
Issues surrounding Institutional Repository

A S Chandel

F R Sumer

Abstract

Paper discusses the need for developing institutional repositories for bringing visibility to their research put and interoperability. States that the contributions of the institutions and their own researchers remain diffused and scattered in various sources hidden to the potential consumers of the institutions themselves, as well inaccessible to the contributors of the research papers. Paper raises certain issues associated with institutional repositories needing professional attention to resolve them. Suggests as to what contents should fall under the purview of the institutional repositories and with what priority.

Keywords: Open Access; Institutional Repositories; E-resources; Digital Libraries; EPrint

1. Introduction

The present trend in electronic age is to provide access to scholarly publications and make every intellectual contribution open to all without any restriction of copyright and barriers. Right to information envisages availability and accessibility to all resources. There is a big divide between 'free-for-all' (EPrint) and 'pay for all' which need to be bridged and resolved. The conflict between the two is obvious having diverse objectives. Generation of any information and scholarly publications should reach right consumers who could be the beneficiaries of the findings of scientific investigations. Authors have right to write and consumers have also equal right to access their contributions. In the modern context it is not 'Books for All or information for all' but 'Knowledge for All' Rang Nathan would have amended his first law in the light of e-library. Present knowledge society expects that every information and knowledge which has been generated should be available to all. Utilization of knowledge for the benefit of the society is equally important if not more than generation. The concept of open access library can be initiated at institutional level without many problems. Instead of creating databases of resources available elsewhere or subscribing to them don't deserve priority over creation of IR.

In para 8.0 of the National Knowledge Commission's Report, networking of different types of libraries and setting up of the National Repository of Bibliographic Records and a centralized collaborative virtual enquiry handling system using the latest ICT were recommended. To enable equitable and universal access to knowledge resources, libraries should be encouraged to create more digital resources by digitizing relevant reading material in different languages, which can be shared at all levels, report further recommends. Developing your own institutional repository (IR) of your own resources in electronic format would be a significant step towards implementation of above recommendations by making institutional resources globally visible as well as accessible to all. It

can be one of the significant initiatives of institutional library, which can add value to professional contribution as well as to the institution. This initiative and contribution of the library would enable to build repository of intellectual capital of the institution with permanent asset by way of capturing, dissemination and preserving the intellectual output of the faculty and researchers. Above all, such initiative no doubt may be an important step not only to fulfill the mission and objectives of the institution concerned but would in a better position to join global system of information exchange and interoperable repositories in the interest of global society.

2.0 Why Institutional Repository

The advantages of developing IR of any resource of any kind are undoubtedly going to be many. The impact is significant and ever lasting. It is long-term investment and cost effective. Some of the apparent advantages and impacts are:

2.1 Advantages

- 1.** Every academic institution intends to show its excellence in its activities which requires visibility. This visibility adds value and prestige to the institution and can find its place among other similar institutions. In the present invisible academic world, bringing visibility to e-resources has become increasingly important, otherwise intellectual output would remain hidden.
- 2.** It is often experienced that the contributions of eminent authors/scientists of their parent institutions remain unknown to other members of the same academic community, though such contributions may be known elsewhere where their work is accessible. It is inner desire of any contributor that his or her contribution should be known, recognized and shared at least in his/her own institution. The recognition is more important in the respective serving institution of the faculty member rather outside. Recapturing and repackaging of your own such resources become mandatory for library profession and deserves priority. It so happens that libraries may be subscribing to many e-resources available online in which the contributions of their own faculty members and researchers may not be available and may remain scattered and diffused in various databases unknown to the parent institutions they are serving. Resultantly, institutional own resources are not readily and easily accessible to their own authors and host institution and its beneficiaries. It was observed that authors' own publications are not accessible to them, which are only available on publishers' websites, on subscription. It looks quite odd that contribution of the author is not accessible to himself/herself whereas the same is accessible to others.
- 3.** This compilation, which may involve initially considerable efforts and finances but in the long run, it is going to be most cost effective product. Libraries which are not in a position to subscribe highly priced journals or databases, IR may serve as a substitute to such databases and would be able to meet the information needs of their academic community to certain extent. IR is a permanent asset for present and future use of the institution. The resources which are available

