The Role of Open Access in Fostering Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration: A case study

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Researchers often invest a lot of time, energy, money and intellectual effort in producing knowledge in the form of scholarly articles. They forecast trends, create efficient and better working models, design systems and help to improve work and processes. To publish their intellectual works on peer-reviewed journals, they transfer their copyright to the publisher (Swan, 2006a). The goal of the authors focuses on creating a meaningful impact with their research work and in return expecting intangible gains such as peer recognition, academic rewards and promotion.

In the current reader-pays publishing model it is ironic that the knowledge creator i.e. the author, “rarely benefits as the subscription fee usually remains the revenue of the publisher” (Glover, Webb & Gleghorn, 2006:197) and “academic authors are interested primarily in wide dissemination of their publications and seek no direct financial reward” (Park and Qun, 2007:57).

While the digital divide continues to widen, the disparity in access to scientific publications between the scholars from developed and developing countries also continues to expand. Open access is claimed to be one of the solutions to bring scientists on a relatively equal footing in terms of access to knowledge hence researchers in developing countries can disseminate and access scholarly knowledge. Nonetheless, the question which open access models work better for these countries and how open access can be harnessed to improve research uptake needs to be explored.

There exists no research on open access in Ethiopia. The main impetus for this research came from an observation that Ethiopian scholars in universities have lagged behind in terms of publishing their research works. This research was initiated to answer those questions by collecting evidence in Ethiopia mainly from researchers and librarians in Ethiopia.

The study looks at how open access fosters knowledge sharing and collaboration among scientists in Ethiopian universities. Articles and book chapters, news and blogs, Web sites and online directories are reviewed and analyzed to discuss and present the current status of the open access movement and contextualization will be made to the situation in Ethiopia. This is an ongoing master thesis that is expected to be completed in the course of April 2009.

A study of Major Institutional Repositories in India

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Institutional repositories (IR) are digital collections that capture, collect, manage, disseminate, and preserve scholarly work created by the constituent members in individual institutions. The establishment of IR in the developing countries ensures that their national research becomes mainstream and contributes on an equal footing to the global knowledge pool.

The paper presents the Indian scenario in developing the Institutional Repositories. The authors depict the main bottlenecks for setting up of IRs in various Indian institutions and come up with appropriate suggestions.

Total number 33 Institutional Repositories in India have been analyzed based on selected study criteria like software used for repositories, size of the items, contents included, languages, description and Country.