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In Praise of Repositories and Open Access: Editorial

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Editorial – In praise of repositories and open access

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This issue of IJASS marks the first open access electronic publication of the journal, at http://arrow.dit.ie/ijass/

The recent development of institutional research repositories in Ireland (for example, 'Arrow' at DIT, 'Tara' at TCD, 'Lenus: the Irish health repository' at the HSE) has enabled open access to the publications, reports and other outputs of staff in these institutions. What's more, these repositories do not stand in isolation. Software has been developed to automatically 'harvest' publications of interest from across a number of repositories. In Ireland, 'researchscope.net' has been developed at the library at WIT. This browser searches all the institutional repositories in Ireland, according to the researcher's search terms. For example, the search term 'families' resulted in 416 documents recently. This number will increase as items are added to repositories, a process that will accelerate if institutions follow DITs lead and mandate staff to submit work to repositories. A similar initiative of the seven members of the Irish University Association (RIAN: The National Research Portal) will launch in 2010.

In addition, repositories provide a platform for the publication of scholarly journals. For example, the entire archive of the Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland (from 1847 to the present day) is available at tara.tcd.ie. This makes current research and archives more accessible than ever before.

IJASS will be hosted on DITs Arrow repository using a platform developed by Berkley Electronic Press and managed by DIT library staff. In addition to posting on-line current and past issues of a journal, the facility allows librarians and journal editors to operate an electronic manuscript submission and review process. This facility is routinely available for journals published by the large publishing companies such as Elsevier, Taylor and Francis, Sage etc. However, in the case of Berkley Electronic Press, it is part of the service offered to institutes on the payment of the subscription. In short, the structure and the associated support service is 'part of the package' and involve no fee on the part of the journal.

All the issues of IJASS, back to Vol. 1 (1998), are now available and searchable at http://arrow.dit.ie/ijass/. For the future, manuscripts will be submitted and reviewed via this website, facilitating prompt responses to authors and creating a central file storage facility for reviewers and editors. Of course, IJASS will continue to subject manuscripts to blind review

by at least two reviewers in order to ensure the highest scholarly standards. In addition to on-line publication, it is intended to continue to print hard copies of each issue for libraries, professional organizations and subscription holders.

Kevin Lalor,
Editor.