

The University of Latvia ETD program: a case study of local practice

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Abstract

In the year 2005 the University of Latvia started a program to create a full text database of all successfully defended theses on all levels - bachelors' and masters' papers, PhD dissertations. This paper is going to demonstrate our experience of management and providing online access to annual 6000 full text dissertations via union catalogue of eight libraries of national significance and discuss copyright issues. While number of students allowing publishing their dissertations is relatively high (about 70%), there are some study programs covered by almost 0% of published dissertations. We are going to analyze why it happened. The most confusing is the case of PhD dissertations. According to national legislation PhD theses has to be electronically published in order to make them available for general public. This legal provision reveals a collision between copyright requirements which prohibit publishing anything without consent of the author on the one hand and academic principles which demands that all the scientific work has to be publicly available on the other hand. The Constitution of Latvia declares that state protects copyright so it is questionable weather the mentioned legal provision on doctoral thesis is constitutional.