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Link to Leeds Beckett Repository record:

<https://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/4710/>

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The aim of the Leeds Beckett Repository is to provide open access to our research, as required by funder policies and permitted by publishers and copyright law.

The Leeds Beckett repository holds a wide range of publications, each of which has been checked for copyright and the relevant embargo period has been applied by the Research Services team.

We operate on a standard take-down policy. If you are the author or publisher of an output and you would like it removed from the repository, please [contact us](#) and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

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## Request a copy: how a small button made a big impact

Our [institutional repository at Leeds Beckett](#) contains over 4,000 full text publications produced by our staff. The majority of these are journal articles, submitted in fulfillment of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) rules that recommend staff make their publications available open access in their institutional repository if they publish in a subscription journal (i.e. green open access). We also encourage our staff to upload as much of their research as possible, including books, chapters, slides, reports and films.

In an ideal world every one of our 4,000 research outputs would be freely available online for anyone to read:

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However, we do not live in an ideal world (if we did I'd be writing this from a beach in Hawaii) and many of our research outputs are restricted. This is either temporary due to an embargo applied by the publishers or permanent due to copyright:

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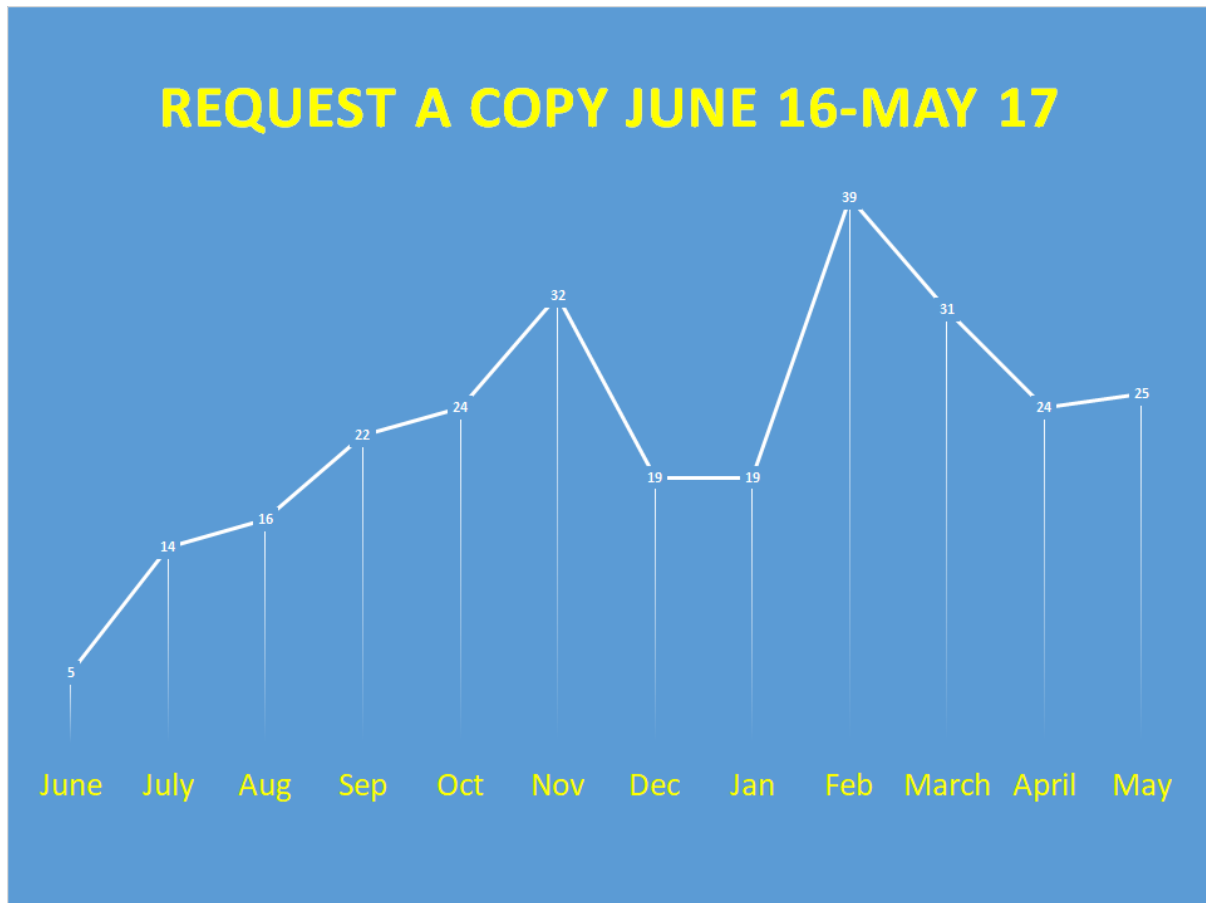
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Each record has a link to the published version of the output - but for many people they will not be able to access this if their library does not subscribe (assuming they are in Higher Education at all) or in the case of books/chapters, they will be asked to pay for a copy. This is where the 'Request a copy' button comes in.

