Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL): Providing Global Visibility to Local Research Output

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Abstract

Journals, which very often carry the first hand information on research in progress, are valuable sources in any academic discipline. However, access to journal literature is not equal in libraries, especially in the developing regions, due to increasing cost of subscriptions and shrinking library budgets. Open Access publishing plays a vital role in this venture by enabling journal articles freely accessible via online. Purpose of this paper is to explore the SLJOL project and identify its' role in the dissemination of local research output. Mainly the review of existing literature and online site visits were used as primary data collection methods. It is concluded that the SLJOL project plays a pivotal role in the process of providing global visibility to local research literature and several suggestions are made for further improvements of the service.

Keywords: Open Access, Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL), Open Journal Systems (OJS), Scholarly Journals

1. Scholarly Journals

The journal is fundamental to formal scholarly communication. The story of the evolution of scholarly journals from their beginnings to their present form is instructive. The first scholarly journal, Journal des Scavans, was published as a new medium of communication in 1665, and was soon followed by the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society **(Osburn, 1984).** Since then, for more than three centuries the journal has played a pivotal role in the creation and transmission of knowledge by serving as the primary medium of scholarly communication, and has remained essentially unchanged in form and function over its lifetime.

2. Open Access Publishing

2.1 Introduction to Open Access Publishing

One of the latest developments related to scholarly communication is Open Access. Open Access (OA) means allowing any user to search, download, read, copy, and print the full-text scientific or academic literature (mainly the peer-reviewed articles), freely on the Internet.

Today, OA has become a new model of scholarly publishing. It has been developed to diminish researchers and libraries from limitations imposed by excessive subscription price increases for peer-reviewed journals (Ranasinghe, 2011). The traditional publishing model restricts access to the publication by requiring payment by or on behalf of the reader. Some argue that in the online environment scholarly information should be free to the reader. OA publishing does remove the cost and complexity of access to scholarly literature. OA does not require any specific commercial model and the key point is that the user does not pay to view the material.

Morris identifies various models of Open Access that are designed to minimize (or avoid) any impact on subscription revenue as follows:

♦ Delayed Open Access: offering free access after a specified period. The length of time after publication which is necessary to avoid loss of subscriptions is likely to vary depending both on the subject area (e.g. how fast-moving it is) and the frequency of publication of the journal.

♦ Short-term Open Access: providing free access to articles for a short period after publication, after which they are only available to subscribers. The argument for this is that this provides immediate impact and raises citation of the articles and visibility, but does not affect subscription revenue, as people are still willing to pay for ongoing access. This may not give sufficient protection, however, for all journals.

♦ Selected Open Access: some journals make selected articles freely available (for example, editorials, newsworthy articles, etc.) whilst the rest remain behind an access control system.

♦ Hybrid Open Access: Increasing numbers of journals are experimenting with Hybrid Open Access. This means that the author can choose to pay the publication charge to make his or her article Open Access immediately on publication. Articles by authors who choose not to pay (and other content) remain behind the access barrier. Depending on the proportion of articles paid for, the publisher can gradually reduce the subscription/license price for the remaining content. This model enables a publisher to test the author demand for OA without putting existing subscriptions/license income at risk; many publishers are currently experimenting along these lines.

♦ Partial Open Access: It is possible to make the journal's primary research content available under an Open Access model, but to make a charge for other value-added content such as editorials and review articles, and/or for additional services. For example, several of BioMedCentral's journals (www.biomedcentral.com) charge subscriptions to cover non-primary material – so does the British Medical Journal (Morris, 2006).

2.2   Open Journal Systems (OJS)

There are various initiatives to publish scholarly journals in Open Access platform. One such initiative is Open Journal Systems.

Open Journal Systems (OJS) is an online journal management and publishing platform that was first launched in 2002 as an open source software freely distributed by the Public Knowledge Project (Willinsky, 2005). The software had been developed as part of the Public Knowledge Project's research program at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver, Canada, under the direction of John Willinsky, with subsequent participation by Simon Fraser University Library, the Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing, and Stanford University. OJS was originally programmed by undergraduate computer science students at UBC, led by

Kevin Jamieson, with a research grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada that sought to explore the feasibility and consequences of helping print journals to publish their content online.

