



# UKCoRR Membership Survey 2011

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Evaluating Membership Priorities

Gareth J Johnson, Chair UKCoRR

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# UKCoRR Membership Survey

Gareth J Johnson, UKCoRR Chair, September 2011

This report covers the results of the 2011, and inaugural, UKCoRR membership survey which took place in June 2011. The purpose of the survey was to gain the viewpoint of the current membership on various past UKCoRR activities as well as reviewing prospective future ones. The goal of the survey was to provide an evidence base on which the Committee could formulate a strategic and operational plan of activity for 2012.

The questions asked were set in informal discussion by the UKCoRR Committee, and the survey as a whole administered and analysed by the Chair. The survey was distributed via the UKCoRR mailing list, and promoted via various social media channels. The survey questions themselves are given at the end of this report (Appendix B).

## 1. Survey Sample

### 1.1. Region of Respondents

In total 75 respondents participated in the survey (30% of Current membership<sup>i</sup>). In contrast to other membership surveys the author has been involved in, this represents an above average level of response. As such, the results of this survey while not definitive can be considered broadly representative of the organisation

Table 1: Respondents by Home Region

	Total Membership	Survey Respondents	Representation of Region in Survey
England	216	63	29%
Northern Ireland	2	1	50%
Scotland	23	9	39%
Wales	7	1	14%

For the purposes of this table the address of the organisation where the individual works has been used to calculate the total membership figure. Note, one respondent identified as *National*. Appendix A has a list of those members whom chose to indicate their organisation. From conversations with the RSP and other managers in the sector, it is estimated that these figures are relatively representative of the viable membership of UKCoRR across the country.

### 1.2. Department Base of Respondents

Table 2: Departmental Base of Respondent

	Percentage of total
Library	89%
Central Administration	1%
IT Services	1%
Research Support	1%
Graduate Office	0%
Other	7%

As might be expected the majority of those participating in the survey are based in the library, which may to a degree shape the issues, procedures and politics that are encountered on a daily basis by UKCoRR members.

The 5 respondents whom indicated *Other* specified their departmental base as follows:

- eScience
- Library, but funded by Research
- Not based in an institution
- Research department
- RSP

## 2. UKCoRR Activities

The first key question was to gauge the focus of UKCoRR's activities. To date the main visible activities of UKCoRR by the membership have been the organisation of a yearly workshop, maintaining the closed discussion list. However, UKCoRR is called upon for opinions and consulted by other bodies (the JISC, projects, consultants) seeking an insight into the repository workers world, this might not be as evident to the membership.

For this question respondents could choose as many of the options as they wished, and as such the percentage represents each option's popularity.

Table 3: Key UKCoRR Activities

	Percentage of Respondents
Facilitating exchange of best repository practice	96%
Lobbying scholarly publishing sector stakeholders (e.g. publishers, CRIS providers, senior institutional managers)	83%
Advocacy/representation of repository worker community's interests	80%
Publication of briefing papers or position statements	41%
Conducting research into activities across the sector	41%
Seeking funding for more formal activities and development	17%
Membership recruitment	13%
Other (please specify)	4%
Skipped question	1%

From this response it seems the arrangement of experience sharing activities, facilitation of the discussion list and other communication channels is overwhelmingly where the membership believes UKCoRR should continue to focus. Also strongly supported is the advocacy and lobbying role on behalf of the membership, and efforts to effect change within the scholarly publishing sector of benefit to those working with repositories.

There were limited, but reasonable, levels of support for the publication of best practice, position statements and further practitioner based research. Very limited support was seen for endeavours to fund more activities than are currently in place or recruitment of more members.

The other suggestions that were made were:

- Career progression for repository workers
- Lobbying software providers (dspace/fedora/eprints) and influencing development roadmaps
- Partnership working with others in the field

The last of these in particular, seems to support the area of concern for the next question – liaison with other organisations.

