

# Mimas

powering  
knowledge

Annual Review  
2011/12

## Powering world class research and teaching

Mimas is an organisation of experts. Our role is to support the advancement of knowledge, powering world-class research and teaching. As a national data centre based at The University of Manchester, we host a significant number of the UK's research information assets – and build applications to help people make the most of this rich resource. We have a unique blend of expertise and contextual knowledge, combined with the capacity to deploy existing and emergent technologies. This enables us to turn advances in technology into value for our communities and provide world-class information resources. Mimas has a longstanding relationship with Jisc, developing services that support teaching, learning and research, and strong connections with research councils, especially the ESRC.

## Director's foreword

As Director of Mimas I would like to congratulate all my colleagues at Mimas and all of our service and project partners for what we have collectively achieved over the last year and also for the continuing contribution they have made towards delivering the strategic aims and objectives of our principal funders. In this year's Annual Report we have used a set of themes to showcase the breadth and strategic importance of our key achievements.

Looking forward, we will continue to enhance the services we deliver and to exploit new technologies to meet changing user needs. Engaging with key stakeholders and partnership with other organisations will continue to be vital to our work to ensure we are fully aligned with the needs of the sector. As an organisation of experts we will continue to invest in developing the skills and expertise of staff to ensure we remain an agile and innovative organisation working at the forefront of new technology.

## Successes and achievements in 2011/12

### Maximising the value of community data

This year, we've collaborated with librarians and repository managers to develop shared services that help to improve institutional effectiveness.

Sharing data, technology, processes, skills and knowledge within the community results in the development of user-centric tools and projects that support collaboration, add value and allow institutions to make evidence-based decisions on the management of their resources.

### A shared approach to usage statistics

Librarians and repository managers are benefitting from two services that help them to evaluate the value and impact of their collections through the delivery of accurate and comparable usage statistics.

We've worked with institutions and publishers, to develop the Journal Usage Statistics Portal (JUSP) and Institutional Repository Usage Statistics (IRUS-UK), both of which have been built in response to demand from UK Higher Education libraries.

*"UK library professionals need shared services like JUSP and IRUS to deliver mission critical services. They provide libraries with critical intelligence and data about their resources, enabling better local decisions to be made about where budgets are spent. These services are not only helping to make academic libraries more efficient and effective in the decisions they make, but are a critical component in our vision for an efficient national infrastructure to underpin research and learning." — Ben Showers, Jisc Programme Manager for Digital Infrastructure.*

### Demonstrating the value of institutional repositories

There is currently no agreed standard in place to measure usage across the range of UK repositories, but IRUS plans to change this by providing a national usage data aggregation service containing details of all content downloaded from UK participating Institutional Repositories. Part of the Jisc funded UK RepositoryNet+ initiative, the service is helping librarians and repository managers to demonstrate the value and impact of their Institutional Repositories, by providing consistent and comprehensive statistics that allow benchmarking at a national level.

[irus.mimas.ac.uk](http://irus.mimas.ac.uk)

**Partners:** EDINA, Evidence Base, Cranfield University

**Associates:** Bournemouth University, City University London, University of Huddersfield, University of Reading, University of Salford.

**Funded by:** Jisc

## Enabling Better Analysis of Publisher Deals

Comparative usage statistics are essential to help evaluate the impact of e-resources and inform future purchasing decisions. JUSP allows library staff to view, download and analyse their online journal usage data quickly and efficiently. Over this past year, it has evolved into a valued service used by 144 UK academic libraries, including a suite of enhancements to the service which have all been conceived and developed in collaboration with a group of 12 libraries. The enhancements are already saving libraries time and enabling better analysis of publisher deals.

[jusp.mimas.ac.uk](http://jusp.mimas.ac.uk)

**Partners:** Evidence Base, Cranfield University

**Funded by:** Jisc

## Improving the efficiency of collection management decisions

Through the Copac Collections Management project, we've been working with a range of partners and libraries across the UK to develop a tool that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of collection management decisions. Through collaboration, we've identified a real need for a service that allows libraries to identify rare and unique items and make informed decisions about which items to withdraw and which to conserve. By working with data already created and invested in by the community in the existing Copac database, we're developing a tool that integrates seamlessly into library workflows and reduces duplication of effort.

