Enhancing value through interoperability: IRUS-UK and CORE

Focus
This case study focusses on the collaboration between IRUS-UK and CORE. It highlights the benefits of data sharing supported by Jisc products including:

- Providing a clearer picture of usage allowing repository managers to view combined CORE and IRUS-UK usage statistics and understand what proportion of usage is through CORE and what proportion of usage is via native repositories.
- Providing a trusted source of COUNTER conformant standards-based, consistent and reliable usage data.
- Demonstrating increased exposure and usage of institutional repository content that is harvested by CORE.

Introduction
IRUS-UK is a standards-based statistics aggregation service, enabling UK universities to share and compare information about usage of items in their institutional repositories. Conforming to the COUNTER standard, statistics are consistent and comparable to enable benchmarking of repository usage at a national level. The standards-based approach that IRUS-UK pioneered is easily replicable and has been adopted more broadly. As such, IRUS-UK is now part of a family of services that include instances for CORE, OpenAIRE, University of Amsterdam and OAPEN, in addition to pilot services in Australia, New Zealand and the US.

The IRUS-UK and CORE collaboration
CORE is an aggregation of open access content from UK and worldwide repositories and open access journals. It provides a range of services including discovery, analytics, and text mining access which are used by repository managers and others.

CORE required a means of consistently and accurately demonstrating the usage of institutional repository content harvested by and downloaded from, CORE. Through working with IRUS-UK, CORE was able to ensure consistent and standards-based usage statistics were available to repository managers. This has been made possible by IRUS-UK providing COUNTER conformant usage statistics for all content downloaded from participating UK institutional repositories.

Benefits
The collaboration demonstrates the benefits of data sharing supported by Jisc products. Benefits include:

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Providing a clearer picture of usage.

Repository managers can view combined CORE and IRUS-UK usage statistics at a repository level in both IRUS-UK and in the CORE dashboard. They can also identify where usage has been recorded through native repositories, and where usage has been recorded through CORE.

In addition IRUS-UK provides the enhanced functionality to display CORE and IRUS-UK usage statistics at an individual item level.

Repository managers can easily understand what proportion of usage is through CORE and what proportion of usage is via native repositories.

A CORE team member stated:

"Repository managers are now in a position to view not only the repository’s statistics via IRUS, but also statistics on the number of full text downloads from CORE per institution. That way, we can offer a better understanding to repository managers of the usage of their collections."

Comments from IRUS-UK users include:

"it is very interesting to see the respective proportions of downloads of ‘our’ content that occur directly vs via CORE…. I think this could be a valuable tool for us in the future."

Alan Stiles, Open University, ORO: Open University Research Online

"The presentation of CORE download statistics alongside those captured directly from our repository by IRUS-UK is helping us to present a more complete picture of the value that others are getting from the open access research we hold within our repository - a very useful enhancement."

Chris Awre, Head of Information Services, University of Hull

Providing a trusted source of standards based data.

Repository managers can be assured that the COUNTER conformant usage statistics are standards based and reliable. This was a benefit that the CORE team were keen to emphasise:

"We can say we have X number of downloads per annum and we can evidence by showing that it is not something we invented - it is measured by a third party and measured using COUNTER conformant statistics so there are standards."

Increasing exposure and usage of institutional repository content.

The ability to identify usage through CORE, suggests that repository managers who make their institutional repository content available for harvesting by CORE may result in the content being used more. The CORE team are keen to provide evidence that this is the case:

"….in future we would like to be able to say ‘because your repository is aggregated by CORE you are getting 10% extra hits’"

Comments from IRUS-UK users include:

"I love the consolidated stats – immediately showing how repositories are designed to be harvested and that we have about 10% of usage via CORE…..I like the fact we have some items also consolidated across several repositories"

Jackie Proven (University of St Andrews Library)

"Helps make the case for adding the CORE recommender (on our to do list) – CORE stats would go up if more repositories were ‘recommending’ content."

Comments from IRUS-UK users include:

"Providing a trusted source of standards based data."
How are the combined statistics presented?

Via IRUS-UK

In IRUS-UK the combined statistics are presented at a repository level and at an individual item level as illustrated in the two examples below:

Combined CORE and IRUS-UK usage statistics at a repository level

- In IRUS-UK a new consolidated usage report (RR2) has been developed. RR2 enables users to view the number of successful item downloads by month for all participating UK repositories, including usage for corresponding items.
Via IRUS-UK

**CORE and IRUS-UK usage statistics at an individual item level**

- In IRUS-UK users can view the combined usage for a particular item regardless of where the item is hosted via the individual item statistics page. (This refers to usage for items included within IRUS-UK and CORE). IRUS-UK provides a breakdown of the usage recorded by individual repositories through IRUS-UK as well as usage recorded by each individual repository that CORE has harvested the item from. It also provides an overall total figure for usage of an individual item.
Via the CORE dashboard

In the CORE Dashboard, repository managers can view the usage from IRUS-UK and the usage through CORE. In addition, they are provided with a figure showing the percentage of overall usage of which the CORE usage comprises.

![CORE Dashboard Usage Statistics](image)

*IRUS should go global – that would be really useful. The user is not as interested in knowing how many times an article was downloaded from a single repository - the user is more interested in understanding how many times the article was downloaded totally from anywhere in the world.*

If the use and sharing of standardised usage statistics was extended internationally more benefits could be accrued. IRUS already partners with services such as OpenAIRE ([https://www.openaire.eu/](https://www.openaire.eu/)) - a European Commission funded project with the general remit to implement EC open access policies and mandates, have also helped to demonstrate the value of an international approach. If standards for usage statistics are adopted globally, it will provide more opportunities to share data and make comparisons and realising the considerable benefits of doing so.

Future developments

The current CORE IRUS-UK collaboration is focussed on items held in participating IRUS-UK repositories. It points to what may be possible on a wider scale in the future. As one CORE Team member stated:

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