International Journal of Knowledge Management and Practices
6 (2) 2018, 68-71
http://publishingindia.com/ijkmp/

ICE CARVING THE RESEARCH THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORIES: SAVING ACADEMIA FROM INTELLECTUAL PROSTITUTION

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Abstract *Purpose: The paper tries to explore the role; institutional repositories play in highlighting the scholarly endeavours. The paper highlights how IR's preserve and disseminate digital materials created by, or associated with an institution.*

Methodology: Based on the findings of the earlier research the study will try to showcase the possibilities researchers can have from the IR's. The published literature was reviewed critically stressing on their empirical findings.

Findings: The study reveals the academic impacts IR's have on the academic circles in terms of wider visibility, better academic recognition, better academic performance and many more. The study clearly reveals that IRs provide an opportunity to integrate and facilitate knowledge sharing so as to enrich knowledge content and enhance global access.

Keywords: *Institutional Repositories, IR's, Open Access Repositories, Open Access, Green Road-Open Access, Scholarly Communication, Knowledge Sharing*

Introduction

Exchanging of ideas has long been promoted from the dawn of humanity. Various communities all across the globe share their ideas and one such community whose ideas matter a lot for the betterment of the society as a whole is the *scholarly community*. "Formation of the first scientific society and the introduction of scientific journals in the 1660s together mark the birth of the formal scientific scholarly communication system" (De Silva & Vance, 2017). The history of scholarly communication traces back to the times when the first scholarly publication, *Journal Des Scavans* made its debut in the year 1665. Soon after that *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* followed the race started by *Journal Des Scavans*. "The formal scientific scholarly communication system has changed at a slow pace, until the last few decades when we have witnessed a tremendous state of transformation over a relatively short period and till date

the race has never stopped and will always be on a move. Scholarly communication is shaped by economic factors, geopolitical events, and technological advances that are taking place at an unprecedented pace" (De Silva & Vance, 2017). The concept born in 1665 paved a way for institutions and organizations all across the globe to test scholarly waters by giving their research productivity a launchpad through academic journals. Publishers all across the globe turned the major key players in bridging the gap between the readers and the scholars. They channelized the thought content, ideas and the results of the researchers to wider masses and helped in creating a better academic impact for author, institution or a nation as a whole. Since libraries were the main reservoirs of these academic pursuits, they were the agencies responsible for subscription to the scholarly publications launched through these commercial publishers. "After the formal system of sharing scientific research findings began with the publication of the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society in 1965, scholarly journal publishing developed into a subscription-based model controlled exclusively by commercial publishers and scientific societies. However, the domination of a few players in journal publishing caused access to scientific knowledge to become increasingly unaffordable and restricted, which alarmed scientific and academic communities" (De Silva & Vance, 2017). Soon the scholarly circles witnessed ripples due to *Serial Crisis*. Libraries with limited budgets had to face serious problems in accessing the content of toll-based nature. The scholarly gap between the readers and the creators widened resulting in an academic imbalance. The libraries affiliated with the developed regions of the globe were academically elite in terms of subscribed content while as the libraries associated with the developing or underdeveloped world were deprived of the scholarly content due to limited subscribed content or in some cases no content at all. *"The research access/ impact problem arose because journal articles were not accessible to all of their would-be users; hence, they were losing potential research impact"* (Harnad *et al.,* 2013). Scientists thought to evolve some mechanism that would resolve the issues pertinent to the subscription philosophy. Thus, a new ray of hope, *Open Access (OA)* nurtured in the scholarly platforms and journals witnessed this philosophy with catalytic vibrance and a dominion in the name of *Golden Road to OA* came in to existence in which authors publish their scholarly works to OA journals. OA resulted in a wider audience and higher impact (Harnad *et al,* 2013) for the scholarly content submitted to OA journals. Number of OA journals grew with the passage of time and helped to overcome the barriers existent with the toll-based journal platforms. But an issue that was yet to be resolved in the OA mode was that of the time taken by a journal to make an article published after acceptance since *"survival in academia depends on publications in refereed journals. Authors only get their papers accepted if they intellectually prostitute themselves by slavishly following the demands made by anonymous referees who have no property rights to the journals they advise. Intellectual prostitution is neither beneficial to suppliers nor consumers."* (Frey, 2003). It many a times takes years together to have an article on a publishing platform even if it gets accepted. At some instance the referee ratings indicate that acceptance rates are lower since referees are more critical (Blank, 1991). *"The reliability of peer review of scientific documents and the evaluative criteria scientists use to judge the work of their peers are critically re-examined"*. In improving the quality and reliability of peer review the options of a wider and earlier accessibility to research are limited (Cicchetti, 1991) which hurdles the publication process to a greater extent due to various types of revision policies adopted (minor or a major). *"Averaged recommendations of peer referees & the number of revisions"* (Bakanic, McPhail & Simon, 1987) also result in the delayed publications of the research output. *"Though the papers are pounded into new and better shapes between the hammer of peer review and the anvil of editorial standards but peer review is essentially unpredictable also"* (Bailar & Patterson, 1985). To achieve a level in tune with the reviewer, the author loses a huge amount of time in convincing the reviewers and ultimately the academic consumers (readers) are debarred from a timely access to the information.

