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Electronic access to authoritative publications for RAE 2008

An innovative partnership will enable free electronic access to journal articles submitted to the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). Project partners announcing the plan include the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Publishers Licensing Society, CrossRef, Eduserv, the Copyright Licensing Agency and a wide array of rightsholders.

The RAE is a peer review process to evaluate the quality of research in UK higher education institutions (HEIs). This assessment informs the selective distribution of funds by the UK higher education funding bodies, and is administered on their behalf by the RAE team based at HEFCE.

For the assessment of research quality in different subject areas, HEIs make written submissions which may include up to four pieces of research output – made public between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2007 – for each researcher in their submission. The outputs can comprise a wide range of materials (e.g. books, conference proceedings, patents) but the majority of outputs cited are journal articles. In the previous RAE in 2001, a total of 117,171 journal articles were submitted for assessment. Over 75,000 of these were published by the 10 leading academic publishers and the rest were published by a diverse group of smaller publishers. Accessing these articles was therefore a serious challenge for RAE assessment panels, which this partnership is uniquely positioned to address.

Under the arrangement, which is free of charge, RAE panel members will be able to access full text electronic content directly from publishers' web-sites using cutting-edge technology from CrossRef and Eduserv. Other outputs cited in submissions which are not readily accessible in an electronic format, such as

books, edited volumes and non-print research outputs, can be accessed by RAE panel members in physical form.

As the RAE licence will be free, it will save HEFCE significant administrative costs. This reflects the partnership between HEFCE and publishers, and the value to the publishing industry in demonstrating that it can work together to provide innovative licensing and access solutions. 'We are delighted to be able to conclude this agreement, which will help RAE panel members access outputs for assessment and ease the burden of data collection for submitting institutions,' said Ed Hughes, RAE manager. 'HEFCE welcomes publishers' co-operation and the free licence to use copyright materials. These copyrights are of course held by authors, artists, and/or publishers and we acknowledge all parties,' he continued.

Alicia Wise of the Publishers Licensing Society said, 'This innovative and elegant solution has enabled a solution to a thorny access challenge. This clearly demonstrates that challenges can be overcome when publishers, intermediaries and universities work in partnership. The arrangement does have boundaries in order to protect publishers and other rights owners. It will not permit use of works other than for the RAE, or the long term storage of electronic files by universities.'

Notes to Editors



The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) distributes public money for teaching and research to universities and colleges. In doing so, it aims to promote high quality education and research, within a financially healthy sector. The Council also plays a key role in ensuring accountability and promoting good practice.



CrossRef is a non-profit membership association founded and directed by publishers. Its mission is to improve access to published scholarship

through collaborative technologies. CrossRef operates a cross-publisher citation linking system, and is a registration agency for Digital Object Identifiers.



In 2000 the contract between Eduserv and HEFCE was formed and in July 2003, the Eduserv Foundation was established to develop and support programmes that drive the effective application of IT in education. These schemes include research grants, assistive technology licences, tutor guides for vocational education and information literacy initiatives.



The Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd (CLA) is the UK's Reproduction Rights Organisation and a member of the International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations ([IFRRO](#)). Formed in 1982, it is a non-profit making company owned by its members, the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society ([ALCS](#)) and the Publishers Licensing Society ([PLS](#)), to encourage and promote the value of copyright.



The Publishers Licensing Society is a non-profit organisation representing UK publishers on matters relating to collective copyright and licensing. PLS works with thousands of publishers in the UK and internationally, operating with the trade associations for publishers' rights. For more information visit www.pls.org.uk

For more information on the Research Assessment Exercise see the RAE 2008 web-site www.rae.ac.uk

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