Targeted Provision: Supporting Researchers at the University of Huddersfield

Background

The Support for Researchers group was set up at the University of Huddersfield to consider ways in which Computing and Library Services (CLS) could better support the University's research community. The group has overseen a number of successful initiatives including targeted training sessions, creation of the Repository, development of dedicated Support for Research web pages, participation in the University Research Festival, EndNote training and support and an improved IT infrastructure for researchers.

Web pages

The new web pages (figure 1.) provide information on the in-depth help and support that is available from CLS for our research community. Content includes information on finding and managing information (including help and advice on using the university's preferred reference management software), detailed information on accessing and depositing in the University Repository, copyright and intellectual property rights and keeping up-to-date with developments in any chosen research area.
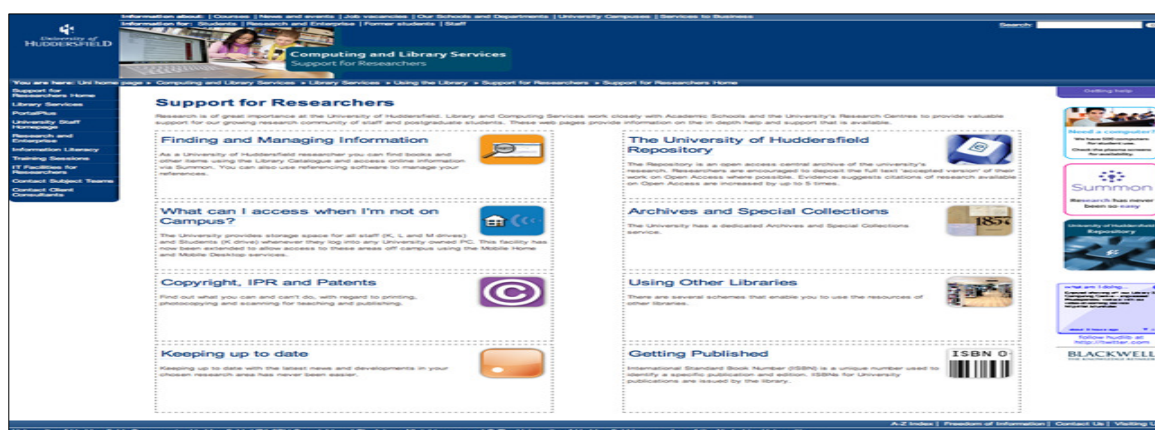
Figure 1. The Support for Researchers web pages.

Targeted training

Three half day training sessions targeted at researchers were organised. These initially ran once per term and were made up of:

- 1 hour advanced search methods
- 1 hour EndNote training
- 30 minutes current awareness training
- 30 minutes Inter-Library Loans and Copyright overview
- 15 minute Archives and Special Collections overview

 Feedback for these sessions was on the whole positive. Many researchers welcomed the opportunity to meet and develop working relationships with their relevant subject teams in the library. It was felt, however, that an hour for advanced search methods and EndNote was inadequate and separate sessions are now offered covering these areas. These are run in

conjunction with our staff development team who publicise the sessions and deal with the administrative side of things such as bookings and organising rooms.

Referencing software

As part of its remit, the group also looked at the range of reference management software available and an institutional subscription to EndNote was purchased. It was felt that EndNote had the most functionality, was easy to use and was already being used by some academic staff. Workshops on using and supporting EndNote were held for library staff who regularly came into contact with academics and researchers. Additionally, each of the subject teams has an 'EndNote Champion' to support and promote the use of the software within their respective academic departments.

Summon

Huddersfield was the first UK University to adopt the web-scale discovery tool – Summon. Summon enables cross searching of most of the e-resources we subscribe to and makes the research process simple and seamless for academics, researchers and undergraduates alike. Searches can also be performed to include items outside of our own collections making it a valuable one-stop-shop for research.

Subject team staff liaise with staff and researchers in their respective schools and arranged drop-in and 1-2-1 sessions to demonstrate Summon and promote use.

