

White Paper on Enhancing Systemic Support and Recognition for Arts Practice Research

Executive Summary

[This version of the document is a DRAFT dated 23.06.26, for consultation only, not yet finalised as representative of a wide range of sectoral opinions. Readers are encouraged to contribute, after reading the document, to the feedback/consultation here:

[Enhancing Systemic Support and Recognition for Arts Practice Research: White Paper Feedback – Fill in form](#)

The survey is open until 31 July 2026. A full executive summary will be written once consultation comments from Imbas members and the wider ecosystem are incorporated and a final draft is agreed.]

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Introduction

Ireland has a thriving arts practice research landscape across its higher education institutions (HEIs). This white paper is aimed at supporting the further recognition and systemic embeddedness of arts practice research. It builds on the findings of the *Perspectives* report (2021), which outlined current practices at Irish HEIs, and adds recommendations for how the creative work produced at those HEIs can best be recognised, valued, supported, archived, and disseminated.

To meet this aim, this document sets out some working definitions of arts practice research and provides context on its background. It details key principles of the field and discusses how arts practice research outputs are currently evaluated at Irish HEIs. It outlines the relevance of FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable) data for arts practice research, and discusses preservation and dissemination best practices, as well as sustainable arts practice ecologies, before concluding with a summary of strategic recommendations.

This white paper emerged from the interinstitutional project *Sharing Arts Practice FAIRly*, funded by the National Open Research Forum (NORF). It complements the project's best practice and technical guideline documents, which are aimed at arts practice researchers as well as technical support staff and those working in information technology library services. It also draws from existing university policy documents to present best practice recommendations for arts practice research in Ireland.

Arts practice research is “carried out by artists, using their own creative practices as the research method” (Mercier et al., 2021, 1). It encompasses all art forms and is fundamental to knowledge formation in and for society. Taking the *Perspectives* report as its point of departure, this document highlights the specific needs of performing arts, broadly defined, while embracing all artistic practices. The recommendations are designed to apply broadly across the full spectrum of artistic practices and the systems that support them.

A central challenge of arts practice research is the documentation and dissemination of embodied processes and ephemeral practices. Arts practice research generates a diverse portfolio of outputs at all stages of the project cycle, any of which might need particular care or treatment when entering research management systems, personal or official archives. Some examples across different artistic domains are mapped out below (see Figure 1):

Figure 1: Sample of Possible Outputs from Arts Practice Research (by domain)

Artistic Domain:	Generated during process:	Generated in production:
Music	Workshops, scores, recordings, edit files	Events, performances, audio and video recordings, records
Dance	Workshops, source images & texts, meeting records, rehearsal reports & documentation	Events, performances, show reports, programmes, digital content, evaluation & review
Theatre	Notebooks, source texts & images, rehearsal reports, rehearsal documentation	Events, performances, show reports, programmes, digital content, evaluations & reviews
Film	Notebooks, drafts of scripts and storyboards, digital models, dailies & outtakes	Showings & promotional events, film files or reels, programmes, digital content, evaluation & reviews
Visual Art	Studio practice, sketches & models, draft work, digital media, correspondence	Artworks, exhibitions & installations, images, digital media, video, audio, catalogues, archives
Literature	Drafts, notebooks, collections, research materials	Readings, workshops, printed pages, publications
VR / AR / XR	Interactive workshops, sketches, codes, meeting transcripts, interviews	Large files (legible with specialist equipment), code, screenshots, video, audio, user data
Web-based art	Drafts, source images, code, editor archives	Code, URLs, DOIs, screenshots, user data

All stages of artistic production may include a wealth of digital material, such as recorded music, videos of dance performances, photographs of theatre performances, and online traces of artistic work. This is in addition to the journal articles, books, chapters, and papers that many researchers produce.

Currently, Ireland lacks a national policy for arts practice research generally, and there are no whole-sector guidance documents for how the digital outputs of arts practice research should be preserved or shared. This results in significant variation in practice across the sector, including inconsistent or poorly supported archiving, ad hoc solutions to evaluation and dissemination, and dependency on individual champions and advocates within the HEI and arts landscapes.

