EIFL-OA: Open Access

Removing barriers to knowledge

knowledge without boundaries

"ADVOCACY FOR OPEN ACCESS: BOTSWANA LIBRARY CONSORTIUM
A CASE STUDY FROM BOTSWANA

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Results of the EIFL-funded project "Advocacy for Open Access to Researchers, Deans, Graduate Students, Editors, Policy Makers, Educators and Library Professionals" implemented by Botswana Library Consortium (BLC).

INTRODUCTION

In 2009 the University of Botswana (UB) implemented Research Innovation and Scholarly Archive (UBRISA), the Open Access (OA) digital repository that showcases UB's research (735 records are currently available and growing). UB Library is currently piloting OA e-thesis project.

In addition, the Botswana College of Agriculture (BCA) is progressing with its OA digital repository (implementation started in 2007) to make the college intellectual output, including grey literature, openly available and preserve the scholarly work in digitalized format to enhance research and teaching.

However, there still remains a lack of widespread understanding of OA and its benefits. There are some departments that do not contribute their research to UBRISA and there are many higher education and research institutions without OA repositories (37 institutions are BLC members). This project identified the main audiences to target for an advocacy campaign, with the hope that by conducting a broad reaching campaign the results would be increased awareness across a variety of stakeholders and increased interest in creating and depositing research in OA repositories.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Creation of an OA Advocacy committee consisting of a variety of stakeholders in order to encourage broad participation in planning and implementation of all activities.

- 20 Botswana Library Consortium (BLC) members attended OA training, learning about OA policy issues and also implementation of OA institutional repositories (IRs).

- First celebration of OA week in Botswana.

- Over 150 researchers, research managers, journal editors, students and librarians attended the OA week events and gained better understanding of OA.

- The Department Agricultural Research at the Ministry of Agriculture brought all their researchers to attend the OA week launch event and workshop and also participated in the OA Week activities through attendance, presentations, as well as display of their research products and

demonstration of what the department does in the area of research to eradicate poverty in Botswana.

- Following the OA week celebrations some research institutions/departments, particularly the Department Agricultural Research at Ministry of Agriculture were eager to start an OA IR to make their research output freely available to the public. The UBRISA (University of Botswana Research, Innovation and Scholarship Archive) Team has already started assisting the Department of Agricultural Research. And Botswana College of Agriculture (BCA) is progressing with its OA IR, including developing a draft policy document.

- 11 journals published by UB are in the process of becoming OA through UB's Library and Office of Research and Development.[1]

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2011, following the first OA workshop held in Botswana in September 2010 for researchers, research managers, policy makers, librarians, ICT specialists, journal editors, and publishers, BLC organised a number of OA activities, including an OA workshop for librarians in August 2011 and OA Week celebrations from 24-28 October 2011 in Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana.

These activities marked the first time that the country celebrated OA week; and it was a successful week! The celebrations started with the official launch by the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture (under whose portfolio libraries fall) and was followed by a workshop.

The target audiences for the OA advocacy activities were:

- Researchers/authors, graduate students, educators and journal editors: those who generate research results

- Policy makers and directors: those who play a major role in research funding and implementation of OA policies

- Library professionals: those who advocate for OA and ensure wide dissemination and access to research results for the public good.

OBJECTIVES

- Informing the target audience about OA concepts and the role of OA journals and OA IRs and the benefits derived from them;

- Training participants on how to start and the best approaches to collaborative promotion of research outputs; including policies and practices;

- Providing hands-on practice for researchers, editors and library professionals in self-archiving/submission of research output to OA IRs;

- Encouraging university administrators to establish OA IRs, developing OA policies, and signing OA declarations;

- Explaining the benefits and strategies for collective advocacy of OA to research results;

- Raising awareness among the researchers that the 'signing off' of copyrights to publishers needs to be approached differently so that the researchers retain some rights to their research work;

- Engaging institutional leadership in looking for ways to support publications in OA journals, which have reduced the cost of access to scholarly literature.

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[1]Botswana Journal of Applied Linguistics; Botswana Journal of Business; Botswana Journal of Earth Sciences; Botswana Journal of Economics; Botswana Journal of Technology; Boleswa: Journal of Theology, religion and philosophy Lonaka; Marang; Mosenodi; Pula; University of Botswana Law Journal

STRATEGIES, TACTICS, AND TOOLS

An OA Advocacy Committee was created to plan and implement OA activities. The committee consists of representation from various organizations and institutions; mainly librarians, plus two members from the academic community – the Department of Library and Information Studies and the Department of Languages and Social Sciences Education.

ACTIVITIES

- Visits and meetings with policy/decision-makers in their respective institutions and departments have been conducted to share understanding of OA concept & scholarly communications and inviting them to participate in OA week activities.