today online may not be available tomorrow. Permanent availability of e-resources is quite unpredictable. Moreover, perpetual access and owning them is not affordable. Publishers may also not go for permanent archival due to some or the reason. In such cases, the possibility of permanent archival and accessibility may raise doubts. But when resources are in your own repository, permanent ownership and preservation both are ensured. Preservation becomes more important since future viability of specific commercial publishers cannot be assured Buckler and Boateng [1]. Nicholas [2] states that if we presume that institutional repositories don't fulfill the role of digital preservation archives, and commercial e-journals industry is the real focus for digital preservation, then e-prints in IR are to be viewed as current awareness tools, full of ephemera – they are useful but transient. This statement implies that preservation aspect of e-resources should be taken into account while going for IR so that it fulfills both the functions of accessibility and long-term preservation.

4. Moreover, when the product is posted on the website of the institution, usability would be multiplied provided their content analysis for retrieval is made logical and effective. It is presumed that due to the dual availability: one in scholarly journal (website of the publishers) and one in institutional repository would increase the usability as well as productivity. It has been proved that open sources are used and cited more than other sources that have restricted access. According to Lawrence [3] articles that were freely available on Internet were cited 336% more frequently than that were not. These figures seems to be on higher side but more citation as well as usability can not be doubted, having been proved in many studies. Some journals, for instance in the field of chemistry, have an 'embargo' submission policy stating that they will not accept papers for review that have been made publicly available on the internet. Though modern trend focuses on accessibility rather than ownership nevertheless advantages of ownership cannot be undermined. IR provides ownership as well as accessibility combining the advantages of both. Accessibility under ownership of others pre-supposes dependence whereas, ownership is dependence free.
5. IR are going to serve as indexes/indicators of the quality of scholarship and strength of their academic contributions. This demonstration of value can translate into tangible benefits, including the funding from both private and public sources that derives in part from an institution's status and reputation, says Crow, Raym [4]. Author further emphasizes that IR have the potential to serve as tangible indicators of an institution's quality and demonstrate the scientific, societal, and economic relevance of its research activities, thus increasing the institutional visibility, status and public value.
6. IR is near synonymous to (open access) reduces the time lag and delay between acceptance and publication of papers particularly in reviewed journals. Hence currency of information is maintained more in IR than getting them published in scholarly journals, provided publications are posted in IR in pre-publication stage.

7. As stated above that IR brings visibility to the contributions of faculty, students and staff of the institution but it also adds to the prestige of the library professionals doing this job of developing IR. Faculty and students of the institution who are consumers of information would obviously give due acknowledgement for professional input. As such librarians also become partner and collaborator in the sharing of scholarship, thereby are in a better position to project their contributions in information communication.
8. IR also enables to cover unpublished papers or even published ones in conferences/seminars proceedings, which don't get their coverage in indexing and abstracting journals/databases. Hence remain inaccessible, which IR bring into the notice of the information consumers.
9. IR as an open source provides inter-disciplinary approach. It has been observed that subject experts mostly refer to their own resources confined to their subjects and specialization and may rarely consult print resources not falling under the purview of their subjects. However, IR as open source would allow the user to search under each concept, which are overlapping in various disciplines and subjects. As such, provides opportunity to search information beyond the boundaries of the subjects and disciplines.
10. Information retrieval in IR can be made more effective by educating the users in formulation of search queries and search commands being used in the software.