In addressing these challenges, this document is designed for use by:

- artists, artistic communities, and audiences;
- arts practice researchers, within and outside academic institutions;
- interdisciplinary and industry collaborators;
- community partners and collaborators;

- librarians, archivists and repository administrators;
- technical support staff for documentation / web infrastructure;
- research office leadership and support staff;
- senior HEI and sectoral leaders;
- national and international policy-makers;
- national and international funding bodies.

Because this document advocates for a form of engaged knowledge-making fundamental to human culture, it is of vital relevance to every member of society. Ireland has a prominent global reputation as a cultural leader, but also has untapped potential to become a global leader in artistic research. Ireland combines factors that make it unusually well positioned. It has strong cultural roots in ancient traditions, but it also sustains a vibrant contemporary creative arts community that works internationally at the cutting edge of practice. It has invested heavily in growing a university sector with research as a strength, while also increasing the arts training available to secondary school students and maintaining community ties with industry and working artists. It has market access to the large UK, EU, and US markets with long governmental and diasporic ties in all three distinct regions. Finally, at a time when other historically democratic governments are cracking down on free expression, Ireland has retained an open arts policy with minimal interference, by global or historical standards. This is the moment for Ireland to progress new visions for artistic research.

Definitions and Contexts

Arts practice research was formalised in Scandinavia and the UK in the 1980s as an approach to research where artistic practice is the process and result. Different terms are used in different research cultures, with “artistic research” most commonly used in continental Europe, and “practice as research” or “practice-based research” more common in the UK and Australia. “Arts practice research” is used for the Irish context in the *Perspectives: Arts Practice and Research* report (Mercier et al. 2, 2021), which outlined the current state of arts practice research in this country. That report was published by Imbas (from the Irish word “Imbas,” meaning inspiration), Ireland’s national research forum for arts practice research.¹

Perspectives also presents Frayling’s definitions of research into, through, and for art. It states that research “into art engages with artistic outputs as objects or texts of investigation, and may be carried out by musicologists, historians, sociologists or other researchers without the inclusion of artistic practice”. Meanwhile, research “through art harnesses artistic practices as research methods, but not primarily for artistic

¹ The word also means “great knowledge ; poetic talent, inspiration ; fore-knowledge ; magic lore” (eDIL s.v. 1 *imbas*, *imbus*, 2013).

purposes. Examples of this include research on the use of singing to improve literacy or investigating the use of dance to enhance physical health.” Finally, research “*for art* engages in artistic practice with a view to creating new knowledge through this process” (Mercier et al. 4, 2021).

The report also notes that arts practice research meets the UK’s research excellence framework’s definition of research as “a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared” (REF 2029). Within the arts practice landscape, that research takes many forms, and requires principles for how it should be treated.

Arts practice research has been described as “a form of research that possesses a solid basis embedded in artistic practice and which creates new knowledge and/or insight and perspectives within the arts, contributing both to artistry and to innovation” (“Key Concepts for AEC Members Artistic Research: An AEC Council ‘White Paper’, 2015”). As such, the practice itself is the research. In its privileging of artistic interrogation, it throws into relief the imperative for creativity in all research.

Principles

A core principle to be considered with arts practice research is parity of esteem for all types of artistic research. This includes equality between genres, between reflection and practice, and levels of community engagement. **The Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research (2020) provides a recent European example of principles ...**

The declaration states that higher education institutions “operate predominately within a research context and have a responsibility to conduct” arts practice research. It notes that these institutions often “interact with related enterprise Research & Development” and “contribute directly to the creation of intellectual property in arts, entertainment and media through research practice,” which gives them a responsibility to “offer learning and teaching programmes that are built on state-of-the-art knowledge”. The declaration also underlines that artistic research “is validated through peer review covering the range of disciplinary competences addressed by the work” (“Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research”).

