JISC

JISC Final Report

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2 Project Summary

2.1.1 The School of Advanced Study is charged by the HEFCE with a mission of research promotion and facilitation (RPF). Composed of ten specialist research Institutes, it fulfils that mission through programmes of conferences and seminars, the provision of world-class specialist library facilities, networking and advocacy on behalf of its subject communities, and extensive and innovative publishing, both print and electronic.

2.1.2 Part of that publishing programme is SAS-Space (http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk), the institutional repository for the School. SAS-Space contains research outputs from across the Institutes; but also works in partnership with learned societies and other scholarly bodies with which the School has many and longstanding links, to provide an open access publishing option as part of its RPF brief. Many of these bodies, whilst highly influential and well-regarded, are small and lack the resources to build and maintain this type of facility on their own account. The culture of open access journal publishing is not yet well established amongst the smaller arts and humanities journals which we intend to engage in this project in the longer term. However, as the business model for this type of small self-published journal comes under increasing pressure, SAS Open Journals now offers a low-cost solution.

2.1.3 The project developed a re-usable overlay journal interface, using *Amicus Curiae* as the exemplar, thus completing the transition of that journal from print to web. This system is now available, at minimal cost, to journals produced within the School, and to publications by cognate learned societies. The system will greatly increase open access publishing capacity in the humanities and social sciences, and further fulfil the School's RPF mission. To date, two further journals have committed themselves to using SAS Open Journals.

2.1.4 *Amicus Curiae* publishes articles on legal issues of cross sector interest and opinion, addressing the concerns of not only legal academics and students, but also the legal profession, the judiciary and the civil service. It is published in print quarterly by IALS and issued free of charge to members of SALS, and is also available by annual subscription. A listing of past issues from 2003 to the pre-current issue has hitherto been made freely available on the IALS website with PDF download options from SAS-SPACE.

3 Report

3.1 Project Outputs and Outcomes

Output / Outcome Type *(e.g. report, publication, software, knowledge built)*	Brief Description and URLs (where applicable)
New overlay journal platform installation	SAS Open Journals, an installation of the OJS system, overlaying the repository SAS-Space: http://journals.sas.ac.uk. Launched 20/10/11
Report	An 'FAQs' document for prospective new journals – already in the hands of two new journals. This will be made publicly

	available.
Event, and Report	Report on launch workshop, including a digest of group discussions on OA journal publishing at large: http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/3210/
Presentation	Presentation of project at 'Open Access Publishing in the Arts and Humanities' event in London: report at http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/3209/
Project blog	Including extended documentation of the major technical innovations, and links to deposited code: http://sasopenjournals.blogspot.com
Knowledge built	SALS itself is now in a position to monitor the effect of OA publication on its membership subscription model, with the future of the print edition kept under review.

3.2 How did you go about achieving your outputs / outcomes?

3.2.1 The objectives of the project as formulated in the original funding bid were to:

develop a re-usable overlay journal interface, using Amicus Curiae as the exemplar, thus completing the transition of the journal from print to web. This system will then be made available, at minimal cost, to journals produced within the School, and to publications by cognate learned societies.

These objectives did not change over the life of the project, and have been achieved. The story of the project is perhaps best told by means of the work packages (WP) projected at the start.

3.2.2 The first task for the staff of *Amicus Curiae* was to review the stock of back articles of the journal already held in SAS-Space (**WP2**). This process raised two issues, the first of which was some wrinkles in the legacy metadata; wrinkles that are easy to miss in a repository setting, but which OJS ruthlessly exposes. The second issue was 'missing' items; articles that for whatever reason were not deposited in SAS-Space at the time, but which would have created very obvious gaps when presented in the new way . A happy by-product of preparing for OJS, then, was cleaner data and nearly fifty new articles for the repository. In addition to this, some legacy PDFs that had been image-based scans alone were replaced with OCR-based PDFs, thus increasing their exposure to search.