OJS was designed to manage the journal's workflow, from manuscript submission through review to editorial work and then publication, while offering a ready means of publishing an online edition and better managing the journal's operating costs (Willinsky, 2006). This system was developed within a climate of concern among journal editors and staff over the costs and means of moving from print to online editions, as well as over the viability of open access models (by which, for example, authors make articles freely available through online institutional repositories and journals make their content freely accessible to readers). These concerns continue to affect social science and humanities journals published by small societies and groups of scholars (Lorimer, Lynch, & Provençal, 2006).

OJS is but one of a number of open source journal management systems (Cyzyk & Choudhury, 2008). It is being used by approximately 5,000 journals, has had 19 upgrade releases since it was first made available in 2002, and is now available in 20 languages. It is currently supported by a team of programmers led by Alec Smecher and managed by Brian Owen, in association with Simon Fraser University Library, with funding from a variety of granting agencies and, to a lesser degree, service and hosting contracts. Figure 1 illustrates editorial and publishing process of OJS.

3. Journals Online (JOL) Project

The JOL is a result of partnership between International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) and CrossRef. JOL uses the technology called Open Journals System (OJS) which was developed by PKP which is based in Canada.

The Journals Online (JOL) project provides advice to journals wishing to publish online, including resource guides and links to suitable technologies and hosting organisations. Focusing on a system developed for groups of journals to publish on community websites, the JOLs provide a cost-effective and secure forum for online journals, which gives them greatest online visibility and discovery.

OJS support the development of websites hosting a number of journals and CrossRef maintain a multi-publisher linking network which vastly improves both visibility and accessibility of journal articles.
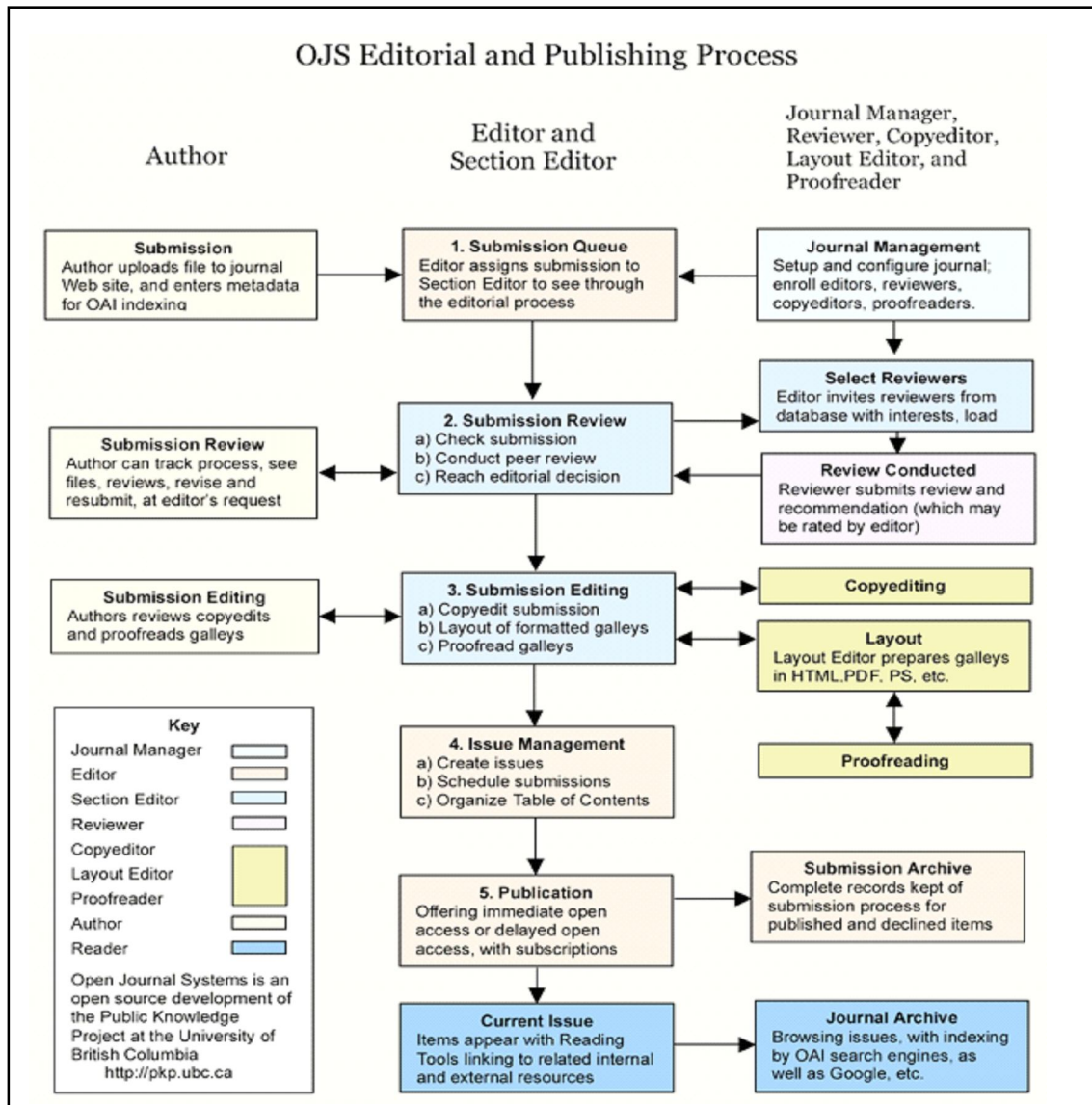
OJS Editorial and Publishing Process

