Narrative description

Explanation of the library’s innovation

For the last six years UNSW Library has delivered a high-demand, innovative service to its research community to support researchers in understanding and tracking their scholarly impact. The overarching aim of this service is to improve research outcomes for the institution, in line with its stated objective of becoming one of the top three research institutions in Australia and a top institution globally.

The Research Impact Measurement Service (RIMS) delivers support to individuals, schools and faculties through a combination of written reports, advisory services, workshops and communications.

RIMS aims to support and inform the strategic publishing practices of UNSW researchers, in order to ensure maximum exposure and visibility of their research outputs. It assists them in making informed decisions about managing their outputs and research profile, and ultimately to track the impact of those outputs using bibliometrics. This service supports individual researchers in providing evidence of their impact for grant applications; prizes and awards; and for internal promotion activities.

RIMS also supports schools and faculties with evidence for formal reviews; to benchmark their performance with competitors; to understand their current publishing footprint and profile; and to develop publishing strategies.

Published mission statement of nominated institution

B2B Blueprint to Beyond - UNSW Strategic Intent

History of development and implementation of the program in brief

The development of the service followed a major restructure of information services at UNSW Library in 2006/07. A number of smaller special libraries were amalgamated into one Information Services Department, consisting of a number of units including the Academic Services Unit, which is now responsible for delivering RIMS.

In reviewing our existing support for researchers, it was ascertained that our services were somewhat limited in scope. Although typical of the service offerings of many academic libraries in
Australia and internationally, they were primarily based around the consumption of scholarly content at the input phase of the research process. Broadly, these included the provision of high quality research collections; reference and instructional services around the use of the content; and document delivery for research materials not held.

What were missing were services around the creation of scholarly content by our researchers. Although repository services for disseminating institutional research outputs were quite mature at our institution, no formal services existed to support researchers around publishing strategies; publishing for impact and the tracking of that impact.

At that time there were also environmental drivers to refocus our resources and effort to support researchers. A newly appointed Vice Chancellor reframed the organisational objectives to focus on research outcomes. In Australia, we were entering into an era of government directed research assessment exercises. Local funding for research was also becoming increasingly competitive. Internally, promotions and tenure were becoming less certain and required production of extensive evidence to support applications.

UNSW Library refocused our strategic direction to align ourselves with organisational goals. With limited resources, this meant that we had to let go of existing and largely unsustainable services to our undergraduate community. The restructure of the Library’s information services resulted in the creation of an Academic Services Unit consisting of two teams, Outreach and Services. The new structure facilitated the development of RIMS.

RIMS started through feedback derived from Outreach librarians during ‘calls’ with academics, where the need for support in this area gradually became articulated. This feedback was documented in ‘call reports’ and recorded in a Contact Register. In early 2007, following a presentation by library staff to the academics on the topic of measuring research impact, the library was inundated with requests for support in preparing submissions for the Research Quality Framework (RQF), an assessment exercise implemented by the federal government in Australia.

Initially through a bibliometrics working group, the Academic Services Unit started to experiment with the provision of formal impact statements for individual academics and Schools. This evolved into a variety of reports including H-index calculations; disciplinary research trend reports; journal impact reports and institutional benchmarking reports.

Over time, and with the emergence of automated reports and tools from publishers and others, RIMS has evolved into an advisory service with an emphasis on assisting researchers to help themselves. Production of formal reports still occurs where it is requested by an academic, school or faculty.

RIMS has resulted in a strengthening of our relationship with our academic community. We are seen as professional partners and it is expected that we will be able to support and advise around all aspects of strategic publishing and bibliometrics. In addition to working with individuals, we are increasingly working with Schools and Centres to help them develop publishing strategies to increase the visibility of their research.

Many opportunities have emerged over the last few years to partner with our Division of Research and faculties to improve research outcomes at UNSW. It has resulted in our recent invitation to
contribute to the newly established Researcher Development Framework through the delivery of a series of workshops around strategic publishing, developing a researcher profile; managing research outputs and establishing a social networking presence.

On the back of a very successful workshop held for academic librarians at UNSW Library in January 2011, we have also been invited to assist other university libraries in Australia and New Zealand to establish similar research support services, through library workshops and seminars.

**Intended clientele; including a brief description of the method(s) of assessing effects on clientele;**

The intended clientele are all researchers at UNSW, including PhD students who are already publishing and early post doctoral researchers.