3.2.3 **WP1** was the initial installation, configuration and testing of Open Journal Systems, undertaken by ULCC. Once this was complete, two particular issues had to be addressed. The first was the ingest of the legacy metadata for the journal from SAS-Space into SAS Open Journals. This process was documented in the project blog.[1]

3.2.4 The second and major technical hurdle at this stage was the modifications to the standard SWORD deposit plugin incorporated in OJS. OJS has a standard SWORD plugin for deposit to repositories, but its default behaviour is to continue to manage and reference digital objects locally. However, the intention in this project was that, once deposit to SAS-Space had been made, OJS would refer to the digital object in SAS-Space, rather than to the OJS local copy. This process, the most significant technical challenge of the the project, was documented in the project blog,[2] and code made available for reuse by others in GoogleCode, and in SAS-Space.[3]

3.2.5 **WP3** involved Dr Webster, Steve Whittle and Julian Harris in a collaborative investigation of the medium- and long-term implications for *Amicus Curiae* of joining SAS Open Journals. These discussions centred on two areas, the first of which was workflow, and the second the likely effect on the longer-term business model of the journal. This investigation was conducted by means of face-to-face discussion/workshop sessions, and some remote user testing of the full OJS workflow with

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[1] http://sasopenjournals.blogspot.com/2011/07/populating-ojs-from-eprints.html
[2] http://sasopenjournals.blogspot.com/2011/11/making-ojs-and-sword-play-nicely.html
[3] http://code.google.com/p/sasojs/ ; http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/3301/

'dummy' items. The *Amicus* team decided to continue managing most of their manuscript production in their current offline way, as is most efficient when operating in conjunction with a print issue that appears three months ahead of online publication. The team however now have a clear sight of what a transition to a OJS workflow would entail in the longer term, and have enabled author submission of manuscripts on the site. (See 3.3 below on findings in relation to business models).

3.2.6 **WP4** related to the further customisations of the default OJS system to project needs. Chief among these tasks was to investigate the integration into OJS of user-generated content already managed within SAS-Space, using the SNEEP plugin for Eprints. We undertook to implement this as far as was feasible within project resources, and to document such elements as had not been possible. We were able successfully to integrate the two such that the publicly available elements of SNEEP (comments and tags) are now extracted and displayed beneath the relevant article in SAS Open Journals, as in Figure 1 below.
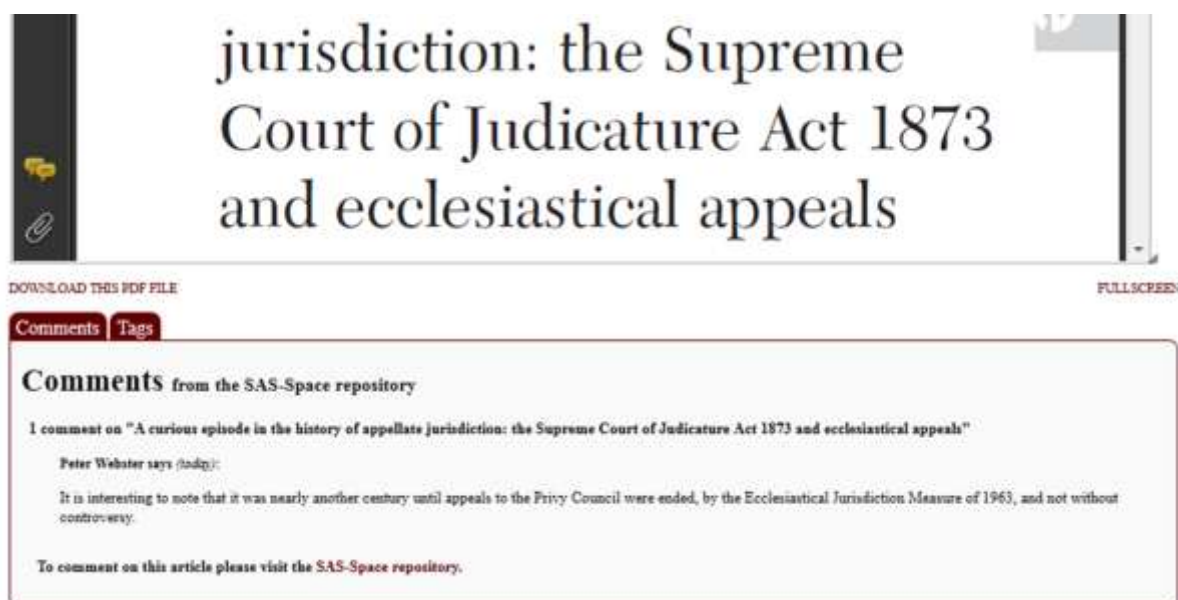

