

Mimas

powering
knowledge

Annual Review
2012/13

Mimas Annual Review 2012/13

Based at The University of Manchester, Mimas is made up of experts in the organisation and dissemination of data. We develop technology which makes information available to those who need it for education and research - whatever their field, and in the way that works best for them.

This year's Annual Review offers a flavour of our achievements for 2012/13. You can find a full overview of our [expertise areas](#) and [portfolio](#) of projects and services from our [new website](#).

Director's Foreword

As Director I am very proud to be able to introduce this year's Annual Review, which showcases a number of our many achievements. These include the creative and innovative application of digital technologies to support research but also to improve the learning experience for students through cutting edge technologies such as Augmented Reality. This year we are particularly proud to highlight the international dimension of much of our work, which includes connecting UK researchers to European archives through to improving access to educational resources to researchers and students in Myanmar. Through services and projects such as JUSP, IRUS-UK, LAMP and CCM we have successfully exploited data analytics to support more effective decision making and the development of more efficient business processes within institutions to save both time and money. We also continue to support and promote the open access agenda through many of our services and project activity such as Jorum.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleagues at Mimas together with all of our service and project partners for what has been collectively achieved over the last year. Looking forward, we will continue to develop and enhance our content services and to exploit new technologies to open up new routes to data and information to meet the ever changing needs of the education and research communities we serve.

Advancing research through digital technology

Data and information must be accessible if they are fully to realise their value. We benefit research by facilitating discussion and collaboration, and enabling the academic community to access and manipulate valuable resources as easily and flexibly as possible.

Connecting UK archives to Europe

Primary source materials contained in archives are vital resources for researchers, but can often be hidden and difficult to find. Through our Archives Hub service, we're part of a European-wide project to develop easy ways for researchers to access as much archival content from as many European institutions as possible.

As the Country Manager for Archives Portal Europe – an initiative designed to share European archival heritage through a single online access point – we're enabling UK archives to be connected to related archives across the continent. By contributing via the Archives Hub, we'll be significantly boosting the number of UK repositories and institutions represented. Jane Stevenson, Archives Hub Manager, says:

"The Archives Hub is all about raising awareness and enabling discovery of unique materials for research. By sharing our descriptions with the Archives Portal Europe we reach an even wider audience on behalf of UK archives, giving researchers more opportunities to explore and make links between these invaluable resources."

[Find out more](#) about Archives Portal Europe from the project website.

Connecting Digital Humanities at The University of Manchester

Digital Humanities has grown in importance in recent years, offering new ways to solve research challenges and visualize materials. The University of Manchester has one of the largest concentrations of humanities scholars in the UK, working alongside learning technologists and information professionals, and we've been working with these colleagues to explore the potential for Digital Humanities, open discussions, and act as a broker to bring together and connect initiatives in this area from all areas of the University. Our work in the humanities via projects such as SCARLET, makes Mimas ideally placed to carry out this work, with experience and expertise in both content and technology development.

As part of this work, we ran a Digital Humanities Conference in November 2013, which aimed to showcase initiatives from around the University, and bring together academics and professionals to identify opportunities. The conference was just the beginning of this major initiative, and we hope this work will be a springboard to develop this area of activity in the future.

Improving digital library provision in Myanmar

2013 saw the launch of the eTekkatho digital library, which gave students and researchers in Myanmar access to much needed online educational resources for the first time. Developed through a unique partnership between Mimas, The University of Manchester and leading Myanmar higher education institutions, eTekkatho contains a wealth of valuable academic resources including online textbooks, datasets and research papers.

Response to the library has been positive from both students and colleagues, and the project was also highlighted during the House of Commons International Development Committee's inquiry into Democracy and Development in Burma.

The library has been tailor-made to work over Myanmar's fragile, low bandwidth Internet environment. And because eTekkatho is in English and open access, we hope that it could also benefit students and researchers in other developing countries where IT infrastructures are fragile.

Looking forward

A new beginning for Jisc Historic Books

Our Jisc Historic Books service allows researchers to discover rich content from three historically significant collections: Early English Books Online (EEBO), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) and 65,000 19th Century texts from the British Library. In 2014, we'll be developing the service to make this content more accessible to users.