Effects on clientele are assessed through a web-based feedback survey sent to each recipient of our RIMS reports. This feedback is analysed quarterly. For the last quarter of 2012, 100% of respondents agreed that they had a better understanding of their publication activity and impact through our service. As expected, the majority of respondents noted that they had heard about our service through their outreach librarian, but pleasingly, 15% of respondents had heard about the service through colleagues or school meetings.

Other feedback, including unsolicited responses received through email and calls, is recorded in our Contact Register and reported monthly to senior library management. Feedback from workshops is collated by the UNSW Division of Research and provided to us at the conclusion of the program. We also track the outcomes of promotion rounds, awards and prizes for which we have provided supporting evidence. Tracking the outcome of grant rounds has not been formally tackled to date. However through our survey, in the last quarter 57% of respondents had requested a RIMS Report for the purposes of a grant application.

We also believe that sustained and increasing levels of requests are an indicator of the outcomes of this service. We track these figures monthly. Repeat business is also very common, with researchers coming back each year for an update of their impact report.

**Principal players (staff, consultants), with brief biographical statements;**

The service involves all professional library staff in our Academic Services Unit and based on work sampling, RIMS constitutes approximately one third of the work of the Unit. The Unit is divided into 2 disciplinary groupings or sub units – Science Engineering and Medicine & Humanities Creative Arts and Social Sciences. These Units are divided into 2 teams – Outreach and Services.

In practical terms, the Outreach team members scope the requirements with our clients, provide on the spot advice when required, and bring back the work where appropriate. The interaction is recorded in our Contact Register and requested reports are currently recorded in Reftracker software which logs the job and allows the Services Team Leader to allocate and track the delivery of the specified report. The allocated Services Team member then conducts the work and delivers the report back to the Outreach team member to deliver to the academic. The job is then closed off in our system.
To communicate the value of our service and to build relationships with faculty and university administration, the Academic Services managers and the Director of Information Services attend high level research committee meetings.

Specific advice for library staff is also obtained from expert staff at bibliometric product vendors such as Thomson Reuters and Scopus (Elsevier). Liaison also occurs with staff at our Institutional Analysis and Reporting Office.

**URLs, photos, videos, other media, if appropriate to understanding the innovation;**

RIMS  
http://www.library.unsw.edu.au/servicesfor/academic/rims.html

Research Impact LibGuide (currently under redevelopment)  
http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/researchimpact

**User documentation, if appropriate.**

Promotional flyer

Academic feedback survey

Flyer for UNSW Library’s 2011 bibliometrics workshop for libraries.

Sample reports and templates are available separately if required by the committee; however we treat the reports as confidential and they will need to be de-identified.

**Nominator’s statement**

UNSW Library is self-nominating for this recognition as we would like to highlight the quality and commitment of all our staff to an innovative and high value service to our research community. Although many libraries are starting to deliver similar services, we believe we were one of the first academic libraries in Australia to implement formal and sustained support services in this area. We are continually approached by libraries in Australia for information about the delivery of RIMS and have even been approached by libraries in the US, Canada, Europe, New Zealand and South Africa who have heard of our work.

Although it was challenging at first for many of our staff to redirect their efforts from student services to focus on researchers, they have gradually embraced the service and taken great ownership over it, contributing immensely to its development. They now see the value of what we are doing and through recent staff surveying, believe that bibliometrics and a deep understanding of scholarly publishing are absolutely critical skills for supporting researchers. These skills have been highlighted in many reports internationally as being necessary for the future of academic libraries. Our library in many ways is already way ahead of many counterparts in this regard. The service has
fundamentally changed what we do in Information Services and has helped to reshape the outlook of UNSW Library and indeed other libraries as well.

The service has contributed to the building of close relationships with our faculties and institutional stakeholders and allows us to work within institutional flows rather than as an add-on or parallel service. Within the library it is no longer seen as an innovation, but simply part of our normal work in information services. It has helped to redefine our future work as academic librarians and additionally, the perception of our value by our institution.

We would like to acknowledge the work of our staff and for the sustained and significant innovation that this service represents. We believe that our service has potential for adaptation by other research libraries. We would appreciate consideration for this prize.

Publications that support this nomination


Letters of support and/or testimonials may be submitted by readers/users, other research libraries, and others.

Due to the short timeframe to submit this application and the fact that most Australian universities are closed for an extended period over Christmas, we have been unable to provide written testimonials from named stakeholders, however would be happy to do this at a future date if required. Below is largely anonymous or de-identified feedback from various sources.