OA came with a number of positive academic realms with it ranging from wider audience and higher impact but the limitation prevalent with the golden road paved a way to the authors to self-archive their scholarly content in an OA archive or a repository (Harnad *et al.,* 2013) sprouting a new manifestation of OA, i.e. *green road to OA*. *"OA repositories are often presented by open access enthusiasts and evangelists as an optimal model for scholarly communication"* (Creaser, *et al.,* 2010). Open access initiatives in the areas of publishing, data sharing, and repositories are shaping modes of scholarly communication (Borgman, 2007). OA repositories have given a new voice and visibility to the unseen and untimely research thus setting a more democratic platform for the hard-core research which was either not published on time.

OA repositories manifest themselves either as *Institutional, Governmental, Aggregating or Disciplinary.* But among all the four, *Institutional Repositories* (IRs) remove the shades of darkness from the research which overshadows them due to number of reasons already discussed.

IRs are an accepted part of the open access landscape, and they have a particular role to play in supporting scholarly communication. "Institutional repositories are one of the newest resources in university libraries. Their proliferation in the 2000's ensured that millions of documents that would have been hidden on a shelf in a small library (in the best case scenario), on some academic's drawer (in the

better case scenario), or in the dustbin (in the worst case scenario) are given life through open access (OA) via the internet. Though IRs are a recent phenomenon, they trace their history in 1990 when Gardner first proposed an archive of academic publications in the journal *"Psychological Science"*. (Bangani, 2018). "Due to its far-reaching suggestions, the article was quickly open for "open peer commentary" (Harnad, 1990). The majority of those who commented on the article expressed support for the idea of repositories (Estes, 1990; Fox, 1990; Harnad, 1990; Kintsch, 1990)" **(as** cited in Bangani, 2018). Scholars all across the globe define IRs in the context of universities (Agyen-Gyasi, Corletey, & Tawiah Frempong, 2010; Crow, 2002; Lynch, 2003). The first open access archive called arXiv.org was started in 1991 at the Cornell University (Jones, 2006). The mention of a full IR, however, did not come in literature till 1994 (Okerson & O'Donnel, 1995 as cited in Jones, 2006). Another important development in the history of IRs was the launch of the American Scientist Open Access Forum and SPARC in 1998. The formation of the Public Library of Science (PloS) in 2000 also heralded a new era for open access journals. Though the West tested waters with IR's earlier "Asian countries began recognizing the necessity of open access and an institutional repository later than western countries" (Cho, 2017). Not many Asian countries have yet launched institutional repositories, excepting Japan, where they were actively implemented in 2004 (Murakami & Adachi, 2006). In Taiwan and Malaysia, only some colleges have actively implemented institutional repositories. And in China **(**Zhong, 2009), Korea (Cho, 2014), and India (Fernandez, 2006; Mukherjee & Nazim, 2011; Nazim & Mukherjee, 2011) the base is still feeble.

"The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) position paper seems to have made the first attempt to define IRs. In it IRs are defined as the "digital collections capturing and preserving the intellectual output of a single or multi-university community" (Crow, 2002 as cited in Bangani, 2018). Lynch (2003) expresses IRs as *"services that a university offers to the members of its community for the management and dissemination of digital materials created by the institution and its community members"*. Agyen-Gyasi et al. (2010) stress on the impact and economic benefits of IR's and define them as "digitised libraries of a university's intellectual outputs that are accessible in open access platforms in order to give a clearer demonstration of the impact of research emanating from that university".

Gardner (as cited in Bangani, 2018) highlights various reasons as to why it was necessary to have IRs:

- Long delays in publishing articles
- Escalating prices of journals and
- Information explosion.

"IRs are ways to ensure that, as subscription costs increase and libraries rationalise and cut their subscriptions, published work is still visible to their academic communities and the world" (Boufarss, 2010). "IRs have been created as a product intended to foster the dissemination of scholarly works, a shared objective for most academic institutions" (Ahmed & Al-Baridi, 2012). The IR, a major means of self-archiving, enables the speedy distribution of research output to increase citation rates and restructure the flow of commercial publishers' academic communications (Cho, 2012). "In addition, many journals in developed or emerging countries have not been indexed in global databases such as the Web of Science, causing a gap in the knowledge flow. This issue impedes formulating a global picture through knowledge discovered academically in any field; therefore, a distribution path that enables the discovery of research results from developing countries must be urgently constructed. As such, providing open access service through institutional repositories can supplement the knowledge flow between by enabling access to research results in developing countries, which seem to be missing in the global channel" (Chan & Costa, 2005).

Conclusion

They are here in the academic world to support open educational system. They have become the accommodative and recovering factors in the scientific and educational production. Since research productivity and citation-based research impact, has become an important issue for scholars and research institutions, IRs are doing wonders in the scholarly communication environment. The scholarly world need to accommodate more and more IR's to set a base where a democratic way of preserving, managing and accessing scholarly resources can be achieved.

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