All academic libraries have a responsibility to provide students and researchers with access to excellent resources, and for the UK's eminent research libraries this means protecting access to important, unique and distinctive collections. However, space restrictions mean that libraries must balance the need to preserve collections with the need to identify and remove items that are no longer needed. This year, we've been developing the tool through user testing, and developing use cases with some of the UK's most important libraries.

[copac.ac.uk/innovations/collections-management](http://copac.ac.uk/innovations/collections-management)

**Partners:** RLUK, White Rose University Consortium

**Associates:** The University of Manchester, the University of Warwick, UCL, The Victoria and Albert Museum

**Funded by:** Jisc

## Knowledge transfer and the student experience

We have worked on a number of new initiatives to support digital learning and improve the student experience throughout 2011/12. By sharing our knowledge and expertise with universities and colleges in the UK and across Europe, we've created resources that engage students and improve opportunities for learning and skills development.

### Sharing knowledge and expertise of Augmented Reality across the UK

Students across the UK are interacting with library collections and manuscripts in new ways thanks to our expertise in Augmented Reality (AR) and the SCARLET projects. The original SCARLET project worked with a mixed team of academics, students and librarians at The University of Manchester to explore how AR could be used with Special Collections materials from the John Rylands Library at Deansgate, including rare editions of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, as well as Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and the oldest extant Greek papyrus fragment of the Gospel of John. The project has been a great success, with very positive student evaluations.

Now other institutions are benefitting from our AR expertise. One of our main aims with SCARLET has been to explore how we can inspire and enable people to use AR with their own collections, and we have achieved this through the SCARLET Toolkit, which provides help, guidelines, advice and case studies. Another mark of the project's success has been the award of additional funding to implement SCARLET+ - a new project that has seen us sharing the knowledge and expertise we gathered during the original project with other teams in the UK, including University of Sussex and the Craft Study Centre at the University for the Creative Arts. Using the Toolkit with different types of collections will give us new case studies about embedding and applying AR in the wider community and help us to refine the toolkit for future users.

[teamsscarlet.wordpress.com](http://teamsscarlet.wordpress.com)

**Partners:** The University of Sussex, University for the Creative Arts, The University of Manchester

**Funded by:** Jisc

### Supporting employability and lifelong learning in Europe

Aspiring and existing hairdressers in Eastern Europe now have improved access to online resources and skills training thanks to our Hair.net project. Working with partners in Bulgaria, Slovakia and Romania, we transferred the knowledge and innovation of our award-winning Hairdressing Training Service – translating the materials for new European audiences. Launched this year, the new Hair.net sites are supporting employability and lifelong learning by significantly improving the availability of online training materials in this area. The tutorials are already attracting positive feedback from students who are finding real-world value in the materials for their studies and work. 93% of initial users have found the materials useful and applicable to their real life practice.

*"I really liked the HairNet website. I watched few videos and must say they are very well prepared. Everything is well presented and explained... I want to enhance my knowledge in hairdressing and I believe this website will help me to do so, gain new skills and get new creative ideas. I am sure other hairdressers will find it just as useful. I am glad that something like this was created." — Hairdressing student, Slovakia.*

[hairneteu.wordpress.com](http://hairneteu.wordpress.com)

**Partners:** Balkan Agency for Sustainable Development (BASD) Bulgaria, Slovak Chamber of Entrepreneurs (CoE) Slovakia, Social and Economic Training Institute (IFES) Romania

**Funded by:** European Commission - Leonardo da Vinci programme

## Inspiring a new generation of spatial scientists

Our Landmap Team have worked with partners at the University of Bonn to launch engaging new online materials for schools that will help to inspire a new generation of spatial scientists.

Developed in partnership with the Fernerkundung in Schulen (FIS) project, Spatial Science for Schools is a suite of new tutorials that aims to improve pupils' understanding of remote sensing images of satellite and aerial photography and encourage them to develop and apply digital skills in topics such as interpreting satellite and aerial photography.