This generates an email to our Research Services team, who check to see if the person requesting it can access it online anyway. If they can't, we then contact the author, provide them with the request and some copyright guidance, and if they are willing they can supply a copy of their publication directly to the person who made the request. In most cases they do

supply a file, but we always stress that it is their decision and they may wish to confer with co-authors or encourage the person making the request to wait until the embargo is due to expire.

When we first added this small feature to our repository we did so without fanfare or any belief that it would make a difference. But, as these tiny changes are wont to do, it surprised us! Between June 2016-17 we had 271 requests, with an average of 23 per month.



We had assumed (always a dangerous thing to do in research...!) that anyone requesting a copy was doing so because it was the only way for them to access the publication. However, 30% of these requests were for texts that were already accessible, either via open access or subscription. Indeed, of these available publications, 69% of them were requested by our own students and 83% of them were articles that we already subscribed to.

This set our librarian senses twitching, and we investigated why so many students were trying to access journal articles via the repository. We discovered that our library search tool indexes the repository, and that the icon displayed suggested that students can access the research directly. As a result, we liaised with our Library Systems team who requested a change to the icon:



## 1. **Measuring thermal performance in steady-state conditions at each stage of a**

By: Farmer, D; Gorse, C; Swan, W; Fitton, R; Brooke-Peat, M; Miles-Shenton, D; Johnston, D, Elsevier BV; Language: English, Database: Leeds Beckett Repository

The methodology used for measuring the thermal performance of fabric retrofit systems which were applied to a solid v



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As this change comes into effect, we also plan to train our frontline staff and academic librarians on accessing open and restricted research in the repository.

This small button has also encouraged us to make other changes to our practice. We now, more than ever, encourage staff to upload all their research; even if an output is permanently restricted, there is still an opportunity for the audience to access it. This is the ultimate drive behind what we do, and this button is another tool in our belt to disseminate the amazing research being done at our institution.

Beyond our training and statistics, it has also had a surprisingly human effect. With each request, the person trying to access the research is asked to provide a reason. These have been far more varied than we imagined and have been well-received by our staff, who rarely get a chance to see who is reading their research.

Some of our favourites include:

“As a frequenter of the F Club [a nightclub in Leeds] and a member of a band that formed through going there, I would love to read people's reminiscences....” - a request for <http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/2929/>

“I am a defensive tactics and firearms instructor at the Dutch Police and currently studying psychology” - a request for <http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/2896/>

We would love to hear how other institutions have implemented the ‘Request a copy’ button and any ideas for how we can further develop this functionality.

This blog post is based on a presentation given at the Internet Librarian International: The Library Innovation Conference on 18th October 2017 - slides available in [the Leeds Beckett institutional repository](#). For more information please contact Jennifer on [j.b.bayjoo@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:j.b.bayjoo@leedsbeckett.ac.uk) or on Twitter @BeckettResearch.