### 3. UKCoRR Organisational Liaison

While UKCoRR is reasonably well known within repository circles, its impact beyond these, even to staff within the libraries within which repository services are based, is questionable at best. As part of its anticipated role to represent the interests of the repository community further there is a seeming need for UKCoRR to raise its profile outside of the repository community. Efforts to upgrade the virtual presence are underway by the Committee, but in the meantime organisations and stakeholders exist to whom advances and overtures can be made – but prioritising these was an issue the Committee wished to clarify.

For this question respondents once again could choose as many of the options as they wished, and as such the percentage represents each option’s popularity.

**Table 4: Organisations and Liaison**

	Percentage of Respondents
RSP (Repositories Support Project)	95%
The JISC	79%
Research Funding Bodies (RCUK, Wellcome etc)	77%
Software vendors (repository e.g. EPrints, DuraSpace)	73%
SCONUL (Society of College, National and University Libraries)	67%
ARMA (Association for Research Managers and Administrators)	64%
CILIP (Chartered Institute of Information Professionals)	64%
ALPSP (Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers)	57%
Specific "Big" Publishers (e.g. Elsevier, Springer etc)	52%
Software vendors (research management systems/CRIS, e.g. Aтира, Symplectic)	49%
STM Association (International Association of Scientific, Technical & Medical Publishers )	40%
Other	9%
Skipped question	1%

The strong response to this question underscores the importance that the membership puts in the corporate representation and advocacy of their interests by the UKCoRR Committee.

Unsurprisingly two of the strongest links UKCoRR currently enjoys (The JISC, RSP) were highly rated as important by the membership. From the remaining options most of the other organisations were considered to be important ones to explore liaison activities with in the coming year. Publishers and their associations were further down the list, hovering around 50% importance indicating a more moderate interest from the membership in liaising with them.

The other suggestions received were:

- All of the above - if appropriate to repository development
- Also relevant Government agencies/bodies in the education sector
- ALT
- DAOJ and PLoS too

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- Publishers in general - I wouldn't want to single out an individual publisher or organisation over the others
- SPARC (2)

## 4. UKCoRR Communication Routes

UKCoRR was set up around a JISMAIL email distribution list, but today other communication options exist. Some of these are used by the Committee as additional routes to communicate with the membership. Likewise there are other social networking tools that are not currently employed. To evaluate which ones members would gain most benefit from the question was posed as to which ones to exploit<sup>ii</sup>.

For this question respondents once again could choose as many of the options as they wished, and as such the percentage represents each option's popularity.

**Table 5: Communication Routes**

	Percentage of Respondents
Mailing list (UKCORR-DISCUSSION)	95%
Blog (UKCoRR@blogspot)	37%
Electronic Newsletter <sup>iii</sup>	32%
Twitter (UKCoRR@Twitter)*	27%
FaceBook*	5%
LinkedIn**	3%
Other	1%
Skipped question	1%
Second Life**	0%

Items marked \*\* are not currently employed by UKCoRR for communication  
 Items marked \* are currently employed sporadically by UKCoRR for communication

Strong support was seen for the mainstream of communication to continue to be the UKCORR-DISCUSSION@JISMAIL distribution list. There was also a pleasing if not overwhelming number of people noting the blog and electronic newsletter<sup>iv</sup> as valuable additional routes. The UKCoRR twitter feed, a relatively new innovation for the organisation, has some supporters within the membership but clearly not as a primary route for sharing news and experience. Other social networking platforms had very little traction on the whole.

One additional comment was received on this section:

- I find multi-stranded communications a complete pain to keep up with; diffuses the message.

## 5. UKCoRR Meetings and Events

### 5.1. Meeting Programme

While UKCoRR has in the past offered an annual/biannual workshop, the Committee was interested to see that in the view of the membership that this was sufficient. For this question respondents once again could choose as many of the options as they wished, and as such the percentage represents each option's popularity.

