Institutional Repositories: Benefits and incentives

Shampa Paul*

Institute of Development and Environmental Applied Studies, NOIDA — 201301, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract The Information Age is characterized by new ways of information generation, managing, and dissemination because of the use of information and communication technology (ICT) (Moahi, 2003; Paul, 2007). Institutional Repositories (IRs) play a fundamental role in centralizing, preserving, and making accessible institution's intellectual capital and, at the same time, they form part of a global system of distributed and interoperable repositories that provide the foundation for a new disaggregated model of scholarly publishing (Johnson, 2002; Nagahban, 2010). A study of nine libraries in the National Capital Region of India was conducted to: identify benefits of IRs, learn the satisfaction level of users with respect to IR facilities, identify the incentives for publication in IRs, and identify the appropriate policies to be adopted by institutions for implementing IRs. The results of the responses from the 496 respondents indicate that: 1) Most Faculty members and Research scholars in this study indicated that they do not publish their research in IRs. 2) Opinions about benefits of IRs are user-specific. For instance, a substantially large percentage of those Faculty members and Research scholars in the study who do use IRs are Most satisfied with potential benefits of IR while a relatively higher percentage of Students fall in the Satisfied category. 3) The benefits of IRs ranked most highly, although this varied by the different user groups was wider readership. Students ranked this and "quality aspect" — the opportunity to improve the quality of one's work through the provision of feedback from other researchers. 4) A serious concern about publishing in IRs is the potential for plagiarism and overall lower control over one's work. A second concern is the potential loss of content in IRs, which are often not archived as well as scholarly journals are. The findings suggest that institutions need to give due attention to policies related to two aspects of publication, especially those related to quality and copyright issues and to the academic value of research output. Other policy-related topics include citation in other publication with due acknowledgement, inclusion in indexing systems for retrieval, interoperability with other IRs, and Permanent storage.

Introduction

The role of information in fostering development has been duly recognized in this global era, wherein information has become a valued commodity in its own right. This age is characterized by new ways of information generation, managing, and dissemination because of the use of

* Tel.: +91 9868152107.
  E-mail address: shampa_paul@yahoo.com.

information and communication technology (ICT) (Moahi, 2003; Paul, 2007). Institutional Repositories (IRs) play a fundamental role in centralizing, preserving, and making accessible institution's intellectual capital and, at the same time, they form part of a global system of distributed and interoperable repositories that provide the foundation for a new disaggregated model of scholarly publishing (Johnson, 2002; Nagahban, 2010). Special libraries are leading in today's distributed information environment and are increasingly involved in the creation, organization, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge through their IRs. Special libraries can be defined as a library established, supported, and administered by a business firm, private corporation, association, autonomous institution, etc., to meet the needs of its members or staff in pursuing the goals of the organization (Online Encyclopedia, 2012). According to Wikipedia (2012), special libraries include corporate, law, medical, museum, news, and nonprofit libraries. These libraries are not usually open to the public, although many do allow access for some researchers. Special libraries are also sometimes known as *Information Centers*. Thus, special libraries hold specialized kind of information sources in any new field of specific research. They are developed to support the mission of their parent organization, and their collections and services are targeted more towards the specific needs of their clientele.

All the sample libraries selected for this study are special libraries in the strict sense, as they are developing their collection in specific areas and offering specialized service to their clientele. The parent organizations of all the sample libraries are engaged in research and training activities. Consequently, the clientele of the sample libraries includes students, research scholars and faculty. These libraries are at the forefront to break down the barriers that divide their traditional decentralized units and are committed to fulfilling their role of knowledge dissemination by adopting new ways. Strong partnerships between ICT and special libraries are able to create the most productive balance between the old and the new environment (Paul, 2010). A majority of the special libraries are involved in supporting the information needs of their users who are involved in research and development activities to fulfil the aims and objectives of their parent organizations. As a result, such libraries are involved in taking full advantage of updated technology so as to satisfy all types of information needs of their users. For this, they are creating institutional repositories so as to make them accessible to their users. The main objectives of the study are:

- To identify benefits of IRs;
- To know the satisfaction level of users with respect to IR facilities;
- To identify the incentives for publication in IRs;
- To identify the appropriate policies to be adopted by institutions for implementing IRs.

Before proceeding further, some extracts of existing literature on the topic are discussed here. The study by Luzi, Rosa, Roberta, and Loredana (2009) indicates that the Italian National Research Council makes its scientific research freely available on the web and the library is engaged in IR management as well as inserting the Institute's scientific research in their digital catalogues. According to Beier and Velden (2004), the Max Planck Society introduced eDoc-Server, an IR to its 80 research institutions. This facilitated the institutions both in managing and disseminating publications as well as digital primary source collections. This software is extensively used for bibliography management.

The article by Laxminarsaiah and Rajgoli (2007) is an in-depth study of the processes of IR creation and its benefits. The study concludes by saying that application and use of information and knowledge can only become a reality, subject to proper leverage of ICT to develop IR, where information is collected, processed, and made visible for dissemination that can make an institution's intellectual output available to the world. A detailed study of the IR established in National Aerospace Laboratories, India, has been discussed by Narayana, Biradar, and Goudar (2006). They also highlight the features and advantages of IR.

The remainder of the paper is as follows: Section II includes the Research Design. The Results are presented and discussed in Section III while Findings are delineated in Section IV. Finally, Section V contains the Summary and Conclusions of the study.

Research design

This research paper is based on the data collected from nine special libraries in the National Capital Region of India. The list of sample libraries under study is as follows:

1. Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) Library, Uttar Pradesh, India.
2. Defence Scientific Information and Documentation Centre (DESIDOC), Delhi.
3. Indian National Science Academy (INSA) Library, Delhi.
4. Institute of Economic Growth (IEG) Library, Delhi.
5. National Social Sciences Documentation Centre (NASS-DOC), Delhi.
6. National Archives of India (NAI) Library, Delhi.
7. National Informatics Centre (NIC) Library, Delhi.
8. National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) Library, Delhi.
9. V. V. Giri Labour Institute (VVGLI) Library, Uttar Pradesh, India.

The data were collected during December 2009 and March 2010. The study covers a total of 496 respondents out of 750 users surveyed from these nine special libraries. Thus the response rate of users is 66.13%. A semi-structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for the primary survey. The observation and interview method were also used to collect further data from the users. The respondents were selected through the purposive sampling method.

In order to investigate issues mentioned in the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses are formulated:

1. Opinion about benefits of IR is user dependent.
2. Depositing research output in IR is user dependent.
3. Incentives to publish in IR and policies to be adopted by institutions play an important role in the success of IR.