

OPEN ACCESS IN NORWAY – WHERE ARE WE, AND WHERE ARE WE GOING?

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Repositories

When NORA (Norwegian Open Research Archives) started in the beginning of 2005, it was an initiative of the universities of Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø. NORA was to be a forum for co-operation and standardisation for all Norwegian Open Research Archives. Today the National Library and BIBSYS also have observers on the board. In addition to facilitating co-operation, NORA harvests metadata from all participating Open Research Archives and gives access to the archives through a search facility. NORA also operates a website, www.openaccess.no, dedicated to information about Open Access for a Norwegian readership, aimed at researchers, administrators and decision-makers at Norwegian institutions.

The number of Open Archives in Norway has grown since the beginning of 2005, from a small handful to nearly a dozen. NORA also harvests databases at some institutions that have no Open Archive as such and has also developed software tools that allow smaller institutions to deposit information directly into NORA, so that 15 archives in all are harvested as of today. Growth has been continuous, but not overwhelmingly strong. 6 universities, 1 business school, 3 regional colleges and 4 research institutes are among the archives presently being harvested by NORA.

Things are happening, though. For a period of time BIBSYS, the provider of catalogue and other library services to most universities, colleges and research institutes in Norway, has been working on a project called BIBSYS Brage. This is a project that offers an institutional repository service to any institution that wants one (at a price, of course). Some 30 institutions (universities, colleges and research institutes) have taken up this offer. BIBSYS Brage has been at a Beta version level for some months now, and is planning to enter the full production phase at the end of March/beginning of April this year. These repositories will be harvested by NORA immediately after launching; we expect the number of harvestable documents to be rather low at the start, but continuously growing.

HeRa, the Helsebiblioteket's Research Archive, which will be a research archive for all hospitals and the health sector in general, including The Norwegian Institute of Public Health and other health research

institutes, are planning to open on March 27th. HeRa is hosted by Open Repository, a service provided by BioMed Central, using a DSpace platform.

Thus, come mid-April we expect NORA to be harvesting at least 40 repositories. The university and college sector, including private colleges, is well covered with repositories, only a handful of smaller institutions in this sector will be without a repository when the BIBSYS Brage project is fully operational.

The research institute sector, however, remains to be integrated into the world of repositories. NORA presently harvests a small handful, and some institutions will be added through the BIBSYS Brage and HeRa projects, but the vast majority, some 50–60 institutions, are still left without a repository. NORA will try to market the idea of a repository to some of these institutions, and a number of possibilities exist for them in order to realize a repository or being harvested by NORA without having to implement a repository locally. BIBSYS Brage can provide them with a repository, Teora (Telemark Open Research Archive) offers services to all institutions in the Telemark area, BORA will offer services in the Bergen area and Munin (The University of Tromsø archive) will consider offering services to institutions in the Tromsø area. NORA also offers an editor that allows minor institutions with few publications to have their metadata in NORA. At institutions that have a larger number of publications but no structured archive that could be harvested using OAI-PMH, NORA harvests internal databases, provided meaningful metadata can be harvested or constructed.

Content

While institutional commitment to Open Archives in the university and college sector seems to be in place, work still has to be done to fill the archives with quality information.

Major institutions have implemented some kind of policy that ensures publication of a majority of master's theses and student papers. Student papers are minor theses written at a late stage of degrees in law and medicine, where a standard master's thesis has not been implemented (for law, this has recently been changed into a master's thesis). Some work has also

been done on ensuring deposit of doctoral theses, and there is a steady influx of reports, working papers etc.

What is lacking is research papers, i.e. copies of papers published in formal journals. As of today, there are 1154 such papers in NORA. We know that nearly 10 000 such papers are published annually authored by Norwegian university and college employees. A report, which is forthcoming, indicates that about 50 per cent of this output could be deposited in a repository in the "final draft post-refereeing" version. NORA holdings span a number of years, and in no single year are there more than 200 papers deposited. In other words, less than 4 per cent of the immediate potential is realized.

Integration between the research reporting systems Forskdok and Frida, and the local repositories, has been worked on. While integration has become operational to some extent, active use of these possibilities has been low. There is obviously a need for information directed at researchers and supporting staff that performs the reporting, in order to make them actually use the depositing possibilities that will make the work needed to deposit papers in the repositories virtually disappear. The deposit of scientific papers will be the key factor in evaluating the success of institutional repositories.

Policies

Making and implementing policies are an important part of making things actually happen, without a policy one is dependent on peoples' good will and interest.

A policy document has been approved by the Research Committee of the University of Oslo, and the board of the university is expected to be invited to take a decision later this year.

A publishing policy document is under preparation at

the University of Tromsø, open access policies is expected to be a part of this document which will be presented to the university board for decision later this year.

The Norwegian Research Council is working on an Open Access position paper, analyzing alternatives and consequences of possible Research Council policies.

Open Access publishing

As the Nordbib report demonstrated nearly two years ago, some initiatives had been taken to implement Open Access publishing models for a small number of journals. Today, DOAJ lists 13 journals for Norway. The Nordbib report suffered from the fact that one could not, at that time, search for country in DOAJ. Today one can, and among the 13 journals listed for Norway only 5 were listed in the Nordbib report, 8 are new. Whether they are truly new, or were in DOAJ in 2006 and just eluded the Nordbib report, is difficult to know. We know for sure that one journal, the Acta Didactica Norge, is a new journal that started in 2007.

We expect further journals to convert to Open Access publishing in 2008, among them Rangifer, the international Journal of the Nordic Council for Reindeer Husbandry Research (NOR). There is also significant interest in looking at establishing new journals from various groups.

NORA has awarded funds to the University of Bergen, to enable them to establish an infrastructure for OA publishing, based on the Open Journals System software. Such an infrastructure is meant to be made available to all of NORA by the University of Bergen, in order to avoid duplication of efforts on the technical side. It is our hope that such an infrastructure will remove an important obstacle to migration or creation of Open Access journals in Norway.

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