EPrints: Sustainability Panel

Les Carr
Mission Alignment - Context

• Intelligence, Agents, Multimedia Group, School of Electronics and Computer Science, University of Southampton
  – Wendy Hall, Hugh Davis, Les Carr et al
  – Open Hypermedia – links as first-class objects
  – Digital Libraries – technologies to support large scale collections
  – Semantic Web – formal techniques for expressing and using knowledge
  – Web Science – impact of the Web on society
Mission Alignment - History

• “Open Journals” project – JISC ELib programme – applying open hypermedia linking techniques to online journals (1994)
  – Main outcome: Citebase
  – Off the radar outcome: generalise CogPrints to make EPrints to support OAI-PMH adoption.
Mission Alignment - Today

• Many research activities in ECS use EPrints as a platform for achieving their own ends
  – HCI technologies, E-learning, E-research, Semantic Web, Linked Data, Web Science

• Also infrastructure activities within our School and Institution
  – Delivers on administrative reporting, research management, strategic planning
Funding

• Chris Gutteridge: chief architect (2000-) and core developer
  – *Day job ECS Webmaster (Special Ops).*
    *Supports 250 web sites and all the teaching and research web services run by the department.*
  – Allowed 20% time to devote to EPrints community
  – Also time for school & institutional repositories
  – Also night time
• Tim Brody: core developer and release master
  – Supported by JISC projects (services)
• Dave Tarrant: core developer
  – Supported by JISC projects (preservation) and PhD
• Sebastian Francois: developer (*e.g.* SWORD)
  – Supported by JISC projects (e-learning)
• Patrick McSweeney: developer
  – Supported by JISC projects (e-learning)
• Les Carr: chief technical director & repository manager
  – *Day job: academic*
Funding: EPrints Services

• commercial hosting, bespoke development, training, support
• based inside school. Not spun off.
• two fulltime repository developers/supporters
  – Adam Field & Tim Miles-Board

• Provides resources for conference attendance etc
• Justifies key staff involvement and low overhead
• Now starting to fund PhD studentships
Resources for Innovation

• JISC (and other) new funding
  – Proposals by ECS or in collaboration with the wider UK repository community
  – “augmenting” project agendas

• Commercial customers
  – New developments are often made available to community

• PhD students
  – Application of student research and innovations

• Main resource: the existing team & project portfolio
  – Regular discussion, brainstorming, argument
  – Listen to the community
  – Engage in forums
Community

• EPrints ‘community’ is determined by UK context
  – UK funding pots are smaller
  – Less investment to develop a specific community (£45k)
  – JISC provides national context / meetings in area
  – UKCoRR inter-platform community
  – Technical development led from Southampton

• Expectations
  – We do as much support and bug-fixing as possible (EPrints Technical mailing list)
  – We encourage contribution through plugin architecture
  – We encourage collaboration
  – in terms of innovation, programming, support, funding etc.
Benefits and Risks

• Pros
  – Coherent development team / code
  – Effective innovation environment
  – Good balance of for-free and for-pay services
  – Low commitment from platform adopters
  – Stable context to adapt to changing circumstances

• Cons
  – Low commitment from platform adopters
  – Little inter-adopter contact
  – Reduced visibility of platform in wider community