Initial comparisons of the usage of Summon compared to our previous system show a steady increase (figure 2). We are currently looking at full-text downloads from publishers which will be a key indicator of whether or not Summon is, as we hope, making it easier to locate articles.
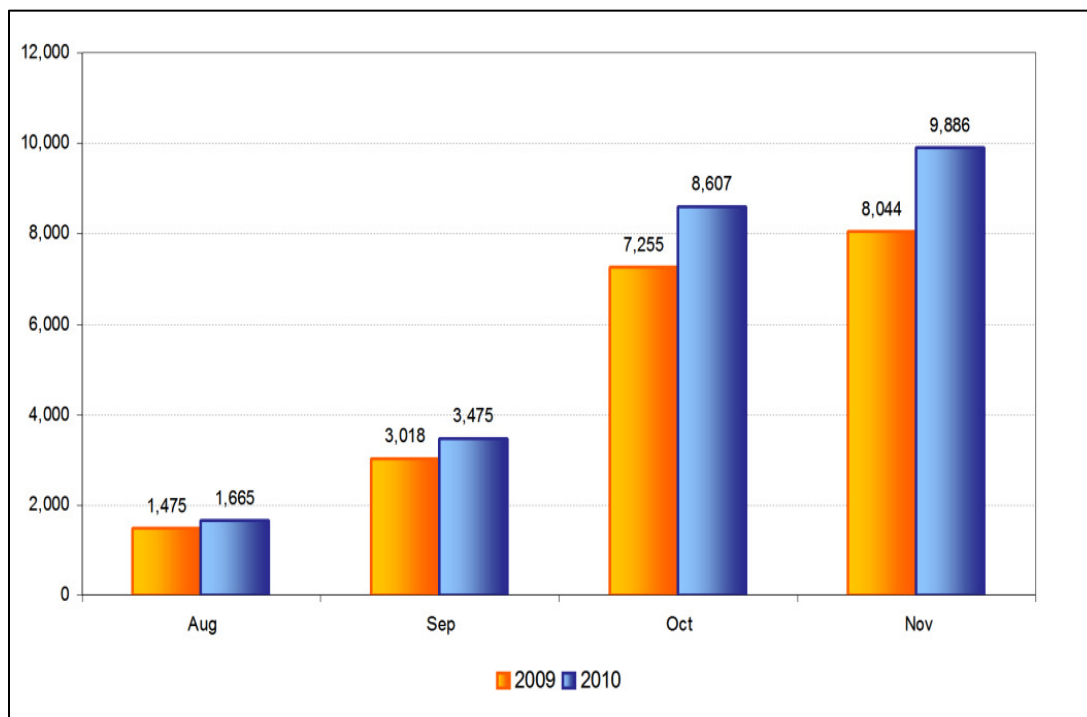

Figure 2. Usage of Summon compared with usage of our previous system.

The Repository

As the number of researchers at Huddersfield grew, it became apparent that we needed a solution to facilitate open access publishing of research. As a result, the University of Huddersfield Repository was founded in 2008. The intentions behind the Repository were to showcase Huddersfield research to the wider academic community, complement the existing publishing process and enable researchers to fulfil their duty to disseminate work widely as a condition of funding. Since its inception, [over 8,400] items have been added to the Repository. It now ranks as the 12th most popular university repository in the UK.
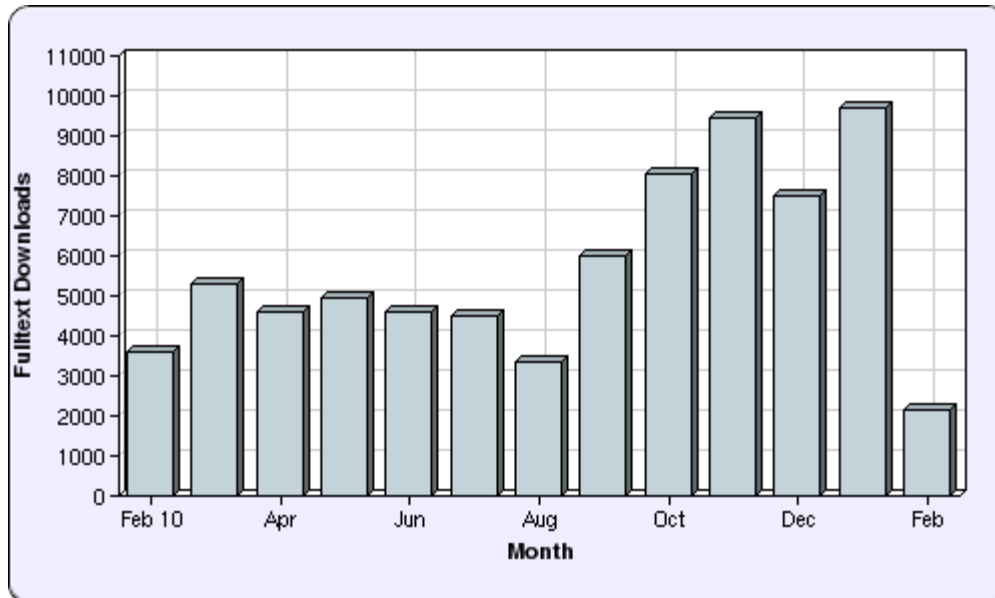

Figure 3. Full text downloads from the University of Huddersfield Repository February 2010 to February 2011.

As the bar chart shows (figure 3), usage peaked in [January 2011 at nearly 10,000 full text downloads.]

One of the aims of the Repository team is to find new ways to improve the visibility of the Repository. For instance Huddersfield PhD theses are now searchable in DART-Europe, a partnership of research libraries and consortia who are working to improve global access to European research theses. Also, Scopus citation data has recently been linked into the Repository.

Purchasing resources for research

Traditionally, the University of Huddersfield has focussed primarily on undergraduate teaching. As the number of researchers at the university has grown steadily in recent years, members of staff responsible for buying resources have had to rethink their purchasing accordingly. This has been reflected in changed buying habits for books and journals to provide for the needs of researchers and also in the purchase of subscriptions for specialist resources such as BioMed Central, an open access publisher of highly regarded peer reviewed journals.

The Research Festival

The Research Festival takes place each year in the Spring Term and is an opportunity for researchers to share ideas and showcase what they are working on. The Festival is led by the Research Office,

but Computing and Library Services is heavily involved with the planning and sees the Festival as a vital part of its support of research activity.

The Research Portal

The Research Portal provides a one-stop shop on or off campus to a range of web based resources and applications. Amongst other things, the Portal links to the Grant Finder, the Repository, the Support for Researchers web pages and the Business Mine, a service which supports Huddersfield students in setting up their own business.

IT provision for researchers

Researchers have a unique set of needs when it comes to IT. Two innovations we have implemented at Huddersfield to assist researchers are the Mobile Home service, which gives access to personal network storage when off campus and the enhanced Mobile Desktop service. The latter provides staff and research students with access to a range of resources including Microsoft Office, SPSS, EndNote and Nvivo. Mobile Home is a simple browser based service which students can use wherever they are without downloading any additional software, while Mobile Desktop uses Citrix software to provide access to applications.

25 Research Things

25 research things is an online programme for researchers which takes them through some of the major innovations in web technology which are changing the way people communicate with each other. Over ten weeks, participants cover topics such as blogging, social networks, Flickr, Mashups, RSS feeds, Technorati, tagging and wikis.

The Convivium

The Convivium was launched in 2009 as part of the refurbishment of the Computing and Library Centre. It is a dedicated space for research students to sit and think, discuss ideas, share experiences and relax. The area is designed to be flexible and researchers are encouraged to move furniture and use the space as they wish. The Convivium also provides a useful space for events aimed at providing support for researchers, usually run by the Research Office. Recent events of this type have include a workshop for part-time researchers and meetings for international research students to enable them to discuss life at the University of Huddersfield for researchers from overseas and provide feedback to improve the experience of future students.

The Future

At the time of writing, Computing and Library Services is being restructured and the Support for Researchers group has been re-launched with new terms of reference. It is anticipated that a new post will be created to take responsibility for supporting researchers. The new group will focus on improving the IT infrastructure, including High Performance Computing, grid computing and data storage and working towards greater interoperability of systems to support the REF in 2014. Further work will also be needed to embed the Repository in the day to day activities of researchers and to continue encouraging a culture of open access publishing.

Links

Support for Researchers web pages <http://www2.hud.ac.uk/cls/library/researchers/>
University of Huddersfield Repository <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/>