



EIFL Open Access Case Study

Open access and open data support services at Tartu University, Estonia

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“Due to the library’s open access (OA) activities and competence, the main change that has taken place can be seen in the role of the library as a trustworthy partner to scientists, university’s administration as well as funders. The library has operated as mediator in the dialogue between the different stakeholders and has reached the position where our input is considered and we can carry out different projects to help improve science.”

Liisi Lembinen, UTL Acting Director.

BACKGROUND: OPEN ACCESS (OA) IN ESTONIA BEFORE THE PROJECT

In 2010, Estonia became involved in the Research Infrastructures Roadmap project, which included two OA related topics: the Estonian E-Repository and Conservation of Collections and the Natural History Archives and Information Network (NATARC).

[Several institutions in Estonia](#) had OA institutional repositories, but OA publishing was less common.

In October 2010 the UTL opened the OA web gate at <http://www.utlib.ee/openaccess> that provides information about OA and links to the largest OA repositories and journals. This website is one of the main sources of OA information in Estonia. During first three years a series of promotional activities were held during OA Week events, resulting in increased usage of OA portal. Every year the website has more than 20,000 unique page-views. And during OA Week visits have been increased more than 15%.

In 2011, UTL initiated a national level discussion about OA among different stakeholders and contributed to the development of a positive brand for [UT OA institutional repository](#) (see the case study [here](#)), Promotional events highlighted the benefits of depositing research outputs in the UT OA repository and benefits of OA. As a result, the repository has grown significantly. In 2010 it has registered over 13,000 deposited items, in 2012 over than 25,000 and it has shown a good way to expose research to a wider audience. During the years 2011-2012 the numbers of visits and hits have also greatly increased up to 3 million per year.

In 2012 UTL started successful collaboration between the Library and the University of Tartu Press to promote and implement OA publishing in the university.

UTL OA Week celebrations in 2010-2012 have placed OA high on the research agenda in Estonia. These activities lead the UTL to participate in the Research and Innovation Monitoring Programme in 2012, where the UTL released a report about the OA principles, copyright issues and business models. The UTL has

become an important centre of expertise on OA in Estonia.

To support the OA movement in Estonia, UTL participates in the European Commission (EC) funded [OpenAIRE](#) project. UTL cooperates with the Estonian Research Council providing researchers with the opportunity to comply with EC OA pilot and make their EC funded research outputs OA in UTL's repository.

Since 2012 the Estonian Research Council requires making the articles, produced from publicly funded research, available for everyone. This indicates that there has been a clear change in the principles for giving out research grants. However, a clear national OA policy has not been developed yet.

The eight-month project has been designed to meet the following objectives:

- Discuss institutional and national OA policies;
- Raise awareness on open research data and opportunities it offers for creating an effective semantic web by linking publications and research data that are openly available;
- Raise awareness on publishing OA journals (via UTL OJS platform, five OA journals were published before the project started) and OA monographs (capitalizing on a strong partnerships with the UT press and OAPEN, only four UT books were available on OAPEN platform before the project started);
- Make research output available in the UTL repository.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

- **Policy change.** The Estonian Research Council requires making the articles, produced from publicly funded research, available for everyone. This indicates that there has been a clear change in the principles for giving out research grants. In addition, OA principles has been added as underlying standpoint to the RD&I strategy "[Knowledge Based Estonia 2014-2020](#)". Among the project activities there were a number of discussions between the researchers, university representatives, publishers, funders and policy makers, dedicated not to the question whether or not Estonia should have an OA policy, but to the question what the policy should be like.
- **An infrastructure set for researchers to share their open research data.** As a result of the Open Data Month (January 2014 – an event engaging researchers in sharing their research data) researchers, funders and policy makers have become more interested in reproducible research. UT received funding from the Estonian government and joined [DataCite](#) as a member to improve the quality of research by enabling people to find, share, use, and cite research data. And UTL has started developing a new web based work-flow through which researchers can publish their data sets and make them openly available.
- **UTL has built support systems to assist researchers with depositing their publications in OA repository** (28% increase in self-archiving after the trainings UTL provided). UT alumni have been reached out and over a hundred of them provided OA to their theses and dissertations. OA and open data have been widely discussed by researchers and students and received a lot of media attention. There were over 1500 visits to UT's OA portal during OA Week 2013 and a new open research data page was visited 700 times during OA Week 2013.
- **UTL consolidated publishing of OA journals and OA monographs.** UTL has integrated five OA journals from other platforms and published two OA journals on [OJS platform](#) (total number of OA journals now is 12). The UT Press has published 15 OA monographs, all of them are available at [OAPEN platform](#) and in [DOAB](#).
- **A network of advocates.** Project offered a platform for experts from different fields (researchers, universities, publishers, funders and policy makers) to exchange expertise, discuss implementation and practice OA.