- Training of library and information professionals who are BLC members. The training covered OA concepts, the OA movement, OA journals and OA IRs; OA and policy environment; platforms/software, hardware; review and comparison of FOSS to build digital repositories (e.g. DSpace etc) and human resources; digital repositories workflows with specific examples from UBRISA DSpace repository; and practical sessions using DSpace software.

- Demonstrations of case studies of existing OA IRs to research communities.

- Sending customised/personalised invitation letters directly to directors, researchers, authors, journal editors and library professionals.

- Interviews at RB2 (Radio Botswana) under the Botswana Productivity radio breakfast show.

OA WEEK ACTIVITIES

The OA Week activities started with an OA Week launch and workshop held at Maharaja Conference Centre, in Gaborone, on 24th October 2011 followed by OA presentations, panel discussions, workshops, and demonstrations held at the UB Library Auditorium from 25 to 28 October 2011. The Ministry of Sports, Youth and Culture honoured our invitation to officially launch OA Week celebrations on 24th October 2011.

Local support for organizing the OA activities was available and drawn from the BLC, Office of Research and Development (ORD) and Digital Scholarship Office in the Office of DVC Academic Affairs, UB. Local support also came from UBRISA Team which provided the training to library professionals. The Department of Educational Technology, Centre for Academic Development at UB assisted with taking photographs and videos of the activities during the OA Week event.

The OA Organizing Committee used promotional materials such as flyers, brochures and posters to market the event. The Committee also used various media to publicize the event. A press release was sent to local newspapers.

UB managed to bring in Ms Eve Gray, Honorary Research Associate, at Centre for Educational Technology University of Cape Town (UCT) to present on OA, new publishing models and new opportunities for African universities.

Stakeholders who participated with presentations/panel discussions contributions and demonstrations included people from a broad spectrum of departments and from several ministries, including:

- Departments of Law, Primary Education, Information Technology, and Library and Information Studies at UB
- Office of Research and Development at UB
- Digital Scholarship Office at UB
- UBRISA Team at UB
- Botswana College of Agriculture

- University of Botswana
- Botswana Library Consortium
- Botswana National Productivity Centre
- Ministries
  - Tertiary Education Council at Ministry of Education & Skill Development.
  - Department of Agricultural Research at Ministry of Agriculture,
  - Department of Registrar of Companies, Intellectual Property Division at Ministry of Trade and Industry
  - Department of Botswana Innovation Hub at Ministry of Infrastructure, and Science and Technology
  - Department of Research, Science & Technology at Ministry of Infrastructure, and Science and Technology
  - Department of National Food Technology Research Center, Ministry of Infrastructure, and Science and Technology

Stakeholders who attended the events include the following:

- Botho College
- The Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning
- The Botswana Export Development and Investment Authority
- The Botswana Defence Force
- Botswana National Library Services
- The Botswana Training Authority
- Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana
- Department of Youth, Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture
- The Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services, Ministry of Transport and Communications
- Francistown College of Education
- The Institute of Development Management
- Institutes of Health Sciences in Gaborone and Francistown
- I.H.S Serowe project, Central government infrastructure, Landflow solutions, Botswana Environmental Information System
- Kanye Education Centre
- The Local Enterprise Authority
- Molepolole College of Education
- National Veterinary Laboratory
- Palapye Technical College
- Radio Botswana
- Serowe College of Education
- Tlokweng College
- Industries: BLSON, Companies & IP

CHALLENGE

The challenge during the OA week was that, while research institutions and departments participated in organizing the event, very few researchers, authors, and journal editors participated in the OA activities. Leaders of various institutions and departments sent library professionals to represent them, with the understanding that the issues being discussed affect librarians. Library professionals attended in large numbers for the duration of the OA Week activities. Despite the challenges, there are institutions and departments as well as individuals who benefited from the OA Week activities (see the list of stakeholders who participated and attended above).

LESSONS LEARNED

- For the campaign to be successful there should be a dedicated committee.

- In-person visits with directors/leadership of departments and institutions is very effective way to cultivate a shared understanding of the concept of OA and its benefit, as well as to get a buy-in. These visits need to precede any written invitation or communication.

THE FUTURE

BLC believes that the results of the OA advocacy campaign will impact future OA work by encouraging more research departments and institutions to embrace OA and publish their research results open access. Demonstrations of established IRs and OA journals will encourage other departments and institutions to follow suit. Given the departments and institutions that participated in the OA Week activities, BLC believes that future meetings with stakeholders will yield more positive responses. Starting in early 2012, BLC is committed to making appointments to visit all stakeholders to inform them about BLC and how a partnership will support successful implementation of information programmes.