

## The UK Electronic Theses On-line Service (EThOS)

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## Thesis supply in the UK

- BL service since early '80s
- Vast majority of UK HE involved
- 500,000 paper theses of which 200,000 held by BL on microfilm. Small number of e-theses held on institutional repositories
- Researcher pays

But, despite dedicated staff:

- Out of date supply formats (paper or microfilm – sales & loans)
- Long supply times
- Heavily administrative at BL & Institution – expensive

Meaning:

- Serious decline in use of the service = lack of awareness of UK research output

# The EThOS Project

- UK Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) funded 3 thesis projects ending late 2004 (or thereabouts)
- Made further funding available to take findings and develop a UK thesis service
- EThOS partnership selected to develop service
- Project Aims:
  - A prototype for a 'one-stop shop' to all 500,000 UK theses dating from 1700s
  - A business model allowing Open Access to all theses, yet financially viable and sustainable
  - Timescale: January 2005 – September 2006



University  
of Southampton



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WARWICK

*Cranfield*  
UNIVERSITY

**SHERPA**

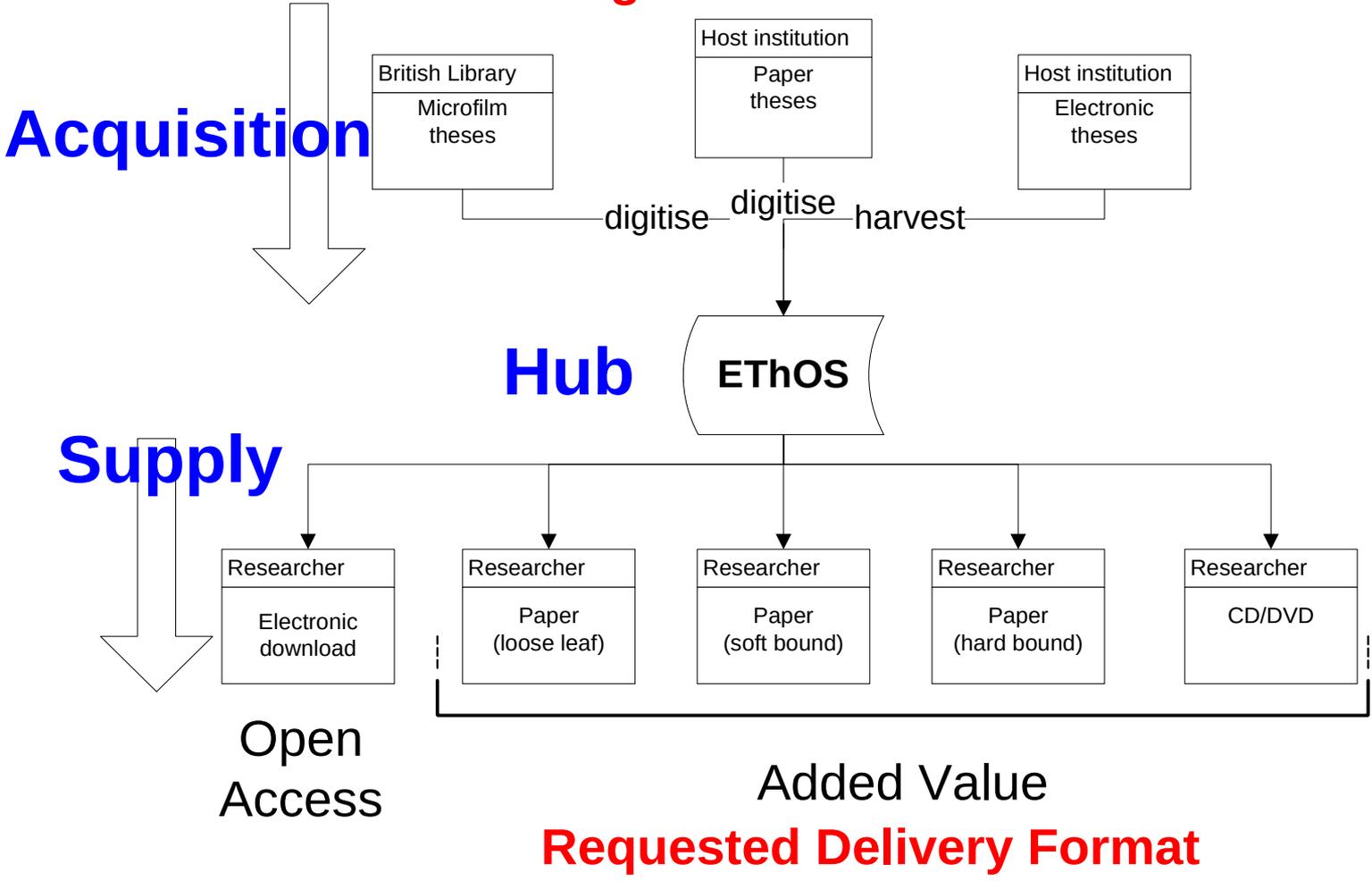
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# ETHOS Project Scope and Structure

