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Towards an A-Z of visual arts research data: disseminating guidance and information from the KAPTUR Environmental Assessment Report

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Abstract

“What is arts research data, what does it mean to you, research art design architecture, I’m going to tell you. What is arts research data, we tried to find out, we asked various researchers, and this is what we found...” (Burgess, 2012)

The objective of the JISC KAPTUR project is to discover, create and pilot a sectoral model of best practice in the management of research data in the visual arts. It is a collaborative project lead by the Visual Arts Data Service (VADS), with four institutional partners: The Glasgow School of Art; Goldsmiths, University of London; University for the Creative Arts; and the University of the Arts London. KAPTUR is funded by the JISC Managing Research Data programme (2011-13). The pioneering work of the JISC MRD programme in the UK since 2009 has been heightened by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's requirement for research organisations in receipt of their funding to have roadmaps in place by May 2012, with a view to achieving full compliance by May 2015; currently 3 of the KAPTUR partner institutions are in receipt of EPSRC funding.

This poster stems from research carried out in trying to understand the perceptions towards arts research data as given by researchers working in the field. The KAPTUR Environmental Assessment Report analysed data from 8 informal interviews with researchers, a literature review, and 16 in-depth one-hour recorded interviews with visual arts researchers based at the partner institutions. This investigation into the nature of visual arts research data was an opportunity to explore the needs of researchers and the environment at each institution. The Report led into the writing of arts research data management policies at each partner institution, as well as further work to develop pilot technical infrastructure and pilot training and support tools for researchers.

The 16 in-depth interviews with the researchers encompassed the following five areas:

1. Terminology
2. The role of the visual arts researcher

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2 Short Title

3. Creation of visual arts research data
4. Use/re-use of visual arts research data
5. Visual arts research data in the longer term

The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and, following collaborative analysis formed the basis of the KAPTUR Environmental Assessment Report. Through discussions at project meetings between the institutions' Project Officers it was decided that due to all partners coming from a visual arts background, a novel and interesting approach to disseminating findings from the Environmental Assessment would be to produce an A-Z of visual arts research data.

The A-Z has made use of quotes and comments from the researchers interviewed to help bring out the voice of researchers in the arts. The style of the A-Z has been influenced by the wood engravings of the English artist Sir William Nicholson (1872-1949). The application of the A-Z for visual arts research data is to provide an alternative approach for engaging information management and research data management professionals with visual arts research data and a new platform for discussion and debate.

[491 words including the quotation]