Within Ireland, Imbas has also noted its commitment to develop a distinctive and dynamic model of arts practice research, attuned and responsive to the particular culture of this island, its aesthetic traditions and lively contemporaneity. It is interested in articulating the distinctly Irish context for arts practice research in respect of, for example the relationship between the arts and orality, multiple forms of originality, collective ownership, the continuum of engagement in the arts from “amateur” to “professional,” forms of deep artistic expertise that defy amateur/professional dichotomies, the importance of the “local,” the recognition of Irish aesthetic traditions

located within a global context, emerging contemporary and experimental practices, and emerging patterns in relation to hybridity and interdisciplinarity.

Valuing and Evaluating Arts Practice Research

The Irish HEI sector uses a range of practices and key performance indicators for evaluating arts practice research with respect to the awarding of PhDs or the promotion of staff. For example, an important criterion for staff tends to be that a sustained trajectory of performance is visible in the relevant period, that is then expected to continue after a candidate is promoted. Key performance indicators can include research trajectory and creative development, extension of knowledge, impact for wider society, and indicators of excellence, significance, and prestige as appropriate to the project. As with all research, the criteria reward the development of new knowledge or the extension of the boundaries of existing concepts, while ensuring parity of esteem for a diversity of artistic practices and worldviews. If that knowledge has an effect on a wider community, this is also advantageous. These are the norms for all promotion regimes, and they pose specific challenges for creative arts. Indicators of excellence beyond publishing in journals or books include, for example, a work being commissioned or funded, which is considered peer review. Reviews in the press, broadcasts on national and international media, or a performance being included in a festival may also grant prestige. Particular publishers of poetry and fiction, theatre companies, and film festivals may be used as examples of indicators of esteem. Commercial recordings of music, online engagements, public performances, and installations are also considered. Arts practice activities and outputs that indicate the esteem of expert peers within arts practice communities beyond the 'professional' sector per se is also essential to ensuring equality, diversity, and inclusivity in how arts practice research is recognised and assessed, and in fostering excellence within the field. Other concerns include the type of funding received, the degree of public engagement, the level of artistic input, methodology, and how the work is disseminated. All of these aspects combine to provide an indication of how a work is esteemed.

FAIR

The best way to ensure that digital artistic outputs are preserved, disseminated, and counted is to align them with FAIR principles of data management. FAIR stands for findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable, and it is internationally recognised and recommended by the Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI) ("FAIR Principles"). For a piece of data to be FAIR, it must have full and consistently applied metadata, use a standard file type rather than a proprietary one, be free to access, work with other systems, and use a unique identifier like a digital object identifier (DOI). A DOI for a piece of arts practice research data provides a permanent (or as permanent as can be guaranteed in the constantly evolving internet) home for that output, a persistent link to that specific piece of data, which is designed not to break and is independent of any

particular website. For arts practice research data, this gives a stability that is very valuable for that work being counted.

In this sector it is common to have general data management plans (including some information on FAIR principles), which are often a requirement for funded research, and there are guidelines such as disciplinary norms for arts practice research and how it is assessed, but there are no specific guidelines for data management of arts practice research projects or how they can align with FAIR principles. The *Sharing Arts Practice FAIRly* project addresses this through its case study on current practices at University of Limerick and a corresponding field report on the other three universities, both of which use semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders to inform their findings, as well as the best practice guidelines, the technical document, and this white paper.

A piece of data can be FAIR but not open, and this is very useful when dealing with arts practice research outputs that cannot be fully shared for ethical or copyright reasons. For example, a community songwriting project might involve the contributions of people who do not want their work to be shared indefinitely. In another instance, recorded music might be released commercially by a record label, and this would be copyrighted. The performance of a play might not be shareable because that play is under copyright, or because of the intellectual property rights of designers, performers, or included media or sounds. FAIR records of the digital outputs of these kinds of projects can still be created without having the file itself be publicly accessible. A file can be uploaded, for example to a university repository, and embargoed, but the metadata can still be visible (for example details on where and when a performance took place, credits of contributors, a research statement or description). Crucially, the piece would still have a DOI that can be pointed to when an artist researcher is seeking funding or promotion.

