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

Jisc Project

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 intial workshops are publicly available 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

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

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/