**Table 6: Meetings and Events**

	Percentage of Respondents
Annual/biannual day long UKCoRR events	84%
Workshops and seminars at other OA conferences or meetings	68%
Online discussion groups	39%
Workshops and seminars at conferences or meetings outside the OA sector	36%
Online webinars	31%
Other	4%
Skipped question	3%

Strong support was seen here as expected for the well received programme of UKCoRR meetings and events. Interestingly there is reasonably strong support for UKCoRR badged presence at other OA related events and meetings, either by invite or application. There was a lesser level of interest at UKCoRR badged activity at events outside of the OA community, such as library related conferences or workshops, in essence most see repository communities as distinct from these groups.

Other options here received a lower level of support within the survey. Online discussions and webinars, not something UKCoRR has particularly explored in the past, had a modicum of support. Potentially these could be explored further if an appropriate topic arose or as ubiquity of telepresence increases among the membership.

The other suggestions received were:

- May have a more prominent role depending on the future status and funding of the RSP
- Don't mind as long as its free - no PPD funds
- We could help with webinars. We run a lot of them.

## 5.2. Future Meetings Themes

The common theme of most UKCoRR meetings is that of experience sharing around common current problems or challenges and ways to overcome them successfully. However, there may be particular issues or themes that are of more importance to our membership than others, which was the point of this question. Some 30 individuals made suggestions in response to this question.

As this was a free text answer I've attempted to pull out the core themes and commonalities; which are perhaps well illustrated in this Wordle of the responses below.

Figure 1: Meeting topic comments



Metadata	1
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A fully broken down list of the comments is given in *Appendix C*. A combination of how people deal with current issues successfully with a continuing interest in advocacy seems to be the overwhelming area where members desire support and development. A smattering of other topics both functional (Copyright, CRIS) and concerned with meeting future challenges (The REF, CPD for repository workers) were also highlighted.

While, this list will be examined as part of the planning process for the next UKCoRR meeting it should be noted that a much smaller number of survey respondents answered it. This in part diminished the authority of the answers given, and it will be considered an illustrative response only.

One comment in particular highlighted the importance of the events drawing out and expanding on the comments and discussions hosted on the mailing list in the delivery of the meeting. This seems an excellent starting point for future event content planning.

**6. Other Comments**

A variety of other comments were received along with the survey findings. The most commonly repeated themes were as follows:

**Role**

- A focus on the people working with repositories, and provide support for their work; rather than the focus falling on systems and software.
- The role of UKCoRR in the twilight of the RSP and beyond, although a continued close working relationship with them for the duration was supposed.
- UKCoRR fulfils a vital positive role within the repository community. The distribution list in particular is a valuable resource for time poor staff and helps with trouble shooting.

**Activities**

- Regional UKCoRR meetings and events would be desirable.

**Membership**

- Organisational membership should be offered, potentially attached to a fee structure.
- The suggestion that UKCoRR should consider levying a subscription fee for membership to drive activities.

**Issues**

- The challenge of evolving repository services and workflows against the back ground of the changing environment within which repositories work; in terms of copyright, organisational goals and funders requirements.
- The challenges of offering a hybrid or purist repository in terms of metadata and/or full-text contents.
- The differences in needs from repositories based in more research orientated organisations against those focussed more on teaching and learning. As well as those dealing with different kinds of material than the purely textual.

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## 7. Conclusions

The survey has generated a represented sample of responses from the UKCoRR membership which the UKCoRR Committee can use in shaping their future activities.

It is interesting that recruitment of membership is not felt to be a key activity, although given some anecdotal evidence<sup>v</sup> the current membership of UKCoRR around 250 may well represent the lion's share of those working in the field in the UK. However, the power of UKCoRR to lobby and represent the membership effectively grows as does the size of the organisation and its visibility. While recruitment may not be an active area for development, clearly the impact and efficacy of what UKCoRR says can only be enhanced with a greater visibility. This could be achieved, it would be hoped, through liaison and targeted communications to other stakeholders in the publication arena.