FAIR principles in detail mean that an output is:

- **Findable:** a user can locate the data using a unique, persistent identifier, in this case a DOI. To aid with finding, the data should have rich descriptive metadata describing it.
- **Accessible:** that metadata can be found using hyper-text transfer protocol secure (HTTPS). This provision also allows for the metadata to be “accessible, even when the data are no longer available,” which applies to the cases involving ethical or copyright concerns where the data may be not open (“FAIR Principles”). Embargoes can be used to protect some data. Using standard file formats also ensures future accessibility.
- **Interoperable:** the metadata conforms to standards of metadata such as Dublin Core. When using a university repository such as DSpace, the metadata fields will already be aligned with a metadata standard, and library or other technical staff who maintain the repository should ensure that the metadata supplied for a given piece of data is relevant to those standards before issuing it a DOI.

- **Reusable:** this ensures that the data has a rights statement or licence associated with it that details whether and how it can be reused. Information about licences can be found below and from Creative Commons (“About CC Licenses”).

Further detail can be found in the DRI’s description of FAIR principles (“FAIR Principles”). These guidelines are focused on the principles as they apply to arts practice research data. For assessing the FAIR compatibility of a piece of data, online tools such as F-UJI may be useful. F-UJI is “a web service to programmatically assess FAIRness of research data objects based on metrics developed by the FAIRsFAIR project” (Devaraju and Huber).

Licensing

Creative Commons licences provide a framework for creators to specify how they want their work to be shared. They can be used when a researcher wants their work to be shareable for free, but potentially under certain conditions, as long as the work is not already copyrighted by a publisher or record label, for example. Creative Commons licences form a modular system that allows the researcher to include or exclude elements that state whether they allow a work to be changed, whether they want credit given to the original piece, and whether the work can be used for commercial purposes or not. A user should “choose the CC license that suits [their] needs and then communicate this choice in a way that will be clear to people who come across [their] work. As part of this communication, [they] should include a link to the license [they’ve] chosen” (“About CC Licenses”). The following are the licence types provided by Creative Commons:

CC BY

- Attribution only
- This licence specifies that a piece of content can be shared, republished, remixed, edited, adapted or otherwise reused and disseminated in any way, commercially or non-commercially, as long as the original creator is credited.

CC BY-SA

- Attribution, same terms
- The addition of SA to a licence means that if a piece of content is shared, it must be shared under the same terms, i.e. it must also carry a CC BY-SA licence. The original creator must be credited, and the work can be changed and released in any way as long as it is again licenced as CC BY-SA.

CC BY-NC

- Attribution, non-commercial

- CC BY-NC specifies that the person reusing the work cannot use it for commercial gain. They must give credit to the original author, but they do not have to share the work under the same terms, and they are free to change it.

CC BY-NC-SA

- Attribution, non-commercial, same terms
- This licence is a combination of the two previous licences. Under this licence, a piece of work can be changed and shared, but it cannot be used commercially, credit to the original must be given, and it must be shared under the same terms.

CC BY-ND

- Attribution, no derivatives
- This licence dictates that attribution must be given and that the work cannot be changed, remixed, or edited; it must be reproduced exactly as in its original form. Credit must be given to the original author, and there is no restriction on the work being used in a commercial context.

CC BY-NC-ND

- Attribution, non-commercial, no derivatives
- Works shared under CC BY-NC-ND cannot be changed in any way and cannot be used for commercial gain. Credit must be given to the original author.

CC0

- Public domain
- This licence has no restrictions on how the work can be used. It can be changed, sold, and redistributed without giving credit to the original author.

