - A customised report, building on the Snapshot and including impact measures to reflect the researcher's unique requirements such as book holdings and social media activity.
- Web guides developed by the project group, from altmetrics through to social media

Research impact reports were created by project group members working in collaboration with the researcher's subject librarian and delivered personally through a consultation. A checklist was developed by the project group and used at the first consultation to assist discussion and identify relevant sources that could be incorporated into web content and their more customised impact report.

The pilot service was very well received and afforded great insight into researcher requirements. The project group subsequently recommended the launch of a full service from 2014, rolled out Faculty by Faculty.

As of May 2015, the BiblioInformatics Service for individual researchers is almost fully operational across the institution. The staggered roll out approach has allowed time for the Research Support Services Librarian to collaborate with each subject team supporting the service, delivering scenario based training and ensuring an understanding of disciplinary tools and requirements. While BiblioInformatics is a new service, many teams were already providing support to researchers. Working together with Research Support Services and the BiblioInformatics project group, all

teams have the opportunity to build on their experience and share ideas for future development of the BiblioInformatics Service.

Impact Platform and self-service

During the requirements gathering phase many researchers suggested the benefit of being able to download research impact reports through a self-service interface. In response to this suggestion, and combined with concerns around the sustainability of manually creating reports, it was agreed that the initial service would include snapshot reports using Research Outputs data only. However as self-service and custom reporting were deemed to be of such great value, the BiblioInformatics project group further recommended the development of a self-service platform ('Impact Platform'). This was prioritised and launched in late 2014 timed to coincide with the roll out of the BiblioInformatics Service to the large Faculty of Medical & Health Sciences.

The Impact Platform, drawing on Research Outputs data, allows researchers to download their research impact report with options to customise and select relevant metrics, such as an h-index, and appropriate visualisations.   The intention is to continuously enhance the platform with further data sources, such as WorldCat and repository usage figures, over time. This iterative development path and self-service focus ensures that the BiblioInformatics service is both sustainable, scalable and will cater widely to researchers from all faculties. The Impact Platform was developed by the Library's Digital Development team with requirements provided by the BiblioInformatics project group.

Strategic reporting

In parallel to the development of support for individual researchers, a facet of the BiblioInformatics service was developed to provide strategic reporting to Senior Management on research and citation performance. Benchmarking reports have been proactively provided to senior management across a number of faculties which has led to further requests for ad-hoc reporting, for example, mapping collaborations, identifying and reporting on research strengths, benchmarking research groups and departments and the delivery of reports to support accreditation exercises. Reports developed optimise the use of publisher researcher intelligence tools, such as SciVal and InCites, and Research Outputs and have been well received at all levels. Work continues to develop and build on these reports to ensure they continually meet stakeholder requirements, embedding them as a key element within the BiblioInformatics service.

L&LS constantly seeks new opportunities to meet institutional objectives through BiblioInformatics. Work is now underway by a Research Support Services Librarian in collaboration with subject librarians to develop and provide reports to support departmental reviews. These reports incorporate data from publisher tools as well as drawing on more alternative sources of impact, for example, repository usage and book holdings for departments within the Humanities, Social Sciences and Creative Arts and Industries. Reports provided have met with a positive response, demonstrating the on-going impact of L&LS and BiblioInformatics throughout the institution.

Next steps and new group

In a fast changing environment, the L&LS BiblioInformatics project group meets regularly to discuss new tools and approaches, changing requirements, Research Outputs functionality and enhancements, and professional development of L&LS staff. As the service is now almost fully operational across all faculties the group has recently transitioned into a Research Support

Advisory group with a wider remit and terms of reference to explore and advise on the development of further research support services.

Research support and doctoral candidates

Support for doctoral candidates is a primary objective for L&LS. L&LS, in collaboration with the School of Graduate Studies, provide a doctoral skills programme consisting of a range of workshops and support.

During the requirements gathering for the BiblioInformatics Service many academics commented on the importance of providing publishing strategy and impact support to doctoral candidates early on in their research career. To cater to this demand, a workshop on maximising impact through publication was developed by the Research Support Services team with input and endorsement from UoA learning specialists and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Maximise Impact workshop is delivered through discussion and collaborative hands-on activities. Doctoral candidates are encouraged to explore creating an online identity, building their reputation, making publishing decisions, use of social media, managing and promoting their research and measuring their impact. The Research Outputs system was identified by L&LS and other senior University stakeholders as an important system to be used by doctoral candidates to record their research and professional activities. The system features prominently in the workshop with candidates given the opportunity to explore and set up their Research Outputs profile in addition to managing their University Directory profile which uses a publication feed from Research Outputs.

Doctoral use of Research Outputs has additional benefits to meet future reporting requirements for the University. Working with the Dean of Graduate Studies and other stakeholders, information on Research Outputs has been recently included in an online hub for doctoral candidates and is promoted in various workshops and doctoral induction days.

Institutional working groups

With system ownership, integration across the institution, and a growing service remit, L&LS has become a key member on various enterprise level working groups. These include areas such as open access, learning and development for researchers, and identity management, gaining further recognition within the institution as a trusted partner in research support.

During 2013-2014, L&LS played a lead role in an institutional working group which explored ways to enhance academic reputation and profile, and increase citations. The group, chaired by the Assistant Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research, was formed out of an institutional priority to extend the visibility and impact of UoA research. L&LS, already active in developing bibliometric services, was invited to write a positioning paper which then went on to form the foundation for the group's objectives.

Recommendations from this Citation working group saw a number of initiatives undertaken. This included a successful institution wide 'increase your impact campaign' in late 2014. One outcome was a surge in research publications uploaded to the institutional research repository, ResearchSpace. ResearchSpace has continued to see continued uptake since the campaign, buoyed by complementary initiatives, such as an L&LS/Faculty collaboratively organised Uploadathon for Open Access week 2014.

The opportunity for L&LS to work on initiatives such as the Citation working group has resulted in a number of flow-on benefits. It has facilitated opportunities to showcase L&LS work, such as add-on services to the research repository and the development of the BiblioInformatics Service. This has ensured sustained buy-in and support at a senior level and invitations to participate in further collaborative initiatives, such as developing workshops for early career researchers.

The recognition of L&LS as a knowledgeable partner in research support has also meant that recommendations made by L&LS have been adopted and widely supported. This includes a project about to commence in June 2015 implementing ORCID across the institution with substantial input and direction provided by Libraries and Learning Services working closely with ITS and other stakeholder groups.

Conclusion

This paper provides a working example of how through collaboration and the ongoing development of specialist services academic libraries can continue to be seen as a relevant and trusted partner in research support. L&LS at UoA has collaborated on various institutional initiatives that have contributed to increasing the visibility and impact of UoA research whilst enhancing academic reputation and profiles. By working across the enterprise L&LS have demonstrated the exponential effects of collaboration on impact: impact for L&LS, impact for individual researchers and impact for the institution as a whole.

With support and engagement from all stakeholders, including University senior management, Libraries and Learning Services are sought out and well positioned to move forward as a key player in developing and leading further institutional services and initiatives to support University of Auckland research.

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