Author

Submission
Author uploads file to journal Web site, and enters metadata for OAI indexing

Submission Review
Author can track process, see files, reviews, revise and resubmit, at editor's request

Submission Editing
Authors reviews copyedits and proofreads galleys

Key
Journal Manager
Editor
Section Editor
Reviewer
Copyeditor
Layout Editor
Proofreader
Author
Reader

Open Journal Systems is an open source development of the Public Knowledge Project at the University of British Columbia
http://pkp.ubc.ca

Editor and Section Editor

1. Submission Queue
Editor assigns submission to Section Editor to see through the editorial process

2. Submission Review
a) Check submission
b) Conduct peer review
c) Reach editorial decision

3. Submission Editing
a) Copyedit submission
b) Layout of formatted galleys
c) Proofread galleys

4. Issue Management
a) Create issues
b) Schedule submissions
c) Organize Table of Contents

5. Publication
Offering immediate open access or delayed open access, with subscriptions

Current Issue
Items appear with Reading Tools linking to related internal and external resources

Journal Manager, Reviewer, Copyeditor, Layout Editor, and Proofreader

Journal Management
Setup and configure journal; enroll editors, reviewers, copyeditors, proofreaders.

Select Reviewers
Editor invites reviewers from database with interests, load

Review Conducted
Reviewer submits review and recommendation (which may be rated by editor)

Copyediting

Layout
Layout Editor prepares galleys in HTML.PDF, PS, etc.

Proofreading

Submission Archive
Complete records kept of submission process for published and declined items

Journal Archive
Browsing issues, with indexing by OAI search engines, as well as Google, etc.

Figure 1: OJS Editorial & Publishing Process (Source: SLJOL Website)

Accordingly, JOL is a database of journals published in a country or region (i.e. Sri Lanka Journals Online, Latin America Journals Online) covering a range of academic disciplines. The objective is to give greater visibility to the participating journals, and to the research they convey. Journals are selected for inclusion on the JOLs using the following criteria:

1. They are scholarly in content, and contain original research

2. Their content is peer reviewed and quality controlled

3. They are able to provide all necessary content in electronic format (tables of contents, abstracts and PDFs of full text)

4. They are published, managed and developed within their respective country

The JOLs provide information on each participating journal, including aims and scope, contact details and general information. They also provide tables of contents and abstracts (where available) for all articles published within the journals. Many full text articles are also available. However, the JOL doesn't function as a publisher and it merely provide a service to the journals by hosting their content online, and promote the visibility of the journal titles and articles.

4. Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL) Project

4.1 Introduction and brief history of SLJOL

Sri Lanka Journals OnLine (SLJOL) is a service to provide access to Sri Lankan published research, and increase worldwide knowledge of indigenous scholarship (Figure 2). It is a database of journals published in Sri Lanka, covering the full range of academic disciplines. The objective of SLJOL is to give greater visibility to the participating journals, and to the research they convey.

Figure 2: Sri Lanka Journals Online Website

Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL) was initiated in August 2008 with six (06) journals. It is a project supported by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publication (INASP). It aims to promote the awareness and use of Sri Lankan-published journals in all disciplines by providing access to tables of contents (TOCs), abstracts and full text on the Internet.

SLJOL uses the Open Journals System created by the Public Knowledge Project. This open source software allows the journal content listed on SLJOL to be indexed through Open Archives Initiative search engines dedicated to research, which harvest the metadata for each journal article, making this work readily available to a global audience, and giving the journals greater visibility among the worldwide research community.

4.2   Coverage of SLJOL

There were forty-six (46) journals listed in SLJOL as of 30th January, 2013. Out of which, 44% of journals were published by professional associations, whereas another 42% of journals were published by universities and affiliated institutions. Another 8% of journals were published by research institutions. There were 364 tables of contents (TOCs) listing 3611 articles. Out of which, 97% of articles (3516 articles) were available with full text.

As far as the subject coverage of SLJOL is concerned, journals were related to following disciplines:

- ♦ Agriculture (7 journals)
- ♦ Architecture, Building and Planning (1 journal)
- ♦ Biological Sciences (5 journals)
- ♦ Education (2 journals)
- ♦ Environmental Sciences (1 journal)
- ♦ Law (1 journal)
- ♦ Mathematics and Computer Sciences (3 journals)
- ♦ Medicine and Dentistry (16 journals)
- ♦ Multidisciplinary (1 journal)
- ♦ Physical Sciences (6 journals)
- ♦ Social Studies (6 journals)
- ♦ Subjects allied to Medicine (3 journals)

Accordingly, it can be concluded that majority of journals joined with SLJOL are science and technology (S&T) related. Journals are selected for inclusion on SLJOL using the following criteria:

1. They are scholarly in content, and contain original research (in addition to other content)

2. Their content is peer reviewed and quality controlled

3. They are able to provide all content for inclusion on SLJOL (tables of contents, abstracts and PDFs of full text) in electronic format

4. They are published within Sri Lanka. Management of publishing strategy, business development and production operation are all run from Sri Lanka.

SLJOL provides information on each participating journal, including aims and scope, contact details and general information. It also provides tables of contents and abstracts (where available) for all articles published within these journals. Many full text articles are also available.

All the material on SLJOL is free to view, search and browse, however copyright of all content is retained by the journals or authors - each journals will need to give permission for any use or re-use of the content that falls outside Fair Use.

However, SLJOL is not a publisher. It provides a service to the journals by hosting their content online, and actively promoting the website to encourage discovery of these titles and their articles. Individual journals are also using the website to publish their journals and they welcome submissions from registered users.

4.3   Services of SLJOL

SLJOL provides following services to research and academic community.

- ♦ Alphabetically listed journals to help researchers find journals of relevance, and allow browsing of the journals

- ♦ Sophisticated searching tool, to help researchers locate articles of interest and relevance to their area of study

- ♦ Email alerts provide a reminder service, to alert researchers to newly-published issues from their selected titles

- ♦ An own home page for each journal, where researchers can find information about the aims and scope of the journal, and information on how to submit articles to each journal. If the journal is available in print, information about how to obtain copies is also given

- ♦ Online full text for many journals. Others publish their full text at another website - links are provided from each article abstract page.

4.4   Usability of SLJOL

According to the latest statistics available, the highest daily usage of 608 occurred on 28th March 2011. Google Analytics shows that from 1 January - 31 December 2011, there have been 111,235 visitors from 198 countries. The top three sources for visitors remain as: Sri Lanka (28,557 from 7 cities), India (16,997 from 84 cities) and USA (10,396 from 2,261 cities) (Table 1). Accordingly, it is interesting to note that India has had most number of visits to SLJOL as far as the foreign nations are concerned (Figure 3).