Other resources

Other resources in this area include the Digital Repository of Ireland, which is focused on “the preservation of Ireland’s humanities, cultural heritage, and social sciences digital data for long-term access and discovery” (“About Us”). Their collection policy includes “materials generated by researchers in Ireland, held by Irish Institutions, or digital material pertaining to the island of Ireland” and specifies that “the material should be of social, historical, political, scientific or economic significance or be of potential enduring interest to the culture of the island of Ireland” (Digital Repository of Ireland 2). In addition to written material, the types of data that can be submitted include “images (paintings, drawings, prints, posters and photographs) . . . sheet music and music recordings, video recordings, ephemera, and research data from a range of Social Sciences and Humanities projects” (Digital Repository of Ireland 2). The

repository is an invaluable resource and offers sustainable preservation and leading expertise. Another useful resource is the Society for Artistic Research's dedicated Research Catalogue, which is "a free, open, and non-commercial platform for artistic research, developed by SAR for documenting, presenting, and publishing knowledge created through artistic research" (*The Research Catalogue (RC) | Society for Artistic Research*). The catalogue enables a user to add licence information, but it does not provide DOIs, unlike the DRI or institutional repositories. A researcher's own institutional repository may offer on-site support, the ability to work with library and technical support staff to make one's submission work best, and an association with the university, which could be important for funding or progression.

Other countries

In the UK there is no national data management policy for arts practice research outputs. The Arts and Humanities Research Council also does not have a data management policy of its own, as this comes under the UK Research and Innovation data management policy more broadly. This policy is short and does not mention arts practice research (*Policy Framework on Research Data*). Institutions have their own policies, with some that are focused on arts practice work. The Royal College of Art's Research Data Management Policy is useful in this regard, as it specifically mentions the types of media generated in arts practice research, including "image data (2D, 3D and video), audio data (music, sounds) sketchbooks, log books, trials, prototypes, ceramic glaze recipes, objects, and correspondence" (Royal College of Art 4). This document also gives concise detail on repositories and persistent digital identifiers (PDIs) (Royal College of Art 4). It does not provide a step-by-step guide for artist researchers on how to preserve and disseminate their data.

Best Practices

The best practice recommendations will be broken down into the phases of a project.

Planning

These guidelines recognise that artistic work may begin with a formal plan or may begin more spontaneously, evolving over time to become an arts practice research project. In either case, if the researcher desires to disseminate and preserve their research, it is recommended to consider early in a project how this might work, as it could affect the types of media that are generated by a project. For example, it may be useful to note what file types for images are appropriate under FAIR before starting to take photographs of a work in progress (it is important to avoid proprietary image formats that might be associated with a particular camera or editing software). It is important to discuss this with collaborators, especially if the artist-researcher is not personally recording the process and has given that role to another person (for example, a

photographer). While every artist's process will be different, it is best practice for data management to have a plan for how the work will be recorded before it commences.

One should consider:

- The nature of a project and what aspects of it will be captured in digital form.
- Who will do this capturing.
- What equipment they will use and what types of files this generates.
- How those files will be stored initially and permanently.
- Whether there will be any additional digital media created before or after the main event or performance, e.g. promotional materials.
- The ethics of capture, the informed consent of those captured, if they involve human subjects.

The file types used should be standard files that can be accessed by anyone with any modern computer. For example, this excludes MS Word files and other Microsoft files, as one requires either an active Microsoft subscription or another program that can open such files; the process should be more seamless than this, and the files should just open. Similarly, the project files of a digital audio workstation (such as .als for Ableton Live) are not FAIR, but the finished audio output of a project and the separate stems that it comprises should all be available in WAV or MP3 format, which are FAIR.

FAIR-compatible file types for arts practice research include:

- Audio: WAV, MP3, FLAC
- Video: MPEG, MKV, MXF
- Text: PDF, XML, HTML, TXT
- Image: TIFF, JPEG, PNG, GIF
- Spreadsheets: CSV

This list is not exhaustive but is intended to capture the most common types of files that could be generated in the process of a piece of arts practice work. More extensive lists can be found in Deutz et al. 2025 and Smith 2025.

Creation of the data

The data should be created in alignment with university data protection protocols, which for example may specify that university-owned equipment should be used for creating data. The interviews for this project detailed that arts practice researchers very often use their own personal equipment rather than university hardware, sometimes for conceptually specific or research-relevant reasons. These guidelines acknowledge that it makes complete sense for the production of artistic work that artists would prefer to use their own gear. For best practices, files should be moved from personal equipment to university cloud storage (such as OneDrive) as soon as possible after they have been created. Files created on university equipment should also be transferred off those

devices and on to university cloud storage, as this is considered more secure than a physical device which could be lost, damaged, or stolen. It can be a good idea to also back things up to a hard drive, but most forms of commercially available flash memory slowly degrade over time. A proprietary system like OneDrive is not a permanent solution and is not FAIR; for long-term preservation institutional repositories should be used.

