

Joint University of Southampton/Economic and Social Research
Council and Oxford e-Research Centre Press Release

October 2009

ESRC appoint National Strategic Director of e-Social Science

Professor David De Roure of University of Southampton has been appointed to the new role of Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) National Strategic Director of e-Social Science, with Dr Marina Jirotko of the Oxford e-Research Centre as Deputy Director. Both are part of the e-Research South consortium.

The appointments, which begin this month and run for three years, mean that Professor De Roure and Dr Jirotko will take a key strategic role in maximising the uptake, use and impact of new e-technologies across the Social Science community. They will also develop a coherent inter-agency approach drawing on various national and international e-Social Science initiatives.

'In the past five years, the National Centre for e-Social Science (NCeSS) has made excellent progress towards establishing powerful new research tools and methods,' said Professor De Roure who directs e-Research activities at the University of Southampton's School of Electronics and Computer Science (ECS). 'Our experience in e-Research, coupled with the fact that Southampton is the home of the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM), puts us in a great position to build on the achievements of NCeSS and communicate these new approaches to the broader research community and the next generation of researchers.'

Dr Jirotko, Associate Director of the Oxford e-Research Centre, added 'My background in both social and computer science will enable me to assist in the coordination of training and capacity building activities to embed e-Social Science techniques in research practice and make effective use of emerging infrastructure.'

Professor Ian Diamond, Chief Executive at ESRC said:

'ESRC is pleased to announce the appointment of Professor De Roure and Dr Jirotko, who combined will provide an ideal leadership team, bringing extensive experience and expertise to the NCeSS research programme to enable social scientists to harness the wealth of digital technologies in undertaking innovative world leading research.'

Professor De Roure has just returned from an intensive tour of the US with Professor Malcolm Atkinson, UK e-Science Envoy, on a fact-finding mission which is set to inform UK strategy and develop international collaborations.

‘e-Science and e-Social Science are very highly thought of internationally,’ he said. ‘We are establishing a terrific network of advisors and collaborators to ensure that e-Social Science goes from strength to strength’.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

For further information about Professor David De Roure, please visit:
<http://www.soton.ac.uk/~dder/>

About the University of Southampton’s School of Electronics and Computer Science

With around 500 researchers, and 900 undergraduate students, the School of Electronics and Computer Science at the University of Southampton is one of the world's largest and most successful integrated research groupings, covering Computer Science, Software Engineering, Electronics, Electrical Engineering, and IT in Organisations. ECS has unrivalled depth and breadth of expertise in world-leading research, new developments and their applications.

About the Economic and Social Research Council

The [Economic and Social Research Council](#) (ESRC) is the UK's largest organisation for funding research on economic and social issues. It supports independent, high quality research which has an impact on business, the public sector and the third sector. The ESRC's planned total expenditure in 2009/10 is £204 million. At any one time the ESRC supports over 4,000 researchers and postgraduate students in academic institutions and independent research institutes.

About e-Research South

e-Research South is an EPSRC funded consortium of four partner organisations across the south of England:

[University of Oxford](#)
[University of Reading](#)
[University of Southampton](#)
[STFC e-Science Group](#)

The consortium aims to create a sustainable research platform across participating organisations and their collaborators by applying innovative computing technology to interdisciplinary problems of increasing scale and complexity.

Driven by specific application areas and building on existing e-Infrastructure technologies and leveraging partner activities e-Research South will:

- enhance ease of use, uptake and 'accessibility'
- develop know-how and tools for dealing with research data
- provide development of and access to advanced visualisation
- create a regional community
- provide opportunities for public engagement with science

ABOUT THE OXFORD e-RESEARCH CENTRE:

The Oxford e-Research Centre (OeRC) aims to accelerate research through innovative new technologies. Working with researchers across Oxford University, nationally and internationally, through the application of cutting-edge computational and information technologies, OeRC enables the exploration of new research areas in the sciences, and increasingly in the humanities and social sciences.

With a core staff of researchers, developers and support staff the OeRC operates as a hub for e-Research activities across the University, facilitating the development of an appropriate research infrastructure and building an interdisciplinary community around e-Research at Oxford. The OeRC is situated in the newly appointed e-Science Building at 7 Keble Road. For more details see www.oerc.ox.ac.uk.

For further information contact:

Professor David De Roure, School of Electronics and Computer Science,
Tel: 023 80592418, email: dder@ecs.soton.ac.uk

Dr Marina Jirotko, Computing Laboratory, University of Oxford,
Tel: 01865 610613, email: Marina.Jirotko@comlab.ox.ac.uk