INTRODUCTION

The libraries of the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York have been an effective and innovative partnership for over ten years. 2015 saw the start of a new phase in the White Rose Libraries collaboration, building on those strong foundations with the appointment of dedicated staff. The new White Rose Libraries Office has spent much of 2015 consolidating the partnership’s existing strengths, whilst laying the foundations for a number of major new initiatives that we expect to bear fruit in the coming months and years.

The heart of the collaboration has always been the jointly-run institutional repositories, and we saw the excellent work in this area continue with an improved and streamlined governance structure, a new three-year roadmap, and a dedicated programme of work to ensure the repositories are fit for purpose and ready for HEFCE policy requirements from April 2016.

Alongside the repositories we have built on the existing networks and relationships between personnel across the consortium to leverage the breadth of experience of library staff, supporting a range of knowledge-sharing events to build a community of practice across a variety of specialist areas - including digital literacy, copyright, research data management, open access, and customer services.

We’ve worked on a number of new collaborative projects, designed to improve efficiencies and take advantage of economies of scale, including a mutually supportive learning set for managers; a programme of research data training sessions for White Rose doctoral centres; a jointly-run Erasmus scheme for visiting librarians; a research project on customer service experience; and a new mutual agreement on disaster support. This work is helping us to identify solid areas for deeper collaborative working, and we’re now beginning to develop significant activity around collection management.

Finally, the libraries have worked throughout 2015 to build institutional support for, and then create the infrastructure around, the new White Rose University Press initiative. The Press - the UK’s first jointly-managed digital open access press - opened for submissions in January 2016 and has already been receiving considerable interest from academics, librarians, and open access advocates, putting the three libraries firmly in the vanguard of changes to scholarly publishing. We are currently working on the first tranche of publications to launch before the end of 2016.

The White Rose Libraries partnership is one of the UK’s most innovative, forward-thinking, and agile library collaborations, and this report reflects the breadth and depth of that cooperation throughout 2015.

MICHAEL FAKE
WHITE ROSE LIBRARIES EXECUTIVE MANAGER
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

#01 ENHANCING REPOSITORY SERVICES

i Development of a three year roadmap to ensure the repositories are fit for purpose within the Universities’ research infrastructure

2,540,000 WRRO & WREO downloads

ii Introduction of new governance and reporting structures, to provide greater direction and oversight of repository development work

9,000 deposits

iii Ongoing work to ensure compliance with HEFCE policies on open access - on target for 1st April

41 functional developments completed

#02 BUILDING A DIGITAL PRESS

i Launch of high-profile, major project to establish a jointly-run open access digital press, engaging a variety of stakeholders across the three Universities

ii Partnership Agreement between the Universities, and contracts with external supplier Ubiquity Press, signed in November 2015

iii White Rose University Press opened for submissions in January 2016

#03 NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

i New Erasmus scheme run jointly between York and Sheffield

2 participants

ii Pilot action-learning-set programme for managers, beginning January 2016

6 participants
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

SHARING KNOWLEDGE, CHANGING PERSPECTIVES

i Range of knowledge-exchange events for teams across the three libraries, including marketing, special collections, copyright, skills and teaching, and open access

136 staff have been involved in one or more White Rose event

ii Staff workshop for middle managers across the consortium in December 2015

iii Collaborative research through Mystery Shopper project

POOLING RESOURCES, POWERING INNOVATION

i Development of joint skills and training materials around bibliographic management

ii Pilot jointly-run RDM training session for arts and humanities students, foundation of a programme of White Rose RDM sessions in 2016

iii Signing of Mutual Support Agreement, affirming commitment to support partners in the event of a major disaster

iv Initial work on the development of a White Rose Libraries collection management strategy, for shared print management of low-use materials