3. Issues

3.1 Copyright and IPR

Open source, open library and open access including institutional repositories have direct conflict with copyrights of the publishers and authors on their intellectual output. If every information and resource is going to be freely and openly available as open source irrespective of their copyrights, it may raise many issues. Some publishers do however permit open access to authors either at the stage of postprints or reprints. However, policies of the publishers may differ. As a matter of fact authors of the papers have the first copyright on his work. Publishers logically should not enjoy the same right as of author even if the copyright is transferred. By doing little editing work, publishers or editors should not own the responsibility of intellectual contribution. However, in the prevailing situation authors who have already transferred copyrights to the publishers merely for the sake of publication request the publisher to get back the rights to post the publications on his own website or in IR of parent institution. However, some publishers have liberal attitude of granting these rights as a standard procedure to the authors and their institutions which is a very encouraging development.

3.2 Other Issues

In the light of the above, following issues would arise seeking solutions:

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- ◆ Is every intellectual output going to be free?
 - ◆ If so, will the publishers and authors accept it, if they accept what would be the terms and conditions?
 - ◆ What would be the consequences and impact of such trend on publishing industries?
 - ◆ Whether authors would be agreeable to put their scholarly pre-publications in their institutional repository? In this regard, Cervone, F [5] made his observation that they (authors) are concerned [with] adding material to an IR and feel that it can impede other, more traditional publication opportunities.
 - ◆ What would be the reaction of the editorial board of scholarly publications if they find that the paper, which they are going to include for publication, is already available on open access? Will they have the same interest to accept the paper for publication as without pre-hoisting in the respective institutional depository? But publishers also shall have to make some compromise in this newly emerging situation. Is it not the legitimate right of the authors and their institutions to reserve the right to archive their own intellectual output for non-commercial and academic purpose without any interference and formal permission from the publishers to whom copyright was given, merely to published the article?
 - ◆ Does copyright act needs amendment in the prevailing situation?
 - ◆ If network of institutional repositories at local, regional and national levels come into being, which is quite expected, what would be its impact on subscription of journals and marketing of information products?

Violation of copyright is becoming more and more prevalent. Google, Yahoo and many other such agencies are fighting legal battles with the copyright holders. Even then millions of documents which are governed under copyright are being made available as open source documents. Books published as recent as in 2007-08 are being made available as open source though they fall under copyright act. One school of thought not believing in copyright is becoming stronger. They are fighting for copyright free movement. They believe that every intellectual product should be made freely accessible without the restriction of copyright. However, it is easier to say than to implement such thinking. Nevertheless, these issues need discussion and attention especially at platform like this.

Copyright issues would no longer be an obstruction and are resolvable. The privileges of the producers of intellectual contents can not be withdrawn and denied even if copyright is given to the publishers to publish the papers. However, Post-print permission to post their publication in institutional repository seems to be legitimate right of authors and the institutions. Even pre-publication of e-resources in IR may be feasible and acceptable to the publishers in due course of time. In case of post-print permission by the publishers which causes delay in accessibility of resources thereby loosing their

currency value which is important especially in science and technology research. Authors' attitude may continue to publish in scholarly journals rather than putting it in IR or in their own websites. Nevertheless, some authors prefer to make their contributions as open source rather than going for commercial publication since open access, open library and IR are to be popularized in the interest of more usability of resources. The movement of open source needs more patronage to succeed. Non-profit organizations are already involved in this movement

4. Scope and Coverage of IR

In the light of issues raised and discussed above, no academicians including administrator cannot undermine the importance of developing IR. E-resources in the form of Open source are becoming more and more popular thus competing with commercial e-resources. There are unlimited resources within and outside the institution that need to be covered in IR. But deciding the contents to be covered is still debatable and unresolved. Priorities for digitization and posting them on institutional repositories need collective thinking and planning. Many digitization projects completed with heavy expenditure are not being used to the extent those should have been used. The objectives and purpose of converting print resources into e-resources must be well defined keeping in view the usability and productivity of such resources. In narrow sense of term Institutional Repositories (IR) is expected to cover those scholarly publications which institution has and that have been authored by its own faculty, students and staff. It may also cover any other information which is of value to the institute and its beneficiaries at local as well as global levels belonging to the institution such as its acts, statutes, curricula, teaching material, serial publications, audio, video material etc on the institute. IR may not limit itself to its own resources but may augment them with others such e-resources which may be useful to the academic community of the institution concerned, may not fall strictly under the purview of the institute. Lynch [6] has given the broader definition of IR as a set of services that a university offers to the members of digital material created by the institute and its community members. As such, IR may not be confined to single institution but may collaborate with other institutes of having similar mandates and missions. Fear of copyright violation dominates the decision whereas millions of documents are being digitized which are under copyright act. In spite of this, such resources are being hoisted as open source, of course without having any commercial gain

