

VERSIONS Project informal update for October 2005

Introduction

This is the first in a series of informal updates on activity of the JISC-funded VERSIONS Project. It is intended for partners in the VERSIONS Project but also for other interested parties.

For those of you who may be hearing about the VERSIONS Project for the first time through this message, VERSIONS aims to clarify the needs of researchers and others for version identification of academic papers, particularly in the open access digital repository environment.

VERSIONS is a JISC-funded project led by LSE with Nereus (www.nereus4economics.info), the consortium of European research libraries specialising in economics, as associate partners. The project is part of the UK JISC's Digital Repositories Programme (http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=programme_digital_repositories). For more information, please see the project website.

Website

The VERSIONS Project website went live last month. Early next year, it will link to the online survey on versions.

www.lse.ac.uk/versions

Nereus meetings

At the Nereus Meetings at Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) on 10-11 October, the VERSIONS Project team had the opportunity to outline the project activities planned for the next few months and to seek feedback and support with some of the activities.

Following a brief presentation showing the website and the project plan document at the Operational Group meeting, the group reviewed the interview questions for the user requirements analysis and provided some valuable comments. A useful and constructive discussion also followed the progress report on the publications list analysis. Finally, members were invited to feedback on a paper on strategic alliances with stakeholders.

User requirements analysis

A first round of interviews has been completed. Six professors, three from ULB and three from Leuven, were interviewed about their practices, attitudes and needs in relation to open access resources and storage and self-archiving of their papers. The results were certainly instructive and revealing, and provided us with a still partial and yet interesting insight into researchers' positions and concerns about online accessibility of different versions of academic papers. The anonymised notes of the interviews will be distributed to Nereus members in due course. We look forward to the next interviews with researchers in Vienna, Maastricht, Kiel and at LSE. We will then be able to

carry out an inter-country comparative analysis of self-archiving and information seeking behaviour among academics.

Publications list analysis

The project team has started working on the data so far provided by Rotterdam, ULB and LSE. The exercise is intended to provide a detailed quantification of availability of author copies among the 50 plus Economists Online researchers. We hope to uncover inter-country and date of publication differences and make comparisons by cross-tabulating against the SHERPA/RoMEO (<http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php>) status list.

Dissemination

In October we had our first opportunity to present the VERSIONS Project at a public event. At the CERN Workshop on Innovations in Scholarly Communication (OAI4) (<http://indico.cern.ch/conferenceDisplay.py?confId=0514>) held in Geneva, 20-22 Oct 2005, Frances Shipsey gave a presentation on 'Versions in the lifecycle of academic papers – user requirements and guidelines for digital repositories'. Slides are available at: <http://indico.cern.ch/contributionDisplay.py?contribId=51&sessionId=3&confId=0514>