*"Landmap is hosting this website to contribute to the UK government agenda to promote science and technology in schools. The tutorials offer a range of possibilities for teachers to encourage pupils' interest in natural sciences, mathematics or engineering through the use of fascinating satellite images." — Kamie Kitmitto, Landmap Manager.*

The new tutorials are giving students the opportunity to apply their digital skills to a range of educational scenarios, from drawing conclusions about the Haiti earthquake crisis to understanding map coordinates.

[landmap.ac.uk](http://landmap.ac.uk)

**Partners:** Fernerkundung in Schulen (FIS) at the University of Bonn

**Funded by:** Jisc, German Aerospace Centre (DLR), Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology

## Opening up heritage and special collections with new technologies

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The UK has rich and varied archives and heritage collections, but these are not always easily accessible for students and researchers. Through a number of innovations, we're opening up these valuable collections and building applications and interfaces to reveal hidden materials.

### Connecting archives to the wider information landscape

Our Archives Hub team are finding new ways to connect archives to the wider information landscape using Linked Data - making this important content more discoverable and placing the archive in its biographical context for real world research.

Linked Data is about connecting structured data on the Web and making links, so that a person or machine can explore the web of data. We have been working with this technology over the last two years with the aim of opening up our data and enabling new links to be made between diverse online resources and content. The Linking Lives project builds on this work by creating a real life biographical interface that exploits the possibilities of Linked Data and gives researchers a simple interface to relevant collections and archives related to significant people. The project is already proving the potential of Linked Data and we are successfully connecting our content to external datasets including the British National Bibliography.

Researchers are not always familiar with using primary source materials, so we anticipate that this biographical starting point will lead them to a host of archives and related content. By working with students and researchers from The University of Manchester to test the Linking Lives interface for real-world research, we hope to develop a valuable and useful resource.

[archiveshub.ac.uk/linkinglives](http://archiveshub.ac.uk/linkinglives)

**Funded by:** Jisc

### Online access to thousands of 19th century books

Through our JISC Historic Books service, researchers were given online access to thousands of books from the British Library's 19th century collections. Developed in collaboration with the British Library and JISC Collections, the collection includes the original typeface, illustrations and fold-out pages for over 65,000 books that were formerly only available physically in the London reading rooms.

The collection is now an integral part of the JISC Historic Books collection, which also contains books from Early English Books Online and Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Bringing together these collections means that researchers can now search across the full text of over 350,000 books published between 1475 and 1914, via one world-class resource.

*“We’re delighted that JISC Historic Books, and our partnership with JISC, JISC Collections and Mimas, enable HE users to explore and research many thousands of texts – whether they’re classics or the hitherto more obscure end of the spectrum. Shelves and shelves of books, that could previously only be read in our St Pancras Reading Rooms, by one reader at a time, are now simultaneously and instantly available.” — Caroline Brazier, the British Library’s Director of Scholarship and Collections.*

[jischistoricbooks.ac.uk](http://jischistoricbooks.ac.uk)

**Partners:** JISC Collections, The British Library

**Funded by:** JISC Collections

## Making resources about the First World War more discoverable

We’re working to make digital resources about the First World War more discoverable, and finding new ways to present this content for the benefit of education and research. We’re exploring how data can be integrated and combined in new ways that can add value for researchers, teachers, and managers of information assets within libraries, archives and museums. Working with a team from King’s College London, who have identified suitable First World War data sources, we’re building an aggregation API and discovery layer for content from these collections that we hope will give students, teachers and researchers easy, flexible and ongoing access to content from and about the First World War. WW1 Discovery is an important exemplar for the Mimas-led UK Discovery programme, which advocates a set of principles to facilitate better access to vital collections in libraries, archives and museums

*“Ultimately what we want is to prove the concept that through adhering to the Discovery principles, good things will happen for teaching and research. We really want to be able to showcase the possibilities of pulling together content from different sources. This represents a new, lighter approach to resource management, with less emphasis on curation and more on enabling people to find exciting connections for themselves.” — Joy Palmer, Mimas Senior Manager.*

[ww1.discovery.ac.uk](http://ww1.discovery.ac.uk)

**Partners:** Kings College London

**Funded by:** Jisc

## Supporting research excellence

We are actively involved in a diverse range of initiatives, which both support and encourage research excellence across the whole sector and are funded by equally diversified bodies.