While thinking and considering as to what contents should be given priority to include in IR, publications of faculty and theses/dissertations submitted in university or institute come to the mind. Many universities have launched their IR giving first priority to digitize theses and dissertations not in view of the usability and productivity but mainly because such material don't fall under copyright act. Theses/dissertations are not very frequently referred and used as research papers. Moreover, digitization of theses and dissertations are going to involve huge expenditure especially in bigger and larger institutions where theses collection is quite large. It should always be kept in mind that

converting print resources into digital format involves not only financial aspect but also intellectual input consuming precious time of professionals

The main purpose of digital resources are global accessibility, more use, including preservation. Preservation though may be implicit and core concept in e-print, yet technology differs for exclusive preservation. This consideration has to be taken care of while taking decision for providing accessibility and preservation. Certain documents deserve dual purpose and certain may not. It must be borne in mind that investment on the project must of cost effective based upon usefulness first to the institution concerned then to the global society.

Another criterion to be considered should be already availability of e-resources in national and international databases. If scientific publications of the institution is well covered and are accessible through subscription does not deserve that priority which uncovered literature and unpublished research material deserve. Large number of seminar and conference papers presented by the faculty in various international and national conferences don't get coverage in databases, so remain hidden. Their usefulness and scholarship can not be undermined. Similarly, every research institutes/ universities have large unlisted uncovered databank of research projects that have been funded by various agencies. Their findings remain not even within the wall of the institute. Don't these important reports deserve to be given priority to be covered in IR?

It has been observed that coverage of humanities and social science literature in national and international databases are comparatively less as compared to pure sciences in print as well as in e-format. Institutions should capture such data and convert into e-format on priority before these are lost for ever.

5. Conclusion

The concept of IR is not new. It is an old wine in a new bottle. Institutions have been engaged in creation of their own databases (repositories) of print resources useful to their own community. Primary objective of IR continues to be same with a difference that new approach is wider accessibility to all. Its benefits have multiplied. Nevertheless, basic purpose of any IR is to first meet the information requirement of its own academic community. It is only the form and the approach which have changed in the new environment. What is important now is to take initiatives to develop IR on sound principles in order to exploit the resources that are easily available within your own institution. These initiatives belong exclusively to library profession. Professionals shall have to educate and convince authors, administrators, funding agencies to support the move along with improving their own skill to do the job. Specialized knowledge is required for proper archival and effective retrieval. SPARC checklist and guide [7] has pointed out that the rationale for universities and colleges implementing institutional repositories rests on two interrelated propositions: one that supports a broad, pan-institutional efforts and another that offers direct and immediate benefits to each institution

that implements a repository. This is a participatory venture in which faculty members, administrative staff, library staff and funding agencies are all associated. But initiative and implementation solely depend upon library professional. They have to augment their e-resources. This collective participation is prerequisite for implementation. Authors may have their own reservation to extend their cooperation in this endeavour and accept the concept. It is the question of convincing them in view of the benefits going to be derived out of it. Experiences and expertise of those institutions which have already launched IR and digitization projects and gained experiences must be shared for planning as well as in implementation.

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About Authors

Prof. A. S. Chandel, Visiting Fellow, Department of Library & Information Science, NEHU, Shillong

Mr. F. R. Sumer, Information Scientist, Central Library, North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong.