International collaboration and value: working with OAPEN

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.

IRUS–UK collaboration with OAPEN

The OAPEN Foundation (http://www.oapen.org/home) is a not-for-profit organisation based in the Netherlands and has its registered office at the National Library in The Hague. OAPEN is dedicated to open access, peer-reviewed books and operates two platforms, the OAPEN Library (www.oapen.org), a central repository for hosting and disseminating OA books, and the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB, www.doabooks.org), a discovery service for OA books. OAPEN works with publishers to build a quality-controlled collection of open access books, and provide services for publishers, libraries and research funders in the areas of dissemination, quality assurance and digital preservation.

OAPEN’s goals are:

- to build a branded collection of open access peer-reviewed titles
- to increase the visibility and retrievability of high-quality publications
- to promote open access book publishing

OAPEN’s requirements

The initial drive for the collaboration is explained by Ronald Snijder, Technical Coordinator at OAPEN as follows:

Focus

This case study focusses on the collaboration between IRUS-UK and OAPEN. It highlights how:

- OAPEN uses the IRUS service to report usage data back to its members
- Through IRUS OAPEN has data that is COUNTER conformant, reliable and filtered for robots and rogue usage
- For funders and publishers whose books are available in OAPEN, it allows robust reporting, including reporting of usage at an individual author level as well as reporting on all items that a particular member has funded
- KU Research a partner of OAPEN with a remit for research has been able to use the IRUS data to understand more about patterns of usage of Open Access ebooks.
Our interest in working with IRUS was that we needed a partner to create COUNTER conformant usage data, and we were looking for a solution that enabled us to report usage to our members - funders and publishers. We had a reporting tool but it was not very scalable and we were not sure that the bots were filtered out, so we were looking for a solution to that and we found IRUS.

How IRUS-UK collaborates with OAPEN

IRUS-UK began collaborating with OAPEN in 2013. OAPEN uses the IRUS-UK service to report usage data back to its members. OAPEN provides IRUS-UK with raw usage data for items in the OAPEN Library using the IRUS Tracker protocol and IRUS-UK converts it into COUNTER conformant statistics and produces BR1 and BR2 reports and variants which OAPEN provides for its partners.

Using the IRUS data, OAPEN provides highlight reports to its members as well as extended reports with specific elements. This means that should a publisher or funder want to provide an individual author a report on the usage of a book they have written they are able to do so. As a result, OAPEN can confidently provide valuable reports back to its members:

We use the data to report back to our members which are funders and publishers telling them you have put in this number of publications on our site and this is the usage that we can tell you about and it has been filtered for inappropriate use.

Examples of how the IRUS data is shared and used publicly includes:

**Tweets about geographical usage:**

**Announcing the achievement of usage milestones:**

**Sharing information on the most downloaded titles:**
Providing information for the OAPEN Annual Report:

In addition to the provision of usage statistics to OAPEN, KU Research, a partner of OAPEN with a remit for research, has been able to use the IRUS-UK data to understand more about patterns of usage of Open Access ebooks, including whether being available on an Open Access basis affects who reads ebooks and how they engage with them.

Drawing on IRUS-UK data, KU Research has also been working with UCL Press to develop usage dashboards. This includes information about geographic usage patterns as the following examples illustrate:

Benefits of the collaboration for OAPEN and related partners

A key benefit is that the data is COUNTER conformant, reliable and filtered for robots and rogue usage:

The main benefit to us for having IRUS is so we can offer standard reporting

IRUS-UK enabled OAPEN to do something it could not with limited resources:

It's nice to have someone who does all the work to create COUNTER conformant data, we do not have resources to do this kind of filtering ourselves, we are a small organisation so happy to outsource this complicated reporting

The experience has been a positive one as Ronald Snijder, Technical Coordinator at OAPEN comments:

I am very happy working with IRUS-UK. We have been able to put several systems together and the provision of usage statistics works seamlessly

For funders and publishers whose books are available in OAPEN, it allows robust reporting, including reporting of usage at an individual author level as well as reporting on all items that a particular
member has funded. Examples of research funders who get access to their usage data include: Wellcome; FWF (Austrian Science Fund); SNSF (Swiss National Science Foundation); and ERC (European Research Council).

For KU Research the value to research was clear. Lucy Montgomery, a representative of KU Research stated:

"We are big fans of IRUS-UK because we like the consistency of data IRUS-UK produces. It becomes very apparent when you dig into the back ends of a lot of platforms and repositories that there is very little consistency in how data is being collected, being cleaned and reported. Because we have done work digging around and finding out what workflows are relating to data among different repositories and platforms we are more aware that the IRUS-UK process is useful as it solves a lot of problems that individual platforms are struggling with. When we can get it, we like having clean, consistent data."

Future developments

In addition, further developments are underway including work in progress to put a SUSHI API over the IRUS based OAPEN data so that Knowledge Unlatched – a partner in OAPEN, can harvest statistics from OAPEN and their research arm, KU Research, can perform their own bespoke analysis of the data. Such activity includes a geolocation analysis of open access ebook usage as well as looking at overall trends in open access resource usage. This demonstrates there is developing demand from beyond the main OAPEN collaboration to work with IRUS-UK statistics.

The consistent data that IRUS-UK contributes to producing was considered valuable for further future uses by KU Research:

"The data has so much value including for downstream applications. That is the stuff of dreams, we love it. What IRUS-UK is doing means we can develop lots of downstream uses just because the data is consistent. We would like to see IRUS-UK offering more services to organisations beyond the UK."

Summary

The IRUS-UK/OAPEN collaboration is an example of how IRUS-UK works with non-core UK institutional repository members, in non-traditional ways in an international capacity and how it works with an individual service rather than an aggregational one. It is also an example of the use of the Tracker protocol outside the UK and how COUNTER conformant statistics for ebooks is supported.