Figure 1: SNEEP comments as implemented on SAS Open Journals PDF view

3.2.7 A fuller report on the technical aspects of implementing this was made available in the project blog[4]; and code for reuse was placed in GoogleCode and in SAS-Space.[5] It was not however possible to integrate the two systems 'the other way', as it were – ie. to allow users of SAS Open Journals to add comments and tags that would be managed in SAS-Space. See section 6.1.1 on future prospects in this regard.

3.2.8 WP4 also included the provision of online help for the setup of new journals; assistance with ISSN registration; and registration of new journals with harvesting services such as DOAJ. These have all been folded into the FAQs pack that is given to prospective new journals.

3.2.9 In order to aid integration with social media, the AddThis toolbar has been added to each individual article page.

3.2.10 The project had undertaken to investigate the possible conversion of author manuscripts, submitted in Word or suchlike into alternative formats, including HTML and ebook formats. Whilst OJS will allow the upload and delivery of additional objects, it was not possible within project resources so to modify OJS to perform those conversions within the workflow. See 6.1.1 for future possibilities in this area.

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[4] http://sasopenjournals.blogspot.com/2011/11/integrating-ojs-and-sneep.html
[5] http://code.google.com/p/sasojs/ ; http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/3301/

3.2.11 **WP5** consisted of a number of dissemination activities. Chief among these was the launch event for the new service, which took place in October. It was well attended, with the delegates divided roughly equally between stakeholders internal to the School and the wider University of London, and those from outside. The event led to specific conversations with representatives of no fewer than four prospective journals, two of which have now taken firm decisions to join the service. A report on the event, summarising some very wide-ranging discussions on OA journal publishing in the arts and humanities, is now available in SAS-Space, along with one of the conference presentations.[6]

3.2.12 Presentations of the project were also given at the following events:
- Conference on Open Access Publishing in the Arts and Humanities (SAS, London, July)
- IALS Library Open Evening (September)
- Meeting of University of London Community of Practice in Digital Humanities (November)
- Meeting of SHERPA-LEAP consortium of University of London repositories (December, alongside the EPICURE project)

3.2.13 Stakeholders were engaged throughout the project through the project blog, the SAS-Space blog, Twitter feed and Facebook pages, and IALS channels including their Facebook page. The production of a suite of print literature to promote the service was postponed until the two journals that have recently decided to join the service have been launched (and may thus be featured.)

3.2.14 Evaluation was a continuous process throughout the project. Advice has been taken from the SAS Marketing Team as to the optimum integration of SAS Open Journals publicity activity within existing channels. In addition, all printed outputs have benefitted from the comments of members of the SAS-Space Working Group; and continue in some cases to be refined through feedback from prospective journal partners. The Working Group was also involved in the planning of the launch event in October, the reaction to which amongst delegates was extremely positive.

3.2.15 Quality assurance was also integrated into every stage of the project. Each stage of ULCC work on the installation and customisation of OJS was subject to feedback from Webster, Whittle and Harris, from the SAS-Space Working Group, and from colleagues around the School with both digital and publications expertise at the appropriate stages.

3.3 What did you learn?

OA journals and small society business models
3.3.1 The anecdotal evidence from informal conversations at the launch event and separately (as news of the new service has begun to spread) is that there is significant pent-up demand from small society journals for an OA solution. At the same time, there is a corresponding and considerable need for advice and support to those journals, often run within largely voluntary organisations with limited or no technical support. For the purposes of this project, this prompted the compilation of a very detailed FAQ document to aid prospective new journal teams.
Another theme to emerge from these activities was that even a very small upfront fee (£1,000 was a figure mooted) would constitute a significant barrier to entry.

