Poster Presentation Transcript

Embedding accessibility in repository and open journal systems

I’m presenting this on behalf of our wider Research and Scholarly Communication Support Team at the University of Kent. Our poster summaries over a year of work to increase accessibility of three key systems that we host:

* Kent Academic Repository and Kent Data Repository, which are both based on Eprints open-source software that we ourselves can update.
* And our Open Journal System, hosted by the Public Knowledge Project, which we use to manage editorial processes for hosting Kent published Open Access Journals.

We initially tested our systems and their content using a range of Tools to measure accessibility barriers and used the results to inform the accessibility statements we published for each of these systems.

After this the real work began.

* We used a range of Tools to improve the functionality of our systems. These helped to identify and improve navigation issues and colour contrast issues with our repositories.
* We now link to Sensus Access from our repositories, which is where accessible documents can be reformatted to alternative formats such as Braille or audio files.
* We developed a new accessibility request process, so that anyone can contact us to request a document to be reformatted to maximise its accessibility. We use a tool called Blackboard Ally to test accessibility barriers and measure the improvements we make to each document.

We learnt that:

* Automated tools can’t tell us everything – and a level of human intervention is always needed.
* We can’t control the format of published works as they are often created by private sector organisations who are not legally obligated to produce digitally accessible content.
* We cannot proactively make accessible every deposit to our repository.
* We therefore take a retrospective approach, as demonstrated by our accessibility request process, but retrospective conversion is also time consuming.

The future looks good, with increased advocacy to embed real culture change, working with suppliers and colleagues to advocate for born accessible content, and further developing our guidance. We hope that this poster provides lots of practical advice and learning for others – with links to our blogs and forthcoming article. The poster is also accessible.