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The Game of Open Access - making UK mandates more memorable, a poster presented virtually at the Charleston Conference, November 2018

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Research Strategy @ UoH

The University of Huddersfield has a growing research community, in part due to an ambitious ten-year strategy which sets out the vision for the institution to be an inspiring, innovative university of international renown. The Vice Chancellor’s Office not only expects teaching excellence for its 19,000 students, but also wishes to increase the number of research active staff. To improve the quality of their outputs, we see a rise in the quantity and quality of the postgraduate-research community, as well as ensuring the quality and range of our external research, enterprise and innovation income.

Game based learning and user engagement

We began by developing some publicity in order to promote OA compliancy and help with the plethora of definitions. We also set up a LibGuides OA support with help on terminology processes and price (hudguides.com/openaccess) and it became apparent that our focus needed to shift to engagement.

How did we create the game?

Several of our librarians use game based learning for their information skills workshops. They decided to use this approach to engage our researchers. In Spring 2017 members of the Subject Team and the Scholarly Communications Team brainstormed a number of ideas for the game with 25 questions. Our in-house graphic designer created the visuals and we then tested the game until we were happy with its first official outing at the annual Computing and Library Services Showcase in July.

And it seems we are in good company, as games seem to be a very popular way of disseminating information and aiding understanding. The game has been played by researchers and librarians at library roadshows and in Open Access information sessions.

Future

Following on from the DART6 conference, some delegates played the game with researchers at their institutions with some very positive feedback and, most importantly, lots of discussions around Open Access mandates. At UoH we can now take on board the feedback given and alter some questions, add more scenarios and even adapt the gameplay with the potential for some ‘wildcards’.

A ‘special edition’ version for REF 31 could also be an option with the potential for an online version too.

Summary

The game has given library staff the opportunity to help researchers deepen their understanding of OA compliance and hopefully with the game, in addition to traditional support, library guides and addendums, we can lighten the stresses of their journey towards publication.