Preservation

Once the data has been created, in the absence of a national repository, if the researcher chooses to preserve it, it should be uploaded to their institutional repository. Many forms of commercially available cloud services also involve researchers in transnational networks that can affect privacy, security, and data integrity, as well as involving ecological and political risks. Institutional repositories will require metadata to describe the digital work. This may include:

- Type, denoting whether the item is an image, a video, a recording of music, software, a poster, an article, etc.
- Author's name, with the option to add multiple authors
- Title, the title given to a particular item by the artist-researcher
- Date (of performance, creation, publication, as relevant)
- Publisher (if applicable)
- Language
- Subject keywords; terms that will help an end user to find this item when browsing the repository
- Abstract, a short description of the item
- Funder or sponsor details
- Licence details (often Creative Commons will be applicable)

This process should be repeated for individual items. One should upload the original file and not a link to YouTube or Spotify, for example, as these proprietary platforms cannot be accessed by everyone, their links could change, or they could cease to exist. When a user submits their item, it and its metadata will be checked by the institutional repository team of that university, who will then publish the item to the repository's website, where it can be viewed by anyone. If needed, an embargo can be added. When the item is published by the institutional repository team, it is given a DOI, and that stable link can be cited, and it should always lead back to the original item.

There can be issues with institutional repositories. An interviewee reported a limit of the size of file that can be uploaded to their repository, which is problematic for arts practice research work that may involve video or audio files, yet also understandable from a resourcing perspective. Another issue is long-term access to the repository for PhD students and staff members who are not permanent. When their institutional login

is deactivated, they can still access the published version of their repository entry, but they cannot edit it or add new files. A more sustainable solution is needed for this. However, a university repository remains the current best practice option for publishing arts practice research data, as once an item is published it is supported into the future by that institution.

Dissemination

DOIs apply to individual items, for example photographs, posters, videos, and artistic statements in text. A particular project, for example a production of an original play, might produce any of these digital objects and more. In that case, these best practice guidelines recommend collecting these into a creative portfolio so that all items associated with a particular project can be accessed together. This creative portfolio should be built around one document, an artist statement with its own DOI, which links to the other DOIs associated with that project. This should be hosted on the institutional repository. This can serve as the landing page for anyone searching for information about that project. The artist-researcher's public-facing research profile (such as Pure, as is used in UL) can then link to that one central DOI for that project. The project can then be counted as a whole, alongside their other published work. With both the institutional repository and the public-facing research profile records of the project, collaborators can be listed as co-authors of the same piece of data. This is the best current platform for disseminating the digital records of groundbreaking arts practice research.

Considerations and challenges

While arts practice research digital outputs can be given a significant platform using the process described in these guidelines, some challenges remain. Stakeholders expressed the need for more resources, in both infrastructure and personnel. Institutional repositories with larger storage available per item would be more beneficial for arts practice work. A need was expressed for a national repository for arts practice research data. Dedicated training for arts practice researchers in uploading their material would also be beneficial; it has been evident from the work of this project that meeting in person and helping a researcher with uploading and entering metadata can improve their skills and confidence considerably in this area.

The ways in which funding is recognised presents a significant challenge in the arts practice research landscape. Within the university system, funding from recognised academic channels – such as Research Ireland, European Research Council, Horizon Europe, etc. – is counted when the funding won by researchers is tabulated. However, funding from arts bodies such as the Arts Council in Ireland is sometimes not counted in these calculations. Some arts practice researchers working within the university system receive Arts Council funding, Ealaín na Gaeltachta funding, or other prestigious

arts practice funding. These are signifiers of esteem in the same way as winning funding from an academic funding council and should be recognised as such. This would more accurately reflect the impact and esteem achieved by arts practice researchers and their projects.

