

OPEN ACCESS IN ICELAND, STATE-OF-THE-ART REPORT

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National policies

“Resources to serve everyone” is the Icelandic government’s name for the Policy on the Information Society for the years 2004 – 2007. This policy emphasizes the part Icelandic libraries play regarding access for everyone.

The Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has also released a policy for education, culture and research for the years 2005 – 2008. It states that access to research results funded with governmental means should be made accessible.

“The Icelandic government’s science and technology policy emphasises the need for access to research data and results that are financed through public funds, which is in line with developments within the European Union. Access to databases of public organisations in Iceland has until now been limited. An example of efforts to increase access to research data is ICERIS, the Icelandic Current Research Information System, which provides access to information on Icelandic research projects and R&D results”. Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (2005, pp. 30-31)

Another important manifestation is from The Science and Technology Policy Council, Prime Minister’s Office, published in 2004. It states the government will support:

- Free access to research results funded with governmental means
- Free public access to databases and other scientific information

These government policies are promising for libraries and are the foundation to build on to increase access to scientific publications and to work towards the Open Access model for e-journals.

Declarations

At ministerial level in Iceland a group is working towards a policy on access to research results from public funding. This policy is built on work done by OECD and EU. 35 OECD countries, including Iceland, supported OA and OAI by issuing a declaration in January 2004; a declaration on access to research results from public funding. The outcome from this work might influence further development of the national access to e-journals.

Other declarations such as the Berlin Declaration or

the Budapest Declaration have not been signed in Iceland neither by the government, research institutions nor the universities.

Researchers

The awareness among researchers regarding OA is not highly visible in Iceland.

OA as an alternative model for publication for scientific communication has not been discussed openly.

Researchers are not obliged to lodge their publications resulting from government funded research in an Open Access repository after publication nor publish their publications in Open Access.

Open repositories

In Iceland, the development of Open Access has mainly been in the hands of the libraries. The initiative was taken by the library of the University of Akureyri (<http://skemman.khi.is>) by building an open repository for dissertations and Landspítali University Hospital Library (<http://www.hirsla.lsh.is>) by building an institutional research repository for the health sciences.

In 2007 two other university libraries, the Icelandic University of Education and the University of Iceland have joined the University of Akureyri’s repository. The plan is to invite other university libraries to join. The University of Iceland has issued a policy that will be effective in September 2008 that all dissertations should be stored in the repository in e- format.

The institutional research repository for Landspítali University Hospital has made an effort to make Icelandic research articles in the health sciences available full text in OA back to the year 2000. Most articles do have summaries in English. The library has made an agreement with the publishers of Icelandic health sciences journals to allow storing the articles in PDF format and accessible in OA right after publication. All research articles published in non-Icelandic journals are linked to publishers’s website. Only about 5% of those articles are stored as the author’s manuscript.

Both of the above mentioned repositories use DSpace software and are listed in the DOAR and ROAR.

Both are searchable through Google Scholar.

The libraries have promoted Open Access by publishing articles about Open Access in library journals, health science journals and research journals. A conference was held in October 2007 sponsored by the Icelandic library association, Upplysing. Part of the agenda was about Open Access and Open repositories. The attendance was high among librarians but only a few researchers did attend.

A conference on Open Access is planned in May 2008. It is organized by the National University Library and Landspítali University Hospital Health Science Library. The aim is to open discussion among researchers, policy makers and librarians.

The national access to e-journals and databases

The national access to e-journals and databases has been available for nine years. The national access (www.hvar.is) was a breakthrough regarding access to information for all Icelanders.

The national access is an Open Access within Iceland. It has been a quest to find a way to make information accessible to all Icelanders. Information is not just about access it is also about sharing information with others. The national access does not allow our

researchers to share their work freely outside Iceland. It also limits the boundaries of distance education to location within Iceland. The national access in Iceland is a proof that such an access is very valuable to the general public, specialists and researchers alike but to complete the quest Iceland needs to work with other nations towards commonly agreed principles and guidelines on access to and sharing of research results.

References:

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