That UKCoRR should liaise with organisations on behalf of the membership's wishes is not a surprise, and it is one that the Committee should follow up in due course. Closer ties with organisations, especially those like ARMA, are ones that have been suggested in recent events by representatives of these bodies themselves. As such this seems to be an area that would bear valuable fruit in terms of visibility and representation of the repository community. That is not to say that each and every member of UKCoRR should consider themselves empowered to advocate to these bodies when chance arises, assisted or supported as need be by the organisation as a whole

The lobbying of stakeholders is a tricky prospect for a volunteer body with no capital funding behind it. In practice the membership could potentially benefit from the appearance of UKCoRR executive members at a local level, to lend credence to their role. A drawback to this option would be that this would require financing by the host organisation. Likewise the RSP as a JISC funded project body currently fulfils this role to potentially a more cost effective way. However, in a post-RSP landscape in 2012 this may well become a role into which the UKCoRR organisation may need to step.

Establishing relationships with publishing bodies is an area for potential development. However, given the multiplicity of publishers out there which of them to contact would seem a more tricky prospect. Add to this the relative infancy and size of UKCoRR as a member led lobbying organisation in contrast to a multi-million dollar publishing house, and the scale of the task becomes much great.

The current major routes of communication used by the Committee to inform members and support their current awareness are appropriate. There is a limited level of interest in the use of social networking channels, which does not eliminate their usefulness. However, it does require that the primary arena for member communications should remain the email distribution list.

The UKCoRR member workshops are very important professional development opportunities for the membership and need to be continued. There is from the survey a rich range of suggestions of themes for workshops and training activities, and it is noticeable that operational workflows and advocacy remain the most important. What is worth noting is that most, if not all, of these these areas of concern are currently answered in the RSP's extensive programme (RSP 2011). However, as noted above this programme will not continue forever and in a post RSP landscape there may be a need for UKCoRR to step up its training role. Lacking a funded base or paid for secretariat the chance of achieving anything even close to the RSP's output seems unlikely.

Levying a fee to the membership is a tricky proposal. The obtaining and managing this cash flow from the membership would generate more work for the executive committee, along with legal requirements for auditing. This would also raise the issue of the fee level and the direct purpose to which the income could be applied. UKCoRR is a relatively small professional body, and many of its members are administrative staff that are not members of other professional bodies. They are potentially not well salaried and may be reluctant to pay even a small charge; and may seek to leave the organisation as a result. As such the levying of the fee without a clear purpose or mandate from the membership would likely prove more destructive than constructive to UKCoRR.

The proposal to offer organisational membership is an interesting one, and one that the commentator did not expand on. Again it would be anticipated that a fee could be expected, but the risk could be that by allowing organisation to join that the “safe haven” provided by the UKCoRR distribution list and membership restricted to those working directly with repositories only could be removed. Members may well become less comfortable with the sharing of problems or issues if their senior management are also members of the list through an organisational membership.

## **8. Recommendations**

To conduct an annual membership survey, moderated by the Chair, along similar lines to inform the Committee’s annual activity planning. Questions should be tailored to be representative of current issues.

To draft letters of introduction and awareness to be sent to a range of key organisations identified. Steps for more formal liaison activities beyond this to be reviewed by the Committee as part of the External Liaison Officer’s ongoing remit.

To maintain current communication channels, and if any social networking beyond blogs is to be highlighted it should be twitter for the foreseeable future.

To set aside a workshop session at the next UKCoRR meeting to discuss the outcomes of this work with the members present; to garner further insight into activities.

To consider carefully the role of UKCoRR in a post-RSP landscape, and to examine what is realistically achievable within the current structure.

To consider that a fee structure should only be explored if demand for activities or outputs from membership exceed those currently achievable by the Committee and if the issues around creating and managing it can be overcome.

To consider that revisions to current membership validity is not something that is strongly desired by the majority of the membership.

To share the results of this work with the membership openly, and hopefully prompt further discussions on the mailing list.

## 9. Acknowledgements

The Chair would like to note thanks to all the members of the UKCoRR Committee (past and present) without whom UKCoRR wouldn't function. Likewise thanks to the membership for participating in this survey is also recorded.