With new partners [Knowledge Integration](#), we'll be designing and building a completely new platform that responds to feedback from students and researchers. The team will be also be working closely with the Jisc Historic Books Advisory Board and User Group to implement requested features and ensure the platform meets the needs of the community.

New data for UKDS.Stat

As partner of the UK Data Service, we aggregate global, social and economic data from renowned sources such as the Office of National Statistics, the World Bank, Eurostat and the International Monetary Fund, and we work to ensure that the highest quality data is delivered in the most accessible format. We upgraded our UKDS.Stat data delivery platform in 2013, giving researchers a route to the latest editions of large socio-economic international datasets. Throughout the year, we worked to make valuable data available via UKDS.Stat, including the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) 2013 Statistics and The IMF eLibrary Text Collection.

In 2014, we'll be migrating more of the international data portfolio over to the improved UKDS.Stat interface, so that everyone can use, find, understand and use data easily.

Improving the student experience

Through the creative use of technology, we develop innovative and engaging learning environments for students. From Augmented Reality to apps to digital books, we work with students at all levels to find ways to improve the learning experience.

Discover Geology with Augmented Reality

We've expanded our use of Augmented Reality in 2013, and we were delighted when this work was recognized with a nomination for the TES Outstanding ICT Initiative of the Year award.

This year we have worked with new audiences and subjects collaborating with colleagues at The University of Manchester to develop Discover Geology – an AR app designed to make learning an interactive experience and help users learn more about the geological history of the Hope Valley. Primarily aimed at MSc Environmental Science students, the app helps users to understand the landscape and unlock hidden information using hotspots via AR. Including an expert academic commentary, practical directions to interesting locations, and a fossil-finder, the app is another example of how AR can have real academic value for educational use. Here's what one of our testers thought:

"All in all, the app made us take paths we didn't consider, stop and examine rocks we would've otherwise ignored, find tiny fossils, and see our trip as more than a casual walk in the hills." - <http://manconline.wordpress.com/2013/08/15/discover-geology-ar/>

Information about Discover Geology and all of our other AR projects can be found on the [SCARLET blog](#).

Developing digital books for medical students

Digital textbooks can offer an active and engaging learning experience for students. This year we contributed to the **technical development of a free iBook**, embedding interactive learning content to help undergraduate students develop prescribing skills and prepare for assessments. We worked in collaboration with a multi-disciplinary team from the Manchester Medical School to **create interactive content** for the Prescribing Skills Handbook series.

The development of the iBook presented an exciting opportunity to engage with students and to augment their learning through a relevant and easily adaptable format. Drawing on our experience of developing online and mobile learning materials for students, we embedded videos, HTML5 widgets, 3D animations, self-assessment and links to useful apps. The book is proving popular with students – here's what one reader had to say:

"I have always found prescribing and pharmacology some of the hardest topics whilst studying medicine. Now that I am going into fifth year, it is more important than ever that I

get to grips with these topics. This book was really helpful, and made some difficult topics seem easy. It is well written, easy to understand and use, and the inclusion of videos, pictures and self assessment questions keep the reader engaged... it is a must read for all medical students."

Looking forward

A new app for Hairdressing Training

Hairdressing Training is one of our most used learning and teaching services, with 90% of UK FE colleges embedding the videos into their teaching. In 2014, we'll be developing a new mobile app for the service that will make these valuable learning materials even more accessible and help bring them to new audiences. We're taking a user centered approach to the app development, working with hairdressing students to build a resource that will be accessible on a range of different devices, and will add value to the existing website.

Enabling efficiency and effectiveness through the exploitation of information and data analytics

The role of analytics in making sense of data has become increasingly critical and can provide business insights into resource usage. Our services, such as [JUSP](#), [IRUS-UK](#) and [LAMP](#), help to reveal the impact of resources, inform decision-making within libraries about procurement or collections management, and overall help institutions to demonstrate value.

Developing a new online dashboard to help libraries make the most of their data

Libraries collect masses of data every day, such as library resource use and student demographics, that can be used to demonstrate value for money and to develop new services for users. In the Library Analytics and Metrics Project (LAMP), we're developing a new online dashboard that will help libraries to exploit the possibilities of this data. We're working with Jisc and the University of Huddersfield to create a prototype shared data analytics service that will bring disparate datasets from six UK HE institutions together and visualise them in an attractive and meaningful way.

