Raising the profile of Research Data Management: the UCA story

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Screenshot from presentation at KAPTUR project conference, 6 March 2013.

Background

The University for the Creative Arts (UCA) is a specialist creative arts institution with approximately 7,000 students spread across five sites in South East England including: Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham, Maidstone and Rochester. A range of subjects including architecture, art, communications, design, fashion, graphics and media are offered.

UCA, through the Visual Arts Data Service (VADS), based in Farnham, is continuing to lead in the area of sharing, preserving and managing digital assets in the creative arts. This is illustrated in the diagram below, which indicates UCA projects funded by JISC. This began in 2007 with the Kultur project, the purpose of which was to create a model institutional repository for research outputs in the creative arts. The Kultur project was led by the University of Southampton with UCA, University of the Arts London, (UAL), and VADS as partners. The Kultivate project led by UCA followed in 2010 and this project aimed to increase arts research deposit in the UK Higher Education sector. The eNova project began early in 2011, the purpose of which was '…to extend the functionality of the ePrints open source MePrints profile tool to ensure it meets the highly specialised requirements of researchers and others in the visual and creative arts (JISC, 2013).' During the last 18 months the KAPTUR project has investigated the management of research data in the arts and the building of a pilot repository to store this information.

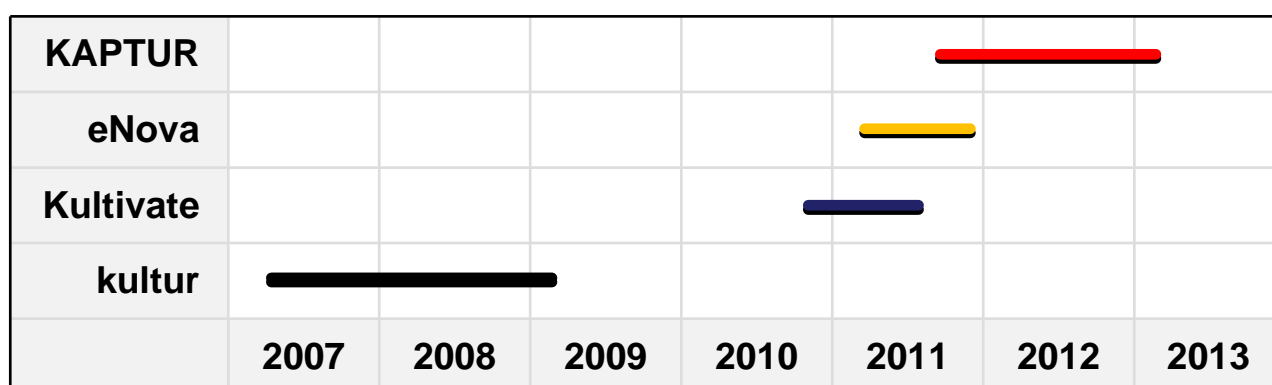| KAPTUR							
eNova							
Kultivate							
kultur							
	2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**

Fig. 1 UCA projects funded by JISC 2007-2013.

