

Chapter 17

Digital Repositories as Harbingers of Open Access in India: A Study

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ABSTRACT

Open Access (OA) is a noble cause as it removes all hurdles from free access to scholarly works and promotes knowledge sharing. The OA movement is strengthened by Institutional Repositories (IRs). IRs are based on institute-specific requirements, workflow pattern, metadata, and other related standards for different kinds of digital documents, search and retrieval requirements, and user interfaces at various levels. In India, some elite educational and research institutes such as the Indian Statistical Institute, some CSIR Laboratories, IITs, and IIMs have taken significant initiatives in building IRs. In addition, a few Universities, such as the Central University of Hyderabad, are working on building IRs. According to various databases, the total number of Indian IRs exceeds 40, but out of these only 25 are functional, while the rest of them are either non-functional or inaccessible. The present chapter is an effort to cover the various aspects of functional IRs in India.

INTRODUCTION

Scholarly communication can be understood as the system through which research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community,

and preserved for future use. It is an umbrella term used to describe the process of academics, scholars and researchers sharing and publishing their research findings so that they are available to the wider academic community (such as university academics) and beyond. Another defini-

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tion of scholarly communications is the creation, transformation, dissemination, and preservation of knowledge related to teaching, research, and scholarly endeavors. Among the many scholarly communication issues include author rights, the economics of scholarly resources, new models of publishing including open access, institutional repositories, rights and access to federally funded research, and preservation of intellectual assets.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

New technologies, specifically ICT, and innovative models are enhancing the sharing of scholarly information in the form of research papers, primary data and other evidence, creative activity and other products of research and scholarship including across institutions and audiences. This scholarly communication promotes a shared system of research and scholarship. However, on account of exponential inflation in journal prices, libraries, especially in underdeveloped and developing countries were finding it difficult to serve their readers adequately and satisfactorily. Funders and taxpayers do not have access to the research they pay for. Producing a research paper may require time and money. Libraries have a money constraints and a static funding as journal costs have consistently raised. Scholars are devoid of scholarly content and Institutional Repositories is the only solution to this problem.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halliday (2001)

In his paper titled “Scholarly Communication, Scholarly Publication and the Status of Emerging Formats,” the author writes about the clarity of the term ‘scholarly publication’ and also explores the role of scholarly communication. Desk research was supplemented by responses to a Question-

naire from key figures in the development of emerging scholarly communication behavior. This paper also contributed to a working definition of scholarly publication consisting of a list of criteria, which may be used to analyze the degree to which emerging formats can be categorized as scholarly publications and to identify the means by which they may be supplemented so that their status may be promoted to that of the ‘scholarly publication.’ These scholarly publications meet the needs of scholarly communities.

Ghosh (2006)

In his article titled “Open Access and Institutional Repositories: A Developing Country Perspective – A Case Study of India,” the author facilitates the availability and distribution of scholarly communication freely, as a means and effort to solve the problem of inaccessibility, primarily due to financial constraints, particularly in the developing countries. In India there has been a gradual realization of the usefulness of open access among various institutions. Various Open Access Initiatives have been undertaken and are operational. Many are in the developmental stage. Some Initiatives have also been taken in the area of metadata harvesting services, particularly publicly funded ones. The future of open access in India is dependent upon a proper policy and developing a proper framework: in the implementation of open access, LIS Professionals should play a proactive role in the growth of collections in Institutional Repositories. The paper provides an overview about the present state of Open Access Initiatives by various institutions of the country.

Koganuramath (2006)

This paper discussed the future plans towards implementation of Institutional Repository in JNU Central Library and also described some available Institutional Repository software. Institutional Repository is the one and only way

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