Technical challenges include the fact that files, even those considered best practice at this time, can become obsolete. The ones listed in this document are the current best options that are supposed to still be accessible in the future, or that could be converted into another file type which would be used instead. Other technical challenges include updating metadata for a creative project that might evolve over time or add new performances (projects can span over years and change significantly), and, related to this, versioning control for creative works. Joint authorship may also present challenges, particularly with collaborators based in different institutions (and, while this document is focused on the Irish context, collaborations are increasingly international), or if collaborators want to be credited in different ways. Sometimes, a collaborator may not be an author of the project, as in the case of a photographer paid to take images of a performance; the creator of the performance is the author, and the photographer may be credited for their work in another part of the document rather than as a main author in the metadata. Rights of pieces performed (for example, copyrighted music or plays) are also a consideration, with those works needing to be embargoed or not shared open access.

Another challenge is that sometimes the repository system used by an institution can change. DOIs should remain for items, but the process can involve complications, and it requires users to learn new systems. A related challenge for these guidelines is that the use of different repository systems in different universities makes it difficult to be specific in the advice given. These guidelines attempt to be general enough that they can be applied to different institutional repositories and public-facing research profile platforms. These guidelines also acknowledge the pragmatism of researchers using what is available to them when it is best fit for their own purposes – using Microsoft systems for storage when an institutional repository cannot admit large enough files, for example – and acknowledges that an artist-researcher's comfort with a workflow for making their art as seamlessly as possible is important. The guidelines maintain that institutional repositories remain the most stable, accessible, and FAIR approach to preserving and disseminating arts practice research data.

Recommendations

Given the above considerations, this white paper makes the following recommendations:

- A more robust national infrastructure for storing and sharing digital objects linked to artistic research is needed. Currently different HEIs use different

systems, some of which are not well suited to the specific requirements of arts practice research outputs. A national repository would benefit researchers along with improvements to institutional repository capabilities.

- We recommend an artistic research statement to frame an artistic output. This central document can provide information on the impact and context of an artistic work and link to the DOIs of the media associated with that work, along with providing key metadata. A template that can be followed by any arts practice researcher would aid this significantly.
- There should be greater recognition of arts practice research outputs in HEI returns. Artistic outputs should be considered as research outputs in their own right, and therefore equivalent in importance to traditional academic research outputs such as books and monographs. This should be counted when that researcher is applying for progression or funding. It would also be a more accurate reflection of a researcher's career. The above recommendation on an artistic statement provides a solution as that document can be counted, with its own DOI, and represent an artistic project.
- The vital role played by artistic funding in supporting arts practice research needs to be recognised also when funding won is counted and work is evaluated. Funding form bodies such as the Arts Council or Ealaín na Gaeltachta underscores groundbreaking creative work within the university system and should be recognised within that system alongside the support received from academic funding bodies.
- Shared guidelines and policies across the sector on arts practice research, how it is conducted and evaluated, and how it is preserved and disseminated. This white paper suggests policies that can be used throughout the field for more alignment and attention to the supports needed on a national level for arts practice researchers.

Conclusion

Arts practice research produces a wide variety of creative outputs, many of which can be documented digitally in diverse way. Currently, those outputs are not as visible online as the written outputs of the same researchers. Better representation of the work on which many arts practice researchers spend most of their time can be achieved through best practice guidelines, more developed policy at university and national level, and better resources for technical support staff. The visibility can also be aided by following the guidance in this document. Researchers should plan in advance, with technical support staff, how their work will be recorded, what types of files it will output, whether they are FAIR-aligned, and how to licence and attribute them. Data should be

created and initially stored in compliance with university data protection regulations, and it should be preserved on university repositories using metadata and processes that correspond with FAIR principles. The pieces of data associated with a particular project should be gathered together into a creative portfolio, with a single artistic statement document with its own DOI that links to the other DOIs of the different items from that project. This should then be disseminated through the university's public-facing research profile. Working together, artist-researchers and technical support staff can ensure that this groundbreaking work is seen and counted.

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