3.3.2 Other themes to emerge strongly from the workshop were:
- that staff of new OA journals are liable to underestimate the degree to which work traditionally done by journal publishers would rebound upon local teams;
- that journal teams would similarly need to engage much more fully with the need for publicity and marketing; and
- that authors would over time need to become accustomed to more exacting enforcement of 'house style' by journals, and to the need to promote their own work.

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[6] http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/view/collections/openaccess.html

OJS, Internet Explorer and the local copy
3.3.3 Part of the modification of OJS to our purposes was the referencing and display of SAS-Space copies of the objects, rather than the OJS local copy. This was successfully implemented in all browsers except Internet Explorer. Despite the OJS PDF viewer and the SAS-Space copy being located in closely related domains (journals.sas.ac.uk and sas-space.sas.ac.uk), IE will not allow a PDF from elsewhere to be displayed. IE users are thus served the local copy when necessary.

3.4 Immediate Impact

3.4.1 For *Amicus Curiae*, its staff and two sponsoring organisations (IALS and SALS), there has been an immediate gain in the visibility of the journal. Figure 2 below shows a significant upswing in usage over the life of the project (May – October). Although some of this is due to the provision of additional searchable texts, and additional items in May/June, the continuing rise after the launch of the site in early October suggests a considerable organic growth in usage.
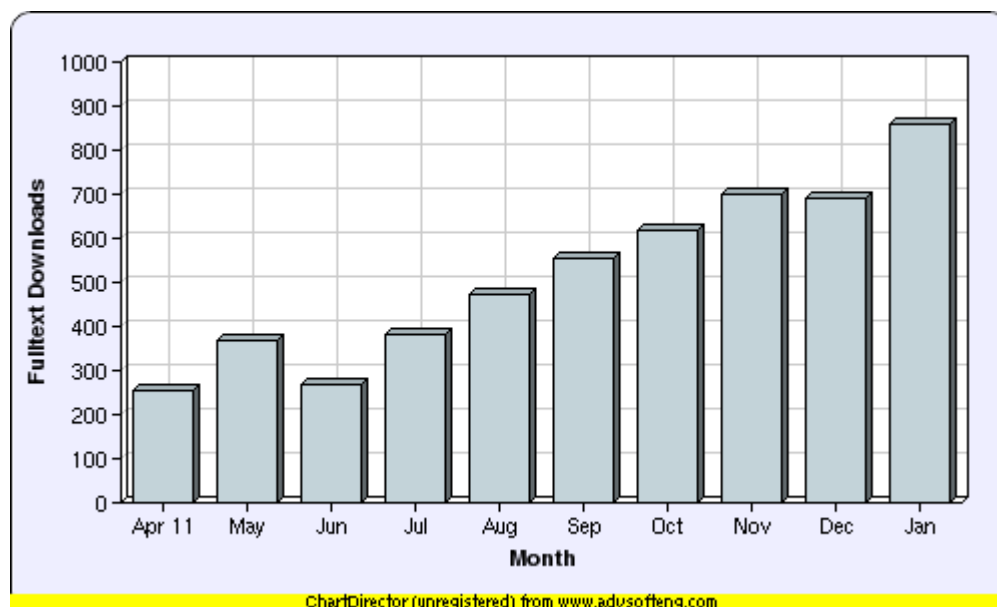

Figure 2: Downloads for Amicus Curiae from SAS-Space, Apr11-Jan12

3.4.2 In partnership with SALS and IALS, the project will continue to monitor impact, and also to further investigate the provision of increasingly divergent print and online editions of the journal, including publication of longer versions, online-only content and supporting texts and data.

3.4.3 Within the School, the impact has been immediate. Firstly, a new journal within the School has decided to join with SAS Open Journals, after having considered more than one commercial publisher. Conversations are also ongoing with colleagues in the School who are involved with the management of external scholarly societies with a view to engaging us to carry their journals.

3.4.4 The new service is also now integrated with the wider SAS web presence, and with other publicity channels, both those associated with SAS-Space and others in the School at large. Formal approval procedures for external journals have also been agreed by the requisite bodies within the School.

3.4.5 From outside the School, a third journal from an independent scholarly society has (as of December) taken a firm decision to engage SAS Open Journals. Conversations with a fourth journal, also new, began in October but have been paused until 2012 for the journal's own internal reasons. Discussions with two more external journals, both of them well established in print, began in January 2012.