Involvement in these projects as Project Officer has provided further insight into the world of research and repositories. The greatest benefit and reward has been meeting and learning from others who are working on all aspects of repositories. The sense of a community has meant both support and knowledge from those with greater experience in the area of research.
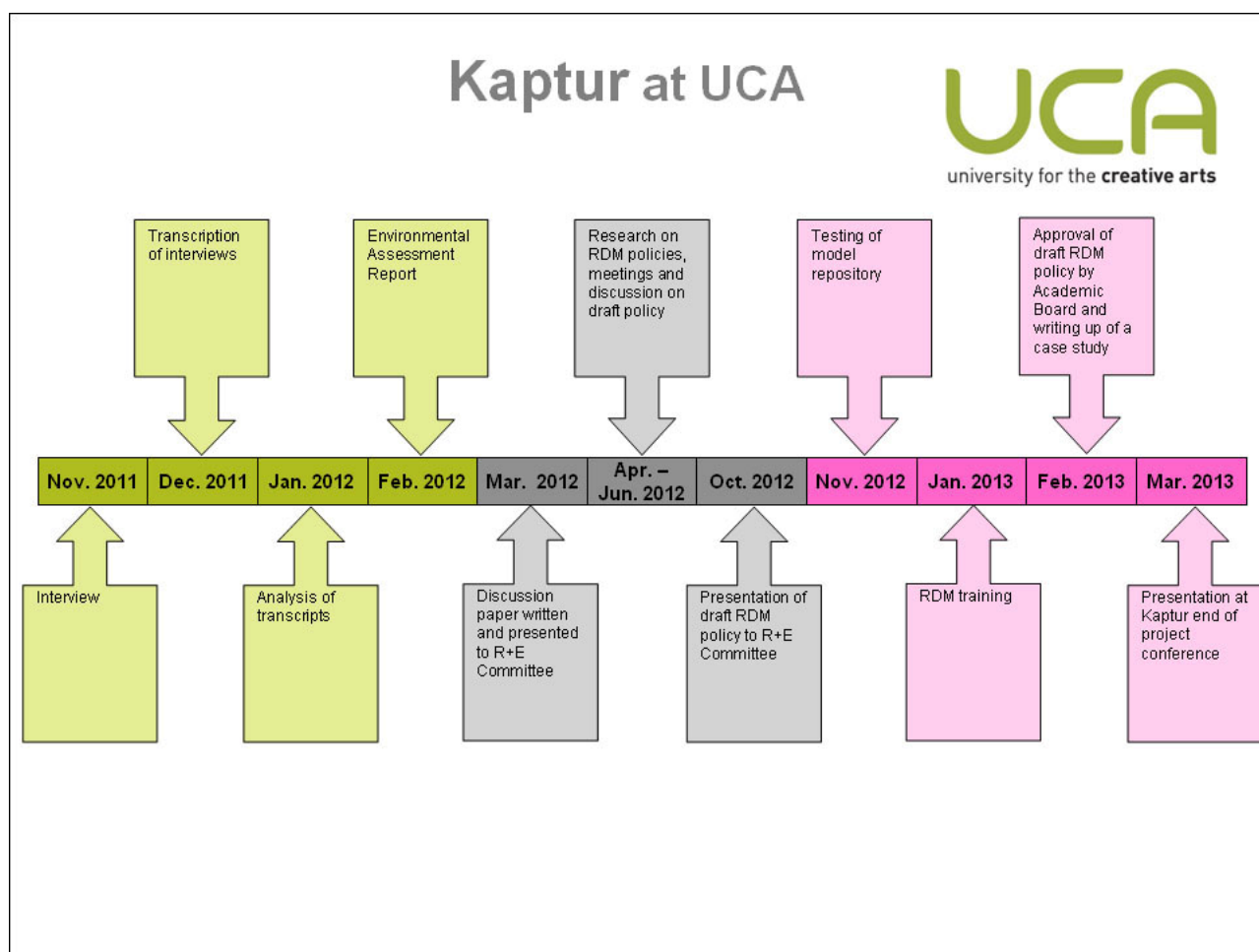
Fig. 2 KAPTUR at UCA: showing a timeline of key points in the project.

Expectations and challenges

At the start of this project little was known about Research Data Management (RDM) within the institution. This is borne out by a quote from Leigh Garrett, the KAPTUR Project Director and Principal Investigator:

> *"Very little is known about the curation and management of arts research data in universities, although evidence does point to the fact that it is handled on an ad hoc basis by individual researchers and teams."* (UCA, 2013)

The aim of the KAPTUR project is 'to investigate the current state of the management of research data in the arts; to develop a model of best practice applicable to both specialist arts institutions and arts departments in multidisciplinary institutions; and to apply, test and embed the model with four institutional partners (VADS, 2012).' The four partners are: Glasgow School of Art; Goldsmiths, University of London; University of the Arts London; and UCA.

