

OPEN ACCESS IN THE BALTIC COUNTRIES

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Open access in the Baltic countries

The first Open Access initiatives in Lithuania came from the Open Society Institute and the Soros Foundation Network in 2003, when the Library of Kaunas University of Medicine was granted a one-year membership fee at BioMed Central. The Institute of Oncology at Vilnius University became a BioMed Central member in 2004. Researchers appreciated to have their scientific papers published in a new and simple electronic way with a short time from manuscript to publication. It was an advantage for researchers to see the usage and citation of their articles on the BioMed Central website. Also, it is important that many of the BioMed Central electronic journals have an ISI impact factor.

Unfortunately, Kaunas University of Medicine (Lithuania) stopped its BioMed Central membership in 2006 because of financial difficulties to pay the membership fee.

Tartu University (Estonia) was a BioMed Central member for 2 years from 2004 and also stopped their membership in 2006. However, Estonian and Lithuanian researchers continue to publish their articles in BioMed Central on their own. Lithuanian researchers have published 57, Estonian 52, Latvian 15 Open Access articles in BMC e-journals.

The Lithuanian Association of Research Libraries organized a first workshop called Open Access Scholarly Communication in Vilnius in 2005 within the frame of the Open Access programme of the Open Society Institute (Budapest) which invited the officers from the Ministry of Science and Education and University Research Centres. It was very important to get to know essential information on Open Access, especially when such famous specialists in this field as Melissa Hagemann, Raym Crow, Lilian van der Vaart, Jean-Claude Guédon, et al., came to give presentations (http://www.lmba.lt/reng/liet/oa_v.html)

Open Access e-repositories

The very first step to create a Lithuanian Open Access repository was the Lithuanian ETD Project as a Pilot for Baltic States designed in the framework of a UNESCO programme, prepared by Kaunas University of Technologies and the Lithuanian Network of Academic Libraries (LABT) in 2004. Fourteen Lithuanian universities and Riga Technical University

participated in the ETD Information System project. UNESCO has contributed to it by granting some financial support for the acquisition of hardware and software.

The ETD project was supported by the academic communities and officers from Ministry of Science and Education and included in the national programs. The Lithuanian ETD Information System has joined the Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD).

At present, there are 6 150 full-text dissertations in the Lithuanian ETD IS, of which 2 386 (38%) are Open Access, others are accessible in the local intranets. It is planned, that at the end of year 2008, ETD IS will cover 7 600 dissertations, and 50% of these should be Open Access.

To meet the demands of the Lithuanian academic community, the full-text document database VDDB has been launched in 2006. VDDB is a constituent of the Lithuanian Electronic Academic Library (www.lvb.lt).

Lithuanian Electronic Academic Library (eLABa) is created as part of the LABT project development and implementation of projects financed by the European Union Structural Funds: The creation of Lithuanian e-publishing system, Lithuanian virtual library development and creation of full-text database repository and Lithuanian science and study e-documents storage and presentation to the users.

The Lithuanian Electronic Library runs on modern ExLibris software products: Aleph, MetaLib, SFX and open source : Fedora, Tomcat, JBoss, OpenLDAP, Shibboleth.

In the meantime, there are 1 740 electronic full text documents published and they are 100% Open Access. Documents are published in the eLABa and they are accessible through the Lithuanian Virtual Library portal (www.lvb.lt)

Tartu University Library – the oldest and biggest continuously working library in Estonia –also has a digital repository for all electronic materials including e-theses and e-publications, digitized theses, books, manuscripts, images, etc. The digital repository is known as DSpace, (<http://DSpace.utlib.ee/DSpace>).

The E-repository runs on DSpace - open source solution for accessing, managing and preserving scholarly works with minimum metadata. Digital objects are fully described in the electronic catalogue ESTER (<http://ester.utlib.ee>). Entries in ESTER are linked to objects in DSpace. There are 7 communities in the Tartu University Library digital repository:

1. Dissertations uphold in Tartu University (since 1859)
2. Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science
3. Northern European Association for Language Technology (NEALT)
4. Faculty of Philosophy
5. Library
6. Museum of Tartu University History
7. Library inside documentation (accessible only for library employees)

All the communities have different collections and sub-communities which are all searchable by keywords or browsed by titles, authors, subjects or dates. At present, there are 5 631 full text documents included in the DSpace e-repository of Tartu University.

In 2006 the National Library of Latvia announced the creation of the National Digital Library Letonica (<http://www.lnb.lv/en/digital-library>). The Latvian Government and the EU Structural Funds provide financial support for the establishment of Letonica. The Letonica will bring together several existing digital collections and will lay the foundations for the common processing, storage and availability of digital materials. The concept and the manual of technical requirements have been prepared. The project fully complies with the ideology of the European Digital Library, since it is targeted at involving all memory institutions. At present, there is cooperation with Microsoft concerning the development of DOM architecture. Interactive involvement of people into the development of the joint resource is a very important part of the project. The project "Lost Latvia" (URL is under preparation), based upon web 2.0 ideology, has gained success and was included into the national heritage programme. The UNESCO programme "Memory of the World" (www.unesco.org/webworld/mdm), in its turn,

initiates the establishment of the national register, which alongside with the nomination policy for documentary heritage would be an excellent tool – a guide for the development of the National Digital Library. Currently, the Digital Library of NLL contains the digitalisation of 84 newspapers, many pictures, maps, books, sheet music and audio recordings.

Open Access journals

International initiatives by the Open Access movement has influenced the Baltic scholarly journal publishers. The publishers have understood that Open Access gives a worldwide audience larger than any subscription-based journal, increases visibility and impact, makes their articles more discoverable, retrievable, and cited. At present, 35 titles of Lithuanian scholarly journals are being published in eLaba (Lithuanian Electronic Academic Library) and their full texts are freely accessible to everybody (www.lvb.lt). Several of them are being indexed at the ISI and PubMed databases. Seven Lithuanian and ten Estonian scholar journals are registered in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ).

ERC (European Research Council) Open Access mandate

In the European context, the most recent significant development has been the European Research Council (ERC) announcement on the 17th of December, 2007, of its position on Open Access, as follows:

„The ERC requires that all peer-reviewed publications from ERC-funded research projects be deposited on publication into an appropriate research repository where available, such as PubMedCentral, ArXiv or an institutional repository, and subsequently made Open Access within 6 months of publication“. In connection with this document the Lithuanian Rectors' Conference is working on the European Universities Association document to support and sign an Open Access mandate.

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