Preparing for CRIS: Challenges and Opportunities for Systems Integration at Finnish Universities

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ABSTRACT

This poster presents issues identified on the attempt to integrate administrative research information with institutional repository (IR) and other systems. The observations are based on preparing for procurement of a Current Research Information System (CRIS) at the University of Jyväskylä. The CRIS will be used by various stakeholders in different organizational units, having conflicting requirements and different notions on system usage (e.g. national publication reporting, project management, researcher CVs). Determining the optimal data flow for handling publications, organizations, or financial information in different systems needs architectural consideration.

While it would be preferable to integrate CRIS and IR to a single system, there are issues with user interface, recording conventions, and selecting the data that is included that may make the task impractical. However, both systems will benefit from synchronization of datasets and separation of responsibilities. Even without a national publication registry, Finnish universities would benefit on services that assist on federated handling of publication data (e.g. publication forum class calculation, determining collaborative publications, transformations for data import/export). The overall publication reporting process is problematic in its current form and needs revisions at the national level.

National context

Since 2011, the focus in national publication reporting has shifted from summary statistics to full publication metadata and ranked publication channels (+Publication forum). This has resulted to complex classification rules (e.g. determining whether an edited book is a "report" or "scientific book", ambiguous restrictions with conference articles, omission of research contributions in non-traditional publication channels). The publication reporting process as a whole is problematic because of its distributed and often conflicting goals (e.g. to adopt a national publication registry was abandoned, one-way nature for collaborative publications, multiple universities and up reporting the same data that is checked, combined, and possibly sent back to original universities in case of conflicts. After the data is reviewed and assigned a rank, erroneous data can no longer be corrected. Finnish universities would benefit on services that assist on federated handling of publication data, utilizing national service bus for basic infrastructure.

CRIS development efforts at the JYU

The University of Jyväskylä has been using an in-house developed research information system TUTKA since 2003. The system has been under continuous small-scale development. Due to increased internal (esp. research project management) and external (i.e. national publication reporting) requirements, usability problems, obsolete basic components, and the need for new integrations (e.g. WoS/Scopus import), the university has decided about CRIS renewal project with commercial system as the primary option:

- Spring 2013: TUTKA group² outlined the scope (publications, projects with additional funding, international mobility, essential scientific prizes) and primary requirements and for the new system.
- Fall 2013: Evaluation of different implementation options, sketching the architecture.
- Spring 2014: JYU Library started centralized recording of publications. The goal is to ease researchers activities and to promote parallel publishing to JYX. This same principle (centrally recorded, validated data) will be applied with the new CRIS and extended to other types of entities as well.
- Now: preparation for tendering detailed requirements, processes, and data model.
- Fall 2014 (expected): tendering process, cleaning up data from the legacy system.
- 2015 (expected): Legacy data transfer, incremental adoption of the new CRIS.

Highlights from the preliminary evaluation of different implementation options for the new CRIS (including potential re-engineering of the legacy system TUTKA).

The evaluation was carried out in fall 2013 and included DSpace-CRIS 3.2.0 beta, Pure 4.16, and Cov続けての5.1.

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Planned integrations (subject to change) for the future CRIS. Yellow boxes denote components or systems external to JYU, blue boxes are developed or otherwise managed externally (TAA is used collaboratively by multiple Finnish universities). Solid line denote automated data transfers, dotted lines depict optional or manual integrations.

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