We're using our data handling expertise to normalise the data, and adding a statistical analysis layer that allows us to identify trends and correlations that can help libraries to make connections and highlight the role the library is playing in the success of the institution. We hope to extend LAMP to more institutions in the future, and this could help to provide insights into the overall effect of library resource provision on student attainment and research success across the UK.

You can follow the progress of the LAMP project over at the [team blog](#).

A new phase for the Copac Collections Management Tools

The Copac Collections Management (CCM) tools project moved into a new phase of development this year. With a positive response to user testing of the initial prototype, we were keen **to fully understand the potential of CCM** by giving more RLUK member libraries the opportunity to test the tools and input into their development.

Now underway for two years, the CCM tools aim to protect access to the UK's rich research collections, **improve the efficiency and effectiveness of collections management** and, overall, offer an evidence-based answer to the question: "How do my collections fit into the national picture?" This new phase will keep the momentum going, exploring how the tools could move into a full service for the library community. We'll explore what training and support is required, whilst also encouraging peer-to-peer support, as the expertise for applying the CCM tools lies within the library community.

The [team blog](#) contains more information about the project, alongside case studies of how our partner libraries have used the tool to identify last copies among titles considered for withdrawal, identifying collection strengths, decide whether to conserve a book, review a collection at the shelves, and prioritise a collection or item(s) for digitisation.

Looking forward

Providing consultancy and advice for usage data services

We're building on our expertise in analytics and usage statistics by providing consultancy, advice, training and support, as well as hosted services, for individuals and organisations managing usage data.

Through the newly created USP Services, which includes our [JUSPConsult](#) and IRUSConsult services, we're working with sectors outside of the UK academic community to demonstrate how the expertise and infrastructure developed for our core JUSP and IRUS-UK usage statistics tools can be applicable to a range of different audiences. We are currently working with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK, and preparing to deliver an IRUS-UK COUNTER solution for the OAPEN online library and publication platform. In addition to this we're providing a pilot service to the University of Western Australia and the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl). We hope to continue this work, transferring knowledge and expertise to other sectors, through ongoing discussions with health and government libraries in 2014.

Promoting open access to resources and information

Building a library for Information & Digital Literacy Skills

Our Jorum service is a major champion of Open Educational Resources (OER). In 2013, the team worked with the library community to respond to the need for an open Information and Digital Literacy Skills Collection.

We wanted to improve the discoverability of Information and Digital Literacy OERs, and **encourage sharing and re-use** of these materials. Before this project, although information and digital literacy resources were included in our database, they did not have a true fit in the Jorum collections. Working alongside key members of the IL community, we built a bespoke OER library, tailored to the specific requirements and skills of information and digital literacy. The collection launched with OERs from well known sources such as Delila (Developing Educators Learning and Information Literacies) and SMILE (Study Methods & Information Literacy Exemplars), and we hope that the development of this tailor-made resource will initiate the deposit and sharing of a range OERs within the IL community.

Find out more about the Information and Digital Literacy Skills project in [this blog post](#) from project manager [Siobhán Burke](#).

Looking forward

Improving access to Jisc digital content and OERs for Further Education

In 2014, we'll be working alongside Jisc Collections to provide the FE and skills community with simple and flexible routes to Jisc digital content and OERs. We'll be providing a focal point for discovering useful learning and teaching content, and collaborating with FE practitioners to enhance Jisc content services. We'll be working closely with the FE community to build something that fits their needs, but we envision a space where teachers and practitioners will be able to discover content that is mapped to their curricula, and will quickly be able to ascertain the relevance of Jisc content to their teaching area and integrate it with their teaching materials and practices.

We hope that this project will highlight and encourage further use of open content, such as that in Jorum, Hairdressing Training, and EDINA's Jisc Mediahub, within FE colleges who struggle to procure content within limited budgets.

Mimas is a Centre of Excellence
based at The University of Manchester

Roscoe Building (5th Floor)
The University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9PL

+44 (0)161 275 6109

info@mimas.ac.uk

mimas.ac.uk