It was clear early on that there were several challenges around the area of RDM. One of these challenges is terminology as illustrated by this quote from the Environmental Analysis Report:

> *"The term 'research data' was not considered helpful to the interviewees, however, the phrase 'documenting the research process in the visual arts' resonated with their work practices."* (KAPTUR, 2012)

Another challenge was trying to establish what already existed within the institution and who to involve in the various aspects of the project in order to meet the objectives. This challenge was made much easier by support from the four researchers who agreed to be interviewed, the

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Research Office, VADS, an individual from IT Services and also individuals from senior management from across the university.

RDM is an area which still needs more investigation and the wealth of tools and resources from the Digital Curation Centre (DCC) will prove useful to UCA in the future. Tailoring of these is likely to meet the needs of the creative and visual arts institutions. This statement is supported by an activity that the Project Officer took part in during a DCC Roadshow at Loughborough in 2012. The activity allowed participants to assess their Research Data Infrastructure (RDI), and on the basis of the Project Officer's responses, UCA is making steady progress. There is an awareness of the need to improve RDI and also to take stock of the current strengths and to improve other areas. This could be done by using the DCC Collaborative Assessment of Research Data Infrastructure and Objectives (CARDIO) toolkit.

Approach

Introduction
The approach from the start of the project was to work in collaboration with others, and attendance at a variety of training events and conferences has shown that this is an important aspect for other institutions. As part of the Project Officer's learning process, they have contributed blog posts to the project after these events.

Interviewing researchers was a very rewarding and interesting experience and provided a large percentage of the material for the Environmental Assessment Report. The purpose of this report was to assess the current situation regarding research data in the visual arts. The project team spent two days analysing the results from the interviews and this provided further insights into how individual researchers approach the management of their research data.

During the course of the project there have been three key achievements and these are: contributing to the KAPTUR Environmental Assessment Report; writing a discussion paper 'Towards a Research Data Management Policy for UCA'; and the creation of an RDM policy. From these key achievements, four areas have emerged: communication, dissemination, collaboration and an increased understanding of RDM.

Communication
In order to raise the profile and to inform staff generally about the project, there was an article in the news pages of the UCA website and a statement for internal viewing.

The first task was to email research staff to ask for four volunteers in the areas of fine art and analogue practice, digital and online practice, an art or cultural historian, and finally a designer. The four researchers were interviewed about six aspects of their research: the scope of visual arts research data or processes and materials; the role of the visual arts researcher; ownership and rights; collaboration and knowledge sharing; access for the longer term; and finally current institutional support.

The interviews were then transcribed and analysed to provide information for the Environmental Assessment Report, which drew from all sixteen interviews conducted across the four institutions. In January 2012, the Project Manager and Project Officers met to discuss and review material from the interviews and five key themes emerged: terminology; role of the visual arts researcher; creation of visual arts research data; use and re-use of visual arts research data; and visual arts research data in the longer term.

There have been four primary methods of communication both within the project team and internally and these were: email, telephone conversations, face-to-face meetings and reporting to committee structures. All these methods ensured that the project work progressed in an efficient and timely manner to meet the overall objectives of the project.

Dissemination
The first major step in engaging senior management in RDM was the production of a discussion paper on RDM, which was considered at the Research + Enterprise Committee meeting held in March 2012. There was an opportunity for staff to comment on the discussion paper, although no comments were received. A draft RDM policy was written after reviewing other RDM policies that were publicly available as well as consulting with the Director of Research. The RDM draft policy underwent several iterations and consultation with stakeholders before a final draft was submitted to the Research + Enterprise Committee in October 2012. The policy was passed by the Academic Board meeting on 27 February 2013.

An opportunity arose in May 2012 for the Project Officer to present a paper at the University's Staff Research Conference when reference was made to the KAPTUR project. Further internal dissemination of the project was achieved by producing an article, '"KAPTURing" your research data' which was published online through the internal newsletter, 'Between the Covers' for Library Services.

Dissemination is a key aspect of any project and a vital way in which to promote the research. This has taken place internally through the methods mentioned above. External dissemination has taken place during events and training that the Project Officer has attended. After these events, a blog post was written for the KAPTUR project and below is a list of events attended:

- Repositories Support Project, Autumn School, November 2011.

