White Rose Libraries

Innovation and Collaboration Annual report

October 2023 – September 2024

Photo: Jamie Davies on Unsplash

White Rose Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

University of Sheffield

UNIVERSITY of York

Governance

The Innovation and Collaboration Board (I/C) has recently restructured and welcomed new members, expanding representation for all three sites. The new structure has allowed a renewed focus on high level innovation and strategy as well as on opportunities for operational collaboration. Expanding the group has brought different perspectives from across the institutions.

WRL was pleased to welcome Elly Cope (Head of Access and Aquisitions, University of Leeds) as the new Board Chair. Elly has brought fresh perspective and direction to the group, encouraging particularly a renewed focus on practical areas of collaboration linked to where the strategies align.

More information on the structure of the Board and a list of current members can be found on the newly updated White Rose Libraries website, which features an informational page about Innovation and Collaboration activities currently being undertaken by WRL.

Photo: charlesdeluvio on UnSplash

Key strategic focus

To help give focus and direction to innovation and collaboration activities, the Board have pulled out some key areas of shared strategic priorities for the institutions. By looking across the individual strategic plans produced by each site, the Board identified five key areas of shared focus:

- **Digital literacy -** including staff skills and discussions on AI
- **Open research**
- **Digital infrastructure -** including IIIF and metadata
- **Collections** - including diversification, decolonisation, discoverability and accessibility
- **Engagement -** through inspiring curiosity and creativity

These key priorities will help shape innovation and collaboration activity and will form the context of institutional updates from each site, ensuring that all colleagues are kept up to date with relevant activities and developments across the three institutions.
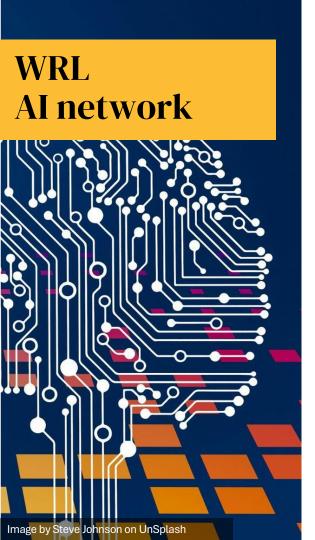
Image by pixabay on Pexels

WRL Roadshow

The Innovation and Collaboration Board has been engaged in discussion around the potential for a White Rose Libraries roadshow, with the WRL Office visiting the three sites to discuss what WRL is and what we do, and to facilitate discussion around this. The Board hope that this will raise the profile of WRUP, specifically, and also help colleagues understand the role WRL plays in forwarding shared strategic priorities and services at the three sites. Discussion and planning for this will continue over the coming months, and the institutional reps are working to identify specific hooks and areas of focus for these at each site.

Sharing Experience days

As part of a renewed drive to provide opportunities to share, the Board have been exploring the potential for Sharing Experience days across the three sites. These would allow colleagues from the institutional library teams to interact and share with each other across the institutions, to create an open dialogue of mutual sharing and learning across the sites. It is hope that this will help consolidate relationship across the sites, which will also facilitate future collaboration. The Board are working on identifying the best structure for this, and determining site-specific themes and hook to encourage engagement.

Image by fauxels on Pexels

WRL AI network

The Innovation and Collaboration board recently convened the WRL AI network, led by Gavin Boyce (Head of Faculty and Research Partnership, University of Sheffield). Membership drawn from the three institutions and spans a range of library teams, including customer services and metadata specialists. This group has had initial meetings to establish the aims and identify key areas of interest for the three sites, relating to supporting various uses of AI, particularly in library services. The group have explored some opportunities for developing training in AI usage and have looked at current practice and plans for AI integration across the three institutions.

This group will continue meeting bimonthly and will work with colleagues across the institutions to further explore and implement strategies for AI use.

Digital Skills

The Innovation and Collaboration Board commissioned a group to deliver shared digital skills development for professional services staff, with Cecilia Lowe (Assistant Director, Learning Enhancement Team, University of York) representing the Board in this. The group has met a few times and has two events planned before the end of the calendar year, focussed on digital data management and accessible practice. These focus areas are a result of feedback from staff (including a staff survey in Sheffield) and the view that staff are interested in upskilling in areas directly relevant to their current work. A 5 week data management online training course has been opened up to colleagues from all three sites, with the aim for each institution to offer a digital skills training event and linking to resources. A feedback form will be circulated following the events to gather engagement data, participant feedback on sessions, and suggestions for further sessions related to digital skills.
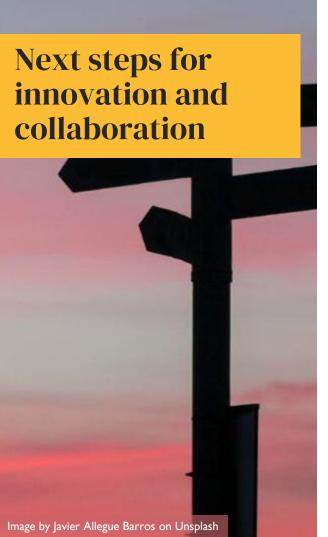
Collaboration suggestions form

The Innovation and Collaboration Board is always keen to hear new ideas for collaboration from colleagues across the three sites. This year the Board launched the Collaboration suggestion form to allow any colleagues to submit their thoughts, ideas, and proposals for potential areas of collaboration across the sites. This could be ideas for knowledge sharing, shared approaches to training or software, and areas of practical activity to collaborate one. These will be evaluated by the Board to explore the possibilities.

The Google Form can be accessed by institutional staff from internal webpages:

- York

- Leeds (link tbc)

- Sheffield

Image by diego on UnSplash

Next steps for innovation and collaboration

OER Network
The I&C Board recently took steps to reconvene the WRL Open Educational Resources Network, engaging in new developments in policy, usage, and systems together.

Shared Experience days
The Board are working on drafting a pilot programme for shared experience days across the sites to strengthen relationships and communication between the three universities and library departments

Digital skills
Exploring opportunities for working together to support Digital Skills for professional services staff

Internation Image Interoperability Framework
Colleagues across the institutions are exploring the viability of working together to use IIIF to collaboratively surface collections

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