## 10. References

RSP Events (2011) <http://www.rsp.ac.uk/events/>

## Appendix A: Institutions Represented in Survey Sample

This was an optional question, and only 37 of those responding answered.

Association for Learning Technology (ALT)	Bournemouth University	Canterbury Christ Church University
City University	Glyndwr University	Goldsmiths
University of Lincoln	Kingston University	Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Loughborough University	NERC
Northumbria University	Open University	Repositories Support Project
UCLAN	University of Birmingham	University of Bolton
University of Bradford	University of East Anglia	University of Edinburgh(2)
University of Hertfordshire (2)	University of Hull	University of Leicester
University of Liverpool	University of Northampton	University of Nottingham
University of Reading	University of Southampton (3)	University of Sussex
University of Warwick	University of Westminster	University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol

## Appendix B: Questions & Options

**1) Please indicate your region:**

- England
- Scotland
- Wales
- N.Ireland
- Other (free text)

**2) Within what department or section are you based in?**

- Central Administration/Institutional Management
- Graduate Office/School
- IT Services
- Library
- Research Support
- Other (Free text)

**3) On what activities should UKCoRR as an organisation focus?**

- Advocacy/representation of repository worker community's interests
- Conducting research into activities across the sector
- Facilitating exchange of best repository practice
- Lobbying scholarly publishing sector stakeholders (e.g. publishers, CRIS providers, senior institutional managers)
- Membership recruitment
- Publication of briefing papers or position statements
- Seeking funding for more formal activities and development
- Other (free text)

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**4) Which organisations or bodies should UKCoRR seek to be in liaison with?**

- RSP (Repositories Support Project)
- The JISC
- Research Funding Bodies (RCUK, Wellcome etc)
- Software vendors (repository e.g. EPrints, DuraSpace)
- SCONUL (Society of College, National and University Libraries)
- ARMA (Association for Research Managers and Administrators)
- CILIP (Chartered Institute of Information Professionals)
- ALPSP (Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers)
- Specific "Big" Publishers (e.g. Elsevier, Springer etc)
- Software vendors (research management systems/CRIS, e.g. Atira, Symplectic)
- STM Association (International Association of Scientific, Technical & Medical Publishers )
- Other (free text)

**5) What communication and interaction routes do you prefer UKCoRR news and announcements to come through?**

- Blog (UKCoRR@blogspot)
- Electronic Newsletter
- FaceBook
- LinkedIn
- Mailing list (UKCORR-DISCUSSION)
- Second Life
- Twitter (UKCoRR@Twitter)
- Other (free text)

**6) What kind of meetings and events would you like UKCoRR to organise or to be represented at?**

- Annual/biannual day long UKCoRR events
- Workshops and seminars at other OA conferences or meetings
- Workshops and seminars at conferences or meetings outside the OA sector
- Online webinars
- Online discussion groups
- Other (free text)

**7) What themes or topics should future events cover?**

**8) Any other comments**

**9) Please indicate your organisation (optional)**

## Appendix C: Future Meeting Topics Comments

### Advocacy (Local) Promotion and Author Engagement

- Challenges of keeping the OA message current in the face of other pressures (e.g. REF) Advocacy surgeries - Ways to get the message out to the determinedly disaffected! Perhaps an Open Access Week UKCoRR event (as OAW is always week two term one we don't get a lot of support)
- Encouraging and maintaining author engagement with repositories
- Advocacy in a difficult economic climate.
- Ways to increase uptake
- I think advocacy will always be a relevant topic, and it's important to hear about new ideas/ developments in this area
- Challenges of keeping the OA message current in the face of other pressures (e.g. REF) Advocacy surgeries - Ways to get the message out to the determinedly disaffected! Perhaps an Open Access Week UKCoRR event (as OAW is always week two term one we don't get a lot of support)
- Raising the repository visibility/focussed advocacy

