



# Accessing and Storing Knowledge project

<http://ask.oucs.ox.ac.uk/>

*Implementation using the JISC e-framework: some surmountable stumbling blocks*

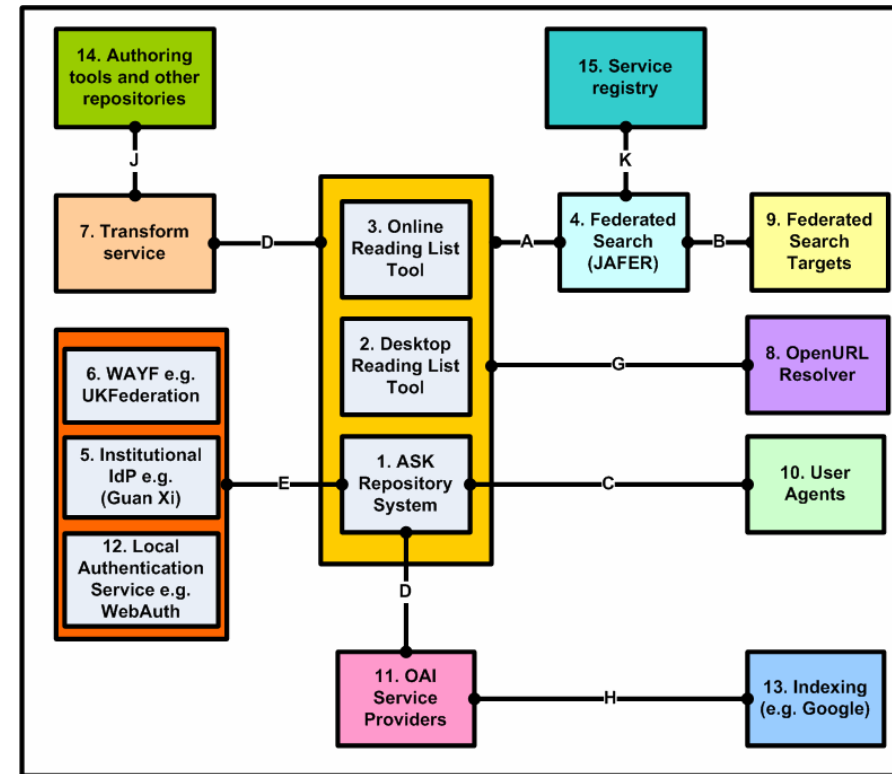
Project team:

Andrew Foster, Alistair Young, Howard Noble, Peter Crowther, Liz Masterman, Michael Loizou, Richard Doe, Shivram Rajamanickam

Presentation created during May 2007 by Howard Noble

# The ASK project in 180 seconds

- Created three open source (LGPL license) applications:
  - Online repository system
  - Online standalone reading list creation tool
  - Reading list management desktop application
- Built on existing open source project software:
  - Guan Xi (Shibboleth-compliant authentication)
  - eXist (metadata and group management)
  - VFS (content management and authorisation)
  - JAFER (federated search)
- Used the JISC e-learning framework (ELF) to define the service abstractions and shortlist interoperability specifications:
  - Metadata management: MODS
  - Harvesting: OAI-PMH
  - Federated search: Z39.50, SRW, SRU
  - Discover: OpenURL 0.1
  - License: Creative Commons
  - Authentication: Shibboleth



## Some observations



- Currently production 'services' such as VLEs and Student Record Systems rarely adopt the service-oriented approach
- The cost of developing and maintaining a robust and fast enough service that can be consumed by production-status institutional systems is likely to be high
- Testing integration points is extremely difficult where development cycles are not coordinated
- The great thing about standards is that there are so many to choose from

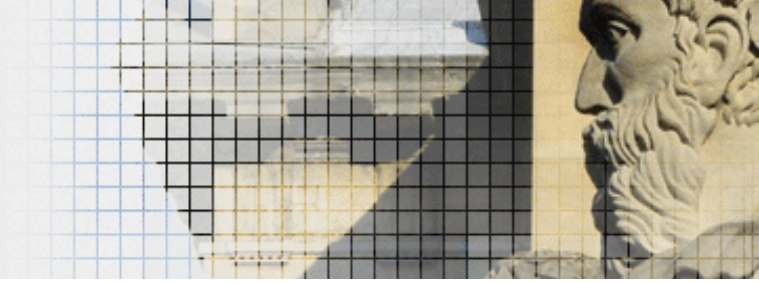


Wikipedia, Blogger, Flickr, YouTube,  
facebook...



- What can we learn from this approach to developing interoperability (“mash-up-ing”)
- How could these services interoperate with institutional services
- What specifically can we learn about specific service abstractions e.g. metadata management through ‘tagging’?
- How are these applications shaping mental models/ expectations of institutional systems
- Can we adopt/ adapt the business models behind developing and hosting these services

# Practical ideas for promoting the e-framework vision:



**Host pilot services** (test-bed idea) so that wide range of stakeholders can explore in a more concrete way the concepts behind the e-framework

Build greater confidence within the developer community that **performance and robustness of service are NOT problems** when adopting the service-oriented approach

Generate a **shortlist of relevant interoperability specifications** - smallest set possible

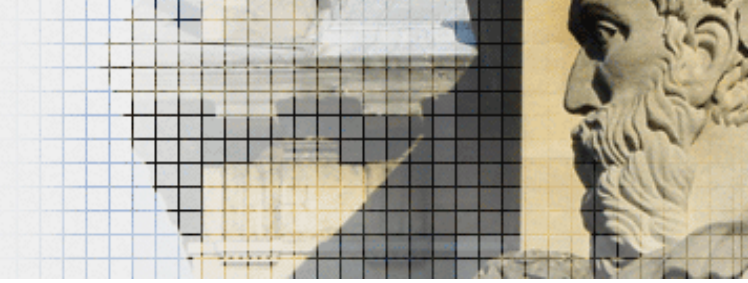
- Too much flexibility would equate to increased cost in developing and maintaining services and lead to unnecessary middleware projects

Support development of conformance with interoperability specifications by putting in place a permanent online 'code-bash' to promote **Agile development**

- Resolve ambiguities in specifications
- Exchange knowledge in successfully implementing specifications
- Start from the simplest implementation of an integration point and develop complexity in-line with requirements gathering and analysis

Look at solving problems through **process and policy development** alongside funding technical implementation projects

# Questions?



1. ASK Project website: <http://ask.oucs.ox.ac.uk>
2. ASK Wiki: [http://ask.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ask/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://ask.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ask/index.php/Main_Page)
3. ASK Repository System: [http://bream.oucs.ox.ac.uk:8080/AskClient/display\\_home.ask](http://bream.oucs.ox.ac.uk:8080/AskClient/display_home.ask)
4. ASK Sourceforge website (coming soon!): <http://sourceforge.net/projects/ask>

