

Attention: ■

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New ARC rules encourage open access research

Moves to encourage legal open access to all research funded under the Australian Research Council's Discovery Projects scheme are welcomed by Queensland University of Technology legal copyright academics.

Professor Brian Fitzgerald, who heads the Open Access to Knowledge (OAK) Law Project, funded by the Federal Government and based at QUT, said the ARC had announced it would encourage researchers whose projects it had funded to place data and publications in online, open repositories such as QUT's eprints (www.eprints.qut.edu.au)

He said researchers concerned about copyright issues when making their findings openly and easily accessible according to ARC requirements would find a comprehensive guide to copyright management strategies in the OAK Law Report published online this year.

"The ARC's announcement highlights the importance of good copyright management practices in systems designed to promote open access to academic and research output," Professor Fitzgerald said.

"The OAK Law Report (www.oaklaw.qut.edu.au) provides a blueprint for research copyright management that sets out the relevant stakeholders' copyright interests and ways to manage relationships between stakeholders to achieve effective open access."

Professor Fitzgerald said the emerging open access environment called for all Australian research and funding institutions to articulate clear policies and copyright management frameworks.

The OAK Law Report examined tools that could be used to help universities and research organisations formulate appropriate open access policies and copyright management practices.

"The Report foreshadowed the introduction of stronger requirements by research funding bodies, such as the ARC, that are designed to ensure that data and publications produced as a result of funded research projects are made more openly accessible to the research and academic community," Professor Fitzgerald said.

"It explains who the relevant stakeholders are, what copyright interests they hold and how the relationships between each stakeholder needs to be understood and managed if open access policies are to be effectively carried through into practice."

Professor Fitzgerald said the OAK Law Project was preparing copyright guidelines that would outline options for universities and academic authors for balancing copyright for publications with the principles of open access.

"The copyright guidelines will provide examples of publishing agreements and model clauses consistent with open access principles," Professor Fitzgerald said.

The OAK Law Project is funded by the Australian Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training, under the Research Information Infrastructure Framework for Australian Higher Education as part of the Backing Australia's Ability - An Innovation Action Plan for the Future.

OAK Law Project: Professor Brian Fitzgerald 0419 704 688.

Media contact: Niki Widdowson, QUT media officer, 07 3138 1841 or n.widdowson@qut.edu.au.