### Advocacy (Wider stakeholder community)

- Speakers from ARMA/research administrators, IR Managers/UKCORR, University Senior Management, RCUK, academics and publishers all giving their views on Open Access from their own perspectives at the same day long UKCORR event might be interesting - perhaps followed by a debate?
- Concerted consistent coherent front being shown to publishers

### Copyright & IPR

- Current copyright issues
- 3rd-party copyright EThOS
- Clarification and communication of copyright issues
- Much more copyright and law, sharing of practice

### CRISes

- Repositories and CRIS system integration issues, citation generation,
- CRIS integration Achieving more full text
- CRIS-IR interaction.
- IR with CRIS 'v' IR. How are institutions benefitting from IR with CRIS? What are the benefits of CRIS and what can it do that the IR can't? How much can IRs do with a CRIS?

### Data repositories

- Data in repositories
- Complex objects & research data

### Horizon scanning & future trends

- Mix of present state of the repository landscape (including good practice examples) and future directions for repositories. (What's on the horizon - how can we position our repositories to take advantage?)
- Possible future trends in the field of repositories
- Funding of repositories by institutions
- Digital preservation - a toolbox for repository managers

### Mandates

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- The possibility of making deposit a mandate, in order to up compliance, and explore how this could conflict with publisher's policies (pros and cons, other institutions' experiences, etc).
- Discussions on impacts of mandates. (funder and institutional).

### **Metadata**

- Metadata standards

### **Metrics & statistics**

- Adding value to repository and stats/metrics on repositories
- Collecting and presenting IR statistics, and KPIs - an ongoing thing but would be good to build up a picture of good practice across institutions.
- whatever is topical! - good to call for ideas nearer an event. Demonstrating impact could be one.

### **OA Publishing**

- Role of repositories development in a Gold publishing scenario (cf Heading for the Open)
- practical issues/problems around gold oa, funding for publishing

### **Professional Issues & CPD**

- Professional position of repository managers and staff within libraries
- CPD and skills and training for repository staff
- Professional development - repository work - is it a career?!
- 

### **Process, Workflows & Policy**

- Best practice with repositories
- Sharing specific experience on workflows and activities.
- Trouble shooting - how to deal with senior management views,
- Presentation of case studies (doesn't have to be formal, funded projects)
- Exchange of experience on recent local repository developments.
- Day to day detail is best shared on the mailing list; events give us a chance to network and bounce ideas off each other.
- Repository management policies - i.e. day-to-day issues such as prior publication, third party copyright etc. with case studies perhaps?
- Though it's fantastic to hear about what other institutions have achieved, and new developments, I think it could be useful to include some discussion of the topics that come up frequently on the discussion list. At any event I've been to with other repository managers I've noticed that similar questions - what are you doing about this publisher, how do you deal with theses, are you having problems with x or y aspect of your repository - come up. This is often the most valuable part of repository events for me, where I get to talk through problems with other managers. Of course, the discussion list enables this, but so much more can be resolved in face-to-face communication. If there could be a way to more formally facilitate this in events, rather than snatching a few minutes here and there in breaks, this could be really useful.

### **The REF 2014**

- A REF support event would be good - especially if you combined emotional as well as practical issues. I don't suppose I'm the only one who was poorly AFTER the RAE finished, dealing with the stress will be part of my planning this time round!
- REF Support/Planning Playing nicely with your Research Support department

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- Current briefings re key issues at key points - REF etc - poss cross over with RSP? Needs to sigue with RSP - perhaps concentrate on more policy than practice???
- Research Excellence Framework and repositories.

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<sup>i</sup> 248 members at time of survey end, July 2011

<sup>ii</sup> As the UKCoRR Website is pending a major overhaul, for the purposes of this survey it was removed from the options. A future survey will ask members as to the particular elements they require the UKCoRR website to provide.

<sup>iii</sup> The monthly email sent out by the Secretary highlighting blog posts, new members and other general news from the month past

<sup>iv</sup> The monthly report sent out by the Secretary updating on new joiners, membership levels and summarising blog posts

<sup>v</sup> Via discussions with the RSP team