- 7th International Digital Curation Conference, December 2011.

- DCC Roadshow, Loughborough, February 2012.

- The 7th International Conference on Open Repositories, July 2012.

- JISC-British Library DataCite Workshop: Managing and citing sensitive data, October 2012.

Collaboration
Collaboration has been both an essential and integral part in working towards the completion of an RDM policy. An initial meeting with the Director of Research established that the university required an aspirational policy, which would provide an overall framework for the management of research data. In order for the UCA research community and other stakeholders to have an input into the policy document an RDM working group meeting was held on 18 June 2012 to discuss the draft RDM policy. Those in attendance at this meeting were the Director of Research, representatives from senior managers across the university, and IT Services.

Further work began on looking at other RDM policies already available through the DCC website. It became clear that the policies from the University of Edinburgh and the University of East London closely matched our own research ethos. The Project Officer then began to collect their own research data on RDM policies before writing an RDM policy for UCA, and this included looking at the university's own research governance policies. The draft policy went through several iterations and throughout this process the Project Officer sought and took advice from the Research Office, other KAPTUR Project Officers, the DCC, and the Project Manager and Project Director.

Developing relationships and increased understanding of Research Data Management
The development of relationships with both departments and individuals has assisted in an increased understanding of RDM. Key stakeholders including researchers, the Research Office, senior members of academic staff, individuals in the IT department and the engagement of librarians who support researchers have been involved in the process of increasing awareness of RDM.

One particular aspect of this has been the delivery of an introductory RDM training session to members of staff from the RO, IT Services, and the Library and Student Services Department. The training took place in January 2013 and consisted of two one hour sessions with the aim of explaining the importance of RDM, the drivers for producing an RDM policy, definitions of research data in the visual arts and the opportunity to create a data management plan. Figure 3 shows an example of research data collected during the training and this will be used to develop further training materials. Participants were asked three questions and to write their answers on post-it notes. The questions or instructions were:

- To write down one thing you know now (as a result of part one of the training) that you didn't know before

- What more would you like to know?

- What are you expecting from the second part of the training?

The feedback from this event was positive and informative with participants indicating that their knowledge of RDM had improved or improved considerably. One of the participants found the workshop was very interesting and helpful. The workshop enabled them to understand research data and research outputs within the visual arts. They also noted the complex nature of research data in this area and the value of the KAPTUR project. Those who came to the training also noted how they and or their departments had benefitted from attending. The responses ranged from understanding the term RDM and research data definitions for the visual arts to understanding research data in a broader context. Training is just the first step in another journey which will be to embed the policy into work practices and procedures.

Fig.3 Research data collected during RDM training in January 2013

Conclusions and Recommendations

KAPTUR has been a very interesting project to work on and involvement has shown that research in one area highlights that with every step there is more to learn and discover. Key to the success has been the willingness of stakeholders to engage with the project. Throughout the project communication, dissemination, collaboration, and the development of relationships have played a major part in ensuring that the objectives from the project were met.

The journey began with interviewing researchers about their work and has concluded with a presentation at the end of project conference. Along the way an RDM policy was drafted and approved, training delivered, testing of a model repository completed and awareness of RDM increased.

The Project Officer's personal recommendations and lessons learnt are:

- Be prepared for things to take longer than anticipated, so patience and enthusiasm are required.

- 'Keep calm and carry on'.

- Communicate with those who are going to be a part of RDM at the institution.

- Look at RDM within the context of the institution.

- Find time to read, research, and talk to those who have done this before.

- You are not alone.

- Don't be afraid to take the first step.

Key Points

- Communication - use all forms of communication, be clear about what you want to say and why it is important for the audience and do not be afraid to repeat the message.

- Dissemination - use opportunities to promote what you are doing to interested parties, for example, similar projects with JISC funding, and where appropriate, report to committee structures.

- Collaboration - this has been key both internally and externally with the project partners and the wider Kultur II and Kultivate group who have an interest in the visual arts.

- Developing relationships and training - the foundation on which to build ongoing best practice to ensure that RDM is embedded in the institution.

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