3.5 Future Impact

3.5.1 As *Amicus Curiae* becomes more fully integrated into library information systems, we anticipate the usage and thus impact of the journal to increase further. We will continue to monitor downloads of digital objects; and a dedicated Google Analytics report has been created to monitor site traffic.

3.5.2 Copyright permission has also been obtained by the *Amicus* team from a previous publisher to retrospectively digitise and re-publish back issues from the inception of the journal in 1997 to the beginning of the current coverage (2003).

3.5.3 As the two forthcoming journals are launched, we expect to see increasing usage of those journals over time, which we will track in the same ways.

3.5.4 The Amicus team have opted in the medium-term to continue producing a print edition of the journal as part of the offer to members of SALS. Since there is little evidence available in the sector at large as to what the impact of a parallel OA edition might be, the *Amicus* team are closely monitoring the situation for any effect, positive or negative, on subscription income. At an appropriate point, Dr Webster will prepare an article for publication on the experience of *Amicus* through the project and beyond, taking in if possible the experience of other journals as they join the service. This should provide a valuable case study into the transition to OA in a subscription society context.

4   Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1.1 Recent discussion of the 'coming of age' of OA as a model has shown up very significant differences between subject areas in the engagement with OA journal publishing. Anecdotal evidence from the project suggests that there is a significant gap in our knowledge of the actual situation amongst smaller society publishers in the arts and humanities. A *small research project* among these organisations, into their workflow arrangements and business models, would very significantly illuminate the field and thus aid the formulation of the necessary next steps.

4.1.2 The experience of this project, at least, would suggest that there is significant demand amongst smaller scholarly societies for solutions to the pressure to which their business models are subject. This would suggest that there is room for both the JISC and for other organisations, including universities and their libraries, to work to *further increase campus-based* OA capacity as one possible solution.

4.1.3 However, amongst would-be editors of new journals there is sometimes greater enthusiasm for the principle of starting a new journal than knowledge of the implications, in terms of workload in both production and publicity, and in relation to sustainability. Needs for training and advice were also noted with regard to retrospective digitisation of journal back issues. This would suggest that there is a *skills gap* that needs to be filled, by either or both of the JISC and individual campus-based publishers.

5   Implications for the future

6.1.1 There remain significant areas of development that could be pursued. As part of this project, we have achieved integration between OJS and SNEEP in one direction, as it were – content from SNEEP as implemented in SAS-Space is now displayed within the SAS Open Journals installation of OJS. Additional work would be required to have data flow in the opposite direction; ie. to allow users to add data within SAS Open Journals which is in fact managed within Eprints. The additional work involved may not be prohibitive, but issues of identity management would need careful consideration, even in our case where users internal to SAS are authenticated in both systems using the same LDAP system.

6.1.2 A second area of potential development would be in relation to alternative publication formats. While OJS handles supplementary files and alternative format versions of texts that may be uploaded from outside, the system does not perform any conversions itself. A useful project would be to investigate the modification of OJS using scripted Open Office conversions from the command line. A second possible solution would be to incorporate in some way the Lemon8-XML application, designed by the Public Knowledge Project with integration with OJS in mind, and also based on Open Office. Establishing means by which editors could comfortably create XML or HTML-based versions of articles would open up the possibility of automatically creating Web and EPub/E-book versions, as well as the present PDF. The possibilities are further documented in the project blog.[7]

6.1.3 The SAS Open Journals service has now been absorbed within the standing SAS-Space repository operation. As such, hosting and support costs have become part of the core activity of the School. Access to the service will be free at the point of use to journals produced within the School. For journals from outside, a small charge will be made. The precise charging regime is negotiable journal by journal, and subject to change with changing circumstances, but we do not anticipate the total charge over the first five years of a journal hosting arrangement to amount to more than £1,000 per journal in the first instance. The contact for the project will remain Dr Webster, and his successors. All reports and reusable code will be managed in SAS-Space.

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[7] http://sasopenjournals.blogspot.com/2011/12/ojs-and-file-conversion.html