ACTIVITIES, STRATEGIES, TACTICS AND TOOLS, SUCCESS STORIES

The UTL implemented five types of advocacy activities in October 2013 (OA Week) and January 2014

(Open Data Month) using tactics and tools described below:

1. Discussing OA and open research data policies: organizing a one-day conference in partnership with Estonian Research Council, UT Natural History Museum (hosting [PlutoF](#) – cloud database and computing services for the taxonomical, ecological, phylogenetical, etc. research and data publishing) and the Center of Estonian Language Resources. [Presentations](#) and panel discussions addressed the following topics:

- What are the EC's and the Estonian research funders' positions on OA? How is OA represented in the EC documents?
- How have different universities developed their OA policies and what effect have the policies had?
- Why and how should we make research data open?
- What are the Estonian research funders' positions on open research data?
- How do today's open data repositories operate?

The conference was live-streamed, and over 400 people attended and watched online.

2. Promoting OA publishing: a one-day seminar was organized by the UTL and the UT press, which focused on practical aspects of providing OA to research outputs. 26 researchers and research administrators responsible for UT research publications learned how to deposit publications to the UTL repository, how to create OA journals using Open Journals Systems platform (OJS) and how to publish OA monographs in OAPEN. In addition, the UT Press hosted an "open doors" day, during which university members, mostly young researchers and teaching staff were welcome to visit the UT Press rooms to become familiar with their everyday activities.

3. Sharing information about OA and open research data: the UTL promoted benefits of OA to researchers and students through online mediums. The UTL OA web gate at <http://www.utlib.ee/openaccess> has been updated with more detailed information about OA. And open research data topics were added to this web gate. We also printed brochures, posters and other promotional items for the OA Week 2013 activities, and distributed information materials about OA among different institutions.

4. Hosting a UT Open Data Month: OA Week activities described above were followed by UT Open Data Month, which engaged the researchers in sharing their research data. There was a series of small group discussions aimed at discovering researcher's needs and expectations and creating an OA platform for data sets publishing and reproducible research sharing. In the beginning of 2014, UTL has become a member of [DataCite](#) and will be assigning persistent identifiers (the Digital Object Identifiers, DOIs) to datasets openly available.

5. OA repository marketing and promotion, train the trainers activities: UTL continued with marketing and developing a positive brand for the institutional OA repository, with the goal of encouraging researchers to deposit their research output there. The most efficient way to do this was through targeting specific groups: departments, faculty, colleges, centres, labs and administrators. To introduce the main concepts of OA and the benefits of OA institutional repository we used the institution's mailing lists for spreading information. And we have also distributed brochures, bookmarks, videos, etc in the UT Library, university faculties, colleges and institutes during promotional events and workshops. To raise the profile of the repository, our new strategy involved training sessions hosted by UTL staff with the University Personnel Office Training Centre support and guidance. UT librarians took the initiative to train 50 subject librarians and academic affairs officers as OA trainers. During the project period librarians assisted authors in depositing their research materials and provided services to check copyright permissions. This initiative has worked well and has established new collaboration between libraries and faculties. UTL consulted and trained faculty librarians and learning technology specialists to involve them in engaging with the faculty staff in the repository developments.

This initiative produced an idea to launch a campaign to make UT alumni research outputs available. The campaign of submitting alumni works to the OA institutional repository has received a lot of feedback from

both written media as well as television and has resulted in publishing various interesting theses.

THE FUTURE

UTL has launched a new open data project as a result of activities supported by EIFL and described in this case study. It develops a national DataCite system and establishes Estonian DataCite consortium that will consist of major research institutions. Estonian DataCite could become a great resource for other Baltic States and European scientists as well, since there is no DataCite centres in the Baltic States issuing DOIs to datasets. This project will also be unique, due to the fact that Estonian libraries and life scientists have not worked together so closely before. This type of cooperation and exchange of expertise adds value to both life and library sciences.

UTL has also just hired a research data manager that will assist researchers with open data sharing.

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