4.5   Promoting SLJOL

Promotion can be identified as an important factor for a project like SLJOL. Even the sustainability of the project would depend on its' usability and hence journal publishing organizations, higher education/ research institutes and their libraries have a responsibility to popularize the service among its' clientele. This is done

through several methods such as publishing a bi-annual newsletter (SLJOL Newsletter), providing links to SLJOL via library websites, etc. For an example, University of Colombo Library provides a link to SLJOL through its' website under the category of e-databases.

4.6   Future Plans of SLJOL Project

The primary goal of SLJOL is to facilitate worldwide access to the full text of Sri Lankan Journals - either by hosting the full text online or redirecting users seamlessly to existing websites. It is envisaged that SLJOL providing a range of online full text access models for journals, from complete open access to only subscribed access, with hybrid models of restricted access. On the current SLJOL system open access to full text is already possible. It is also hoped that the journals on the service will soon begin to allow online submission of articles and that they will conduct the whole editorial process in this online environment.

Country	No. of Visitors
Sri Lanka	28,557
India	16,997
USA	10,396
UK	5,638
Philippines	3,288
Australia	3,236
Malaysia	3,119
Canada	2,310
Indonesia	2,196
China	1,953

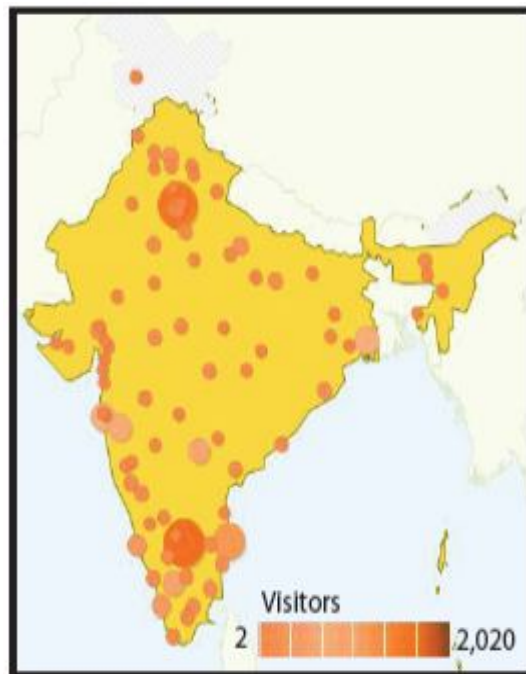**Table 1: Location of visitors to SLJOL**   **Figure 3: Location of visitors from India**

5.   Other JOL initiatives

In addition to SLJOL, there are some other JOL projects supported by INASP. They are:

Bangladesh Journals Online (BanglaJOL)

Nepal Journals Online (NepJOL) and

Philippines Journals Online **(PhilJOL)**

INASP also developed and managed African Journals Online (AJOL) until 2004 when the management was transferred to **National Inquiry Services Centre** (NISC) in South Africa. Vietnam Journals Online (VJOL) was also managed and developed by INASP until 2009 when the management was transferred to National Center for Scientific and Technological Information (NACESTI) in Vietnam.

6. Conclusions and Suggestions

Sri Lanka, as a rapidly developing country, is boosting its' research and development activities. As a result, number of research works have increased and are published in local journal literature. On the other hand, researchers need rapid access to journal literature to facilitate their ongoing research work as well as to avoid the duplication of research.

Sri Lankan higher education/ research institutions face problems in publishing their journals in electronic format. SLJOL project provides them a platform to publish their journals online. This is a great advantage for a developing country like Sri Lanka in order to get the global visibility to its' research output and so that it increases the research impact of the nation. It can be concluded that the Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL) project plays a vital role in disseminating nation's research output not only locally but internationally in an effective manner.

The journals which have not been joined with SLJOL so far should be encouraged to do so. SLJOL should maintain the existing criteria used to select journals for future, to maintain a high quality service. Ultimately SLJOL can be served as an internationally recognized indexing service as well. Also it would be useful, if the SLJOL could facilitate the entire editorial process (from submitting the manuscript to publishing) of journal publishing in order to improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of the process. SLJOL also can introduce a range of online full text access models for journals, from complete open access to only subscribed access, with hybrid models of restricted access.

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