### Building a world-class data infrastructure for social sciences

Mimas' ESDS International and Census Dissemination Unit Services have a long history of providing researchers with access to quality social and economic data. This year they became a part of the new UK Data Service, giving continued access to these valuable collections. In addition to providing access to high quality data resources, we're contributing to the strategic and operational management of the UK Data Service with Mimas Director, Keith Cole contributing to the Senior Leadership Group.

Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) the new service will offer seamless, unified access to valuable economic, social and census data for the research community, along with support to help researchers develop the skills needed to make the best use of the data available.

*"The UK Data Service represents a significant step forward in our strategy. As data are the lifeblood of research, our aim is to consolidate resources in a way that expands both the reach and impact of these vital investments. It will become a cornerstone for UK research; the place to go for high quality data and support." — Professor Paul Boyle, Chief Executive ESRC*

**Partners:** UK Data Archive

**Funded by:** ESRC

### Providing free access to essential biomedical research outputs and information

UK PubMed Central (UKPMC) welcomed the European Research Council (ERC) as a new partner and was subsequently re-launched as Europe PubMed Central (Europe PMC). The service, which offers free access to biomedical literature resources including open access journals, now provides scholars with unprecedented free access to essential research outputs and information.

*"We are delighted that the ERC has agreed to join the Europe PMC service and hope this paves the way for other European funders to participate in this initiative. Quite simply, as more funders join, so more research becomes freely available and can be used without restriction to advance knowledge and its applications to benefit our societies - whether that be by academic researchers, industry, healthcare professionals or the lay public." — Sir Mark Walport, director of the Wellcome Trust*

Through our work on the Europe PMC+ service, we're further enriching this valuable resource by giving principal investigators the opportunity to manage and submit their peer-reviewed manuscripts, link their grant portfolio to associated research articles, and assess the impact of their research through citation counts and article download statistics. A significant ongoing development by Mimas, the Grant Information SySTem (GRIST) is a new component that provides open access to a database of extended grant data, suitable for inclusion in a funder's or institution's research management system. In addition, we're making it possible to offer automated ingest directly from funders' grant administration systems.

[europepmc.org](http://europepmc.org)

**Partners:** European Bioinformatics Institute, The University of Manchester (Mimas and NaCTeM), the British Library

**Funded by:** [europepmc.org/Funders/](http://europepmc.org/Funders/)

## Securing access to valuable collections of socio-economic data and resources

Researchers are guaranteed continued access to valuable collections of socio-economic data and resources, thanks to new funding from the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (via the ESRC) and new data licence negotiations by the UK Data Service team.

The new agreements mean that we have significantly increased access to databanks from international organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the United Nations. These connections significantly enhance the portfolio of international macro data and resources available to the UK academic community.

*"These licenses give the UK academic community unique access to the entire data resources of the OECD, IMF and IEA, enabling global issues such as financial crises, international development, energy and the environment to be addressed using authoritative, benchmark, real-world data. Access to the data also provides educators with opportunities to include actual events and their impact in their teaching and learning materials." — Keith Cole, Director of Mimas*

[esds.ac.uk/international](http://esds.ac.uk/international)

**Partners:** European Bioinformatics Institute, The University of Manchester (Mimas and NaCTeM), the British Library

**Funded by:** [europepmc.org/Funders](http://europepmc.org/Funders/)

## Awards and nominations in 2011/12

### Mimas/Team SCARLET

Joint second prize "Learning Technologist of the Year Award."

Association for Learning Technology (ALT). 2012.

### Mimas/Autonomy Team

Nominated for "Best Not for Profit IT Project."

Project Excellence Awards: The Chartered Institute for IT. 2012.