OPEN ACCESS: MAXIMISING RESEARCH QUALITY AND IMPACT SEMINAR

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Iryna Kuchma reports on the Open Access: Maximising Research Quality and Impact seminar which took place at the University of Latvia on 22 October 2009, organised by the University of Latvia (LU), the State agency "Culture information systems" (KIS), and eIFL.net during International Open Access Week (October 19-23, 2009).

Introduction

The Open Access: Maximising Research Quality and Impact seminar [1] brought together 78 researchers, research managers and policy-makers, journal editors and publishers, librarians, and ICT specialists to discuss the latest developments of the open access movement and to debate how to raise the visibility of research outputs from Latvian universities and research organisations, and how to build their capacities in global knowledge sharing. In his welcoming speech, Prof. Indrikis Muiznieks, LU vice rector, confirmed, that LU is looking forward to explore the benefits of open access as a viable solution to existing problems in scholarly communication.

The seminar started with an overview of the evolving scholarly communication environment and the benefits that open access brings to researchers – enlarged audience and citation impact, tenure and promotion; to policy makers and research managers – new tools to manage a university's image and impact, and to research libraries. It was stressed, that today's science and research are dynamic and collaborative and it is important to sustain the communication processes, rather than simply archive research results in the form of a single journal article.

The seminar covered a wealth of topics, including the economic, social and educational benefits in making research outputs available without financial, legal and technical barriers to access; how open access and institutional repositories can help to maximise the visibility of research publications and improve the quality, impact and influence of research; how to disseminate research results in the most efficient way and how to collect and curate the digital outputs; how to showcase the quality of research in universities and to better measure and manage research in such institutions. Practical sessions addressed open access policies, copyright management – licensing open access content to avoid confusion regarding use and reuse –, recommendations how to explain the need for

a repository and its expected benefits, how to write a strategic plan and compile business cases.

This report focuses on two case studies from Lithuania and Ukraine and on the challenges and opportunities for research publications in Latvia.

Open access projects in Lithuania

Dr. Žibutė Petrauskienė, Vilnius University Library, presented the open access projects and policy landscape in Lithuania and shared a case study of the Lithuanian Academic e-Library (eLABa).

She introduced both the national level initiatives – Article 45 of the Law on science and studies (from 12 May 2009): Publicity of the results of scientific activity and the institutional level initiatives – Regulations of Open Access to Scientific Information of Vilnius University (accepted by the University Senate Committee on 8 October 2009).

She also provided updates on the eLABa collections, and its participating institutions, and on the public availability of Lithuanian ETDs – 56% of ETD collection or 6616 documents (as of Septermber 2009) [2]. Among the problems she listed were lack of institutional policies, copyright management, lack of interest from institutional and national level decision makers, and lack of financial support from the national funding programs.

eLABa represents the best practices of open access in Lithuania, bringing benefits to institutions, researchers and the state. The eLABa implementation promoted scientific research and usage of research results in research institutions, the business sector and in other communities both in the EU and globally, thus creating a common research framework. The Ministry of Education and Science recognized eLABa as an important development and provides support.

Open Access projects in Ukraine

Tetiana Yaroshenko, University Librarian and Vice President for IT, National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy, presented the governmental and institutional open access policy landscape and the collective actions of universities and libraries to promote open access. She described the implementation of a national open access mandate – open access to research funded by the state budget of Ukraine is required by the Law of Ukraine "On the principles of Developing Information Society in

Ukraine in 2007-2015". To implement this mandate, the Vernadsky National library of Ukraine created a full text registry of 965 journals [3] and a DSpace repository.

She also mentioned the Olvia Declaration of the Universities: Academic Freedom, University Autonomy, Science and Education for Sustainable Development, endorsed by 26 rectors of Ukrainian universities in Yalta, Crimea, on June 12, 2009. Open access to research information is described in the Article 2.6: "Academic freedom includes open access to information (except reasonable exceptions specified by the law of Ukraine), including open access to research information through the development of open repositories and open access journals in the universities, and the ability to communicate freely with the peers in any part of the world. Open access to information is a significant part of the research in today's globalised world, a key to further development of science, education and society, and Ukraine's integration into the global academic community."

Moreover she presented an Open Access to Knowledge statement, endorsed by more than 150 Ukrainian University librarians. In this statement the libraries ask researchers to support open access and to self-archive their research papers, reports, dissertations, educational materials etc. in open institutional repositories, to publish articles in open access journals, and to retain their copyright. They ask universities and research institutions to implement open access policies and strategies, to provide open access to the full-text peer-reviewed research outputs produced by faculty and staff; and to launch and develop open institutional repositories and open access journals: all with the ambition to raise the scientific quality, social and economic value of the research. Academic journal publishers are asked to allow self-archiving of post-prints, to request only the rights needed to publish an article, to cancel or shorten the embargo periods, and to provide the published versions of the articles to the relevant open institutional repositories.

In the second part of her presentation she highlighted open access journals and repositories from the Ukraine, the open access mandate in Ternopil State Ivan Puluj Technical University [5], and shared a case study on the institutional repository in her own institution – National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy.

Challenges and opportunities for research publications in Latvia

Indra Dedze, project manager at the LU Academic Department, presented challenges and opportunities for research publications at LU with its 90-year long history. LU academic staff annually publishes on average 3, 000 research papers, but these are not widely available and it is important to help the library setting up an institutional repository to collect the research papers and provide access to them.

Aija Putniņa and Ruta Garklāva, LU, and Kristīne Pabērza, LU/KIS led a discussion about culture of trust, technical aspects of open institutional repositories and advocacy for open access.
 Uldis Zariņš from the National library of Latvia, gave a talk on the role of the national library in collecting information and ensuring perpetual availability, and on the role of the state in the copyright debate.

LU plans to set up an open institutional repository pilot in Latvia and the workshop participants will be working together to develop strategies for collective advocacy of open access to research results in Latvia.

References

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