Towards a UK Research Data Discovery Service

Aim
EPSRC, a major UK funder, expects the research organisations it funds to maintain a research data catalogue. Many universities are setting up data repositories in response, but will people go to them to look for data to reuse?

The UK Research Data Discovery Service will enable the discovery of UK research data, no matter where it is held. It is being developed in two phases.

Phase 1: 2013–2014

- We developed a proof-of-concept discovery service, building on the ORCA software developed by ANDS for Research Data Australia.
- We tested it with data records from 9 subject-based data centres and 9 university data repositories, all from within the UK.
- This involved writing crosswalks from 6 different metadata standards into RIF-CS, the metadata profile used by the ORCA software.
- Harvesting was achieved either by uploading XML from a URL or by copying XML directly into the system.


- Gather requirements and key use cases from potential contributors, end users, Jisc customers and other stakeholders.
- Evaluate the suitability of various software solutions: ORCA, CKAN, others?
- Agree on the metadata that will be collected, how it will be used, and the protocols for harvesting.
- Test and refine the harvesting processes and end-user experience.
- Develop a business case, including evidence-based market research and cost–benefit analysis.
- Develop full guidance on how to use, contribute to and maintain the service.

Questions:
- Could we provide localised views for institutions to use as a data catalogue?
- Could we enhance our data records with information pulled from other registries?
- What other systems might want machine-access to the UK RDDS?

More information can be found on the project blog: http://rdds.jiscinvolve.org/wp/