Samples of Quarter 4 (Oct – Dec 2012) anonymous feedback from RIMS Survey

- I am incredibly grateful that the library offers this kind of service. It’s totally indispensable for us.
- [Outreach librarian name] was efficient and accurate as always. In addition to what I asked for, she met with me personally and explained the results. She also helped me with some strategic planning with citations, as well as explaining how to increase my online profile.
- I will be applying for future funding and will use the data in my application; if my proposal meets with funding success, I am sure that the insight I have gained through this service will have influenced the outcome.
- For the above report I don’t know grant outcome yet. However for the same report I had 1.5yrs ago, I think the insights from UNSW librarians had amazingly positive impact on grant outcomes. Couldn’t have done my CV section without their support! I had no idea about all the indices one can compile. And if I did, I would have no idea how to compile them. This is a critical resource to continue to support!
- It is quite a transformative event to see the take up of one’s publications. I think it professionalises you in a unique way - you get to see yourself and your work in the bigger picture.
Samples of unsolicited email feedback (2011-2012)

- **From the Director of a Research Centre**
  
  I just wanted to take the time to formally thank you and [xxxxx] and the team at the UNSW library for what is always a highly professional, friendly and flexible approach to their work. We at the [xxxx] feel spoilt by the excellent assistance we receive from the Library team. Please pass on great thanks to [xxxxx] who has done a wonderful job.

- **From an Associate Professor in Faculty of Science applying (successfully) for promotion to professor**
  
  I have reworked my data based on your suggestions... Thank you very much for all your help! You were fantastic!

- **From a Business academic applying for an Australian Research Council grant**
  
  Thanks again for your assistance with my citations for the grant application. I was pleasantly surprised by the findings and learnt a lot from you and your colleagues about the process.

**Early Career Researcher workshop feedback**

1. **Email from the Program Coordinator (2012)**

   What a wonderful series of workshops you and your team provided for the Early Career researchers over the past two weeks.

   The first group’s feedback certainly highlighted the value of the session and I have no doubt the second group’s will too. In fact I was quite surprised by the understanding of the group, not to mention the nature of some of their questions. At least they know where to go now or will accept an opportunity to meet with their Outreach Librarian! I will forward the feedback to you when it is collated.

   Please pass on my sincere thanks to all of your team for the professional and worthwhile job they carried out – we are indeed fortunate to have such a passionate group there to support researchers.

2. **Email from the Program Coordinator (2011)**

   As we suspected, this group really were happy with the entire session, and rated the session with a 100% approval rating. And the comments are great as well.

3. **Comment from a participant (2011)**

   Excellent session - best so far. Very relevant. Presentation very good. Practical session excellent.

**Email feedback from other libraries**

**Australasia**

- **Workshop feedback:** Once again, thank you very much for the wonderful workshop you offered to my team. You have energised the team and I have been receiving ongoing positive feedback. Just one example: Fantastic session yesterday, with [xxx] from UNSW, thanks[xxx]!
I also attach the evaluation report for the session. It is the most positive one I have seen all year.

- Workshop feedback: Of the 38 forms returned no-one rated the workshop less than 4 out 5. General comment: “Great content – keen to get started on work in this area” About key learning: “The importance of conversation back & forth between library & academics – relationship building- being clear about scope & disclaimers- types of academic enquiries”.

- Workshop feedback: I found the whole workshop relevant as I had little knowledge of bibliometrics beforehand and do not work in an Information Services capacity. It was great to see other aspects of services that libraries can provide to their clients

- Workshop feedback: I think we all are very grateful to UNSW for sharing in such depth the journey of your Research Impact Measurement Service

- Feedback from a library administrator: Thank you for allowing [xxx] to visit the [xxx]library and present her workshop for [xxx] Learning and Research Services staff last week. Her visit has been most successful. It has been invaluable for the staff to spend time with [xxx] and talk with her about experience at UNSW. Staff had time to ask questions, clarify and share ideas in a wider context than the usual day-to-day mode. I feel sure we will see a renewed energy in the team around the issue of developing researcher support services.

**USA**

Request for advice: I am...Librarian at the University of... and I am looking into the potential utility of the Libraries implementing a service much like the RIMS that is described in your article (attached). While the United States does not have a formal requirement like Australia’s ERA, our academic institutions are under pressure to demonstrate the value or impact of our research funds and activities.

Would you be willing and able to share with us the progress your group has made in providing this service, as well as more details about the services you provide? Specifically, we would like to know how the service is doing since it started; has business increased?

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For further information or clarification about UNSW Library’s RIMService, please contact:

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