<b>Workpackage</b>	<b>Lead Institution</b>
1. Project Management	Glasgow
2. Central Hub Development	British Library
3. Interfaces	Cranfield
4. Digitisation	British Library
5. Intellectual Property Rights	Edinburgh
6. Institution Toolkit	Robert Gordon University
7. Business Model	Glasgow/British Library
8. Dissemination & advocacy	Birmingham/Warwick

# The system

## Storage Location & Format



## E-thesis data transfer & metadata standards

- Principle: data transfer standards are well defined and simple and the supplying institution must meet them to take part in the service
- Metadata is well-contained with a small number of mandatory fields
- OAI-PMH used for transfer of both metadata and content – simple, pragmatic, practical for version 1
- Single point of collection at Institution
- Tools developed for Open Source repository software (Dspace, Eprints, Fedora)
- This method means that regardless of how and where e-theses are stored within the institution, as long as they are 'prepared' to meet the standard and are located at 1 address for collection, the service can find and download them.
- Allows flexibility within the institution and flexibility in choice of repository supplier (i.e. as long as the supplier meets the simple standard, the institution can participate)

## Why digitise?

- Small number of e-theses at present (<500), but growing. 500,000 paper theses of which 200,000 held on microfilm at BL.
- Institutions will continue to produce paper theses for years to come - until they all have Institutional Repositories and e-submission procedures.
- Service needs to offer content of paper theses to attract Researchers and encourage e-submission (the 'critical mass')
- 80% of theses ordered via BL are from last 13 years – peak usage is 2 year old theses. Demand continues for information held on paper theses

## Digitisation programme

- Considerations when digitising:
  - Paper theses sit on Institution shelves so service must manage a geographically disparate collection
  - Estimate 25,000 theses will need to be digitised per annum
  - Central digitisation service required – manual operation so quite expensive
- Theses only need to be digitised once – then they are always available for immediate download.
- Large scale digitisation is only required until the bulk of theses wanted by researchers are digitised – then the operation is scaled down.
- Biggest risk to the service is if demand outstrips digitisation capacity, which is most likely in the early days (smallest number of theses in e-format), so controlled growth through appropriate marketing is required

## Business Model features

- Cost recovery service : All funds raised will be spent on the service and digitisation of UK Theses
- Digitisation of each individual thesis is paid for, thereafter thesis is available free to download for all subsequent Researchers
- HEIs can choose to offer content (including digitised theses) via a choice of relationship types
  - Open Access Sponsor – advances funds annually to support the system and receives an equivalent value of digitised theses (including those of it's collection ordered 'on-demand')
  - Open Access Associate pays on a piecemeal basis
  - Other – First Researcher ordering pays for digitisation
- Any thesis supplied to EThOS in e-format will be supplied free for download (Open Access) to a Researcher
- Added value services (printing, binding, supply on CD/DVD) will be offered for delivery and will be chargeable to the Researcher

# Intellectual Property Rights

- Within the meaning of the UK *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act (CDPA)*, 1988, (s.175) , a British thesis is an unpublished work, and is protected under the act meaning that re-publication of any significant part of a thesis by a third party (EThOS) without the copyright owner's consent is a breach of copyright
- Current system (author “opts-in” to allow supply i.e. gives permission) is time consuming and administrative (i.e. expensive) involving forms from authors and from researchers - legal recommendation is that this continues, but that won't allow us to meet the expectations of a modern e-commerce aware Researcher
- For future submissions (paper or e-) this can be streamlined using workflow and technology (on-line registration and licence agreement) but for existing theses (500,000) seeking permissions to digitise would be difficult and very expensive
- Proposal:
  - Adopt an “opt-out” solution but:
    - Offer a “quick take-down” option
    - Ask institutions to contact as many authors as possible
    - Publicise intentions via appropriate communication media
    - Take out insurance
- Note: there is no intention to abuse any IPR. The BL has been described as a ‘trusted’ public organisation and is not making any money out of supplying theses. Theses are supplied in order to support UK HE and the authors.

# EThOS Institutional Toolkit

- Aim: Helping institutions to manage change
  - To assist institutions to make theses available online
  - To offer guidance on the alternative options for participating in EThOS
  - To provide advice on the **legal, cultural, technical, administrative** and **resource** issues that need to be considered
  
- Four step process
  - Step1. Culture Change
    - What are e-theses, who benefits from making them available, what is EThOS
  - Step2. Business Requirements
    - Business case, legal issues, admin issues, participation options, priorities
  - Step3. Technical Implementation
    - Existing repository, setting up a repository, using the central hub only
  - Step4. Training & Guidance
    - Training methods, training authors, supervisors and library/admin staff

## Next steps

- Ensure that appropriate funding is in place for the service to go live (Sponsors, 'philanthropic organisations')
- 'Scale up' the prototype system to meet expected loads
- Establish a digitisation studio
- Investigate funding options for further developments, but NOT allowing 'scope creep' for version 1
- Live late 2007