

DRIVER: Supporting Institutional Repositories in Europe

The current system of academic publication developed as a means to disseminate the findings of research. However, this system can hamper the very process it was set up to serve, with access to articles being limited by publishers to only those who can afford to subscribe. Open access digital repositories provide a means whereby the traditional publishing model can co-exist with the needs of authors and their readers, as well as with the demands of research funders for research impact and hence, value for money. Subject to copyright, authors can deposit copies of their finished articles in open access repositories, in addition to publishing them in research journals.

A recent study of scientific publication markets in Europe funded by the European Commission 1 strongly recommends the development of a European policy mandating open access to EC-funded research.

The SHERPA project is internationally recognised as a leader and advocate for the development of open access institutional repositories and associated services. SHERPA is collaborating in the major project, DRIVER (Digital Repository Infrastructure Vision for European Research). This is a high profile, major European project with 10 international partners, funded by the European Commission and it reflects the international enthusiasm surrounding the Open Access movement.

DRIVER sets out to build a testbed for a future knowledge infrastructure of the European Research Area. It aims to deliver any form of scientific output, including scientific/technical reports, working papers, pre-prints, articles and original research data to the various user groups. The testbed is based on existing nationally organized digital repository infrastructures. Other work includes the support of new European repositories.

DRIVER is composed of eight work packages – each focusing on different aspects of the project. The project is now actively advocating repository development - creating an informed and active environment for repository infrastructure development in EU countries with focused activities, information and contextualized support.

This poster will explain the vision behind DRIVER and will describe how the various aspects of the project tie in together to form the knowledge infrastructure of the European Research Area. DRIVER is an ambitious and important project that will yield valuable results for individual researchers, the publishing community, funding agencies and the European Research Community as a whole.