



Evidence Summary

Developing Countries Lag Behind the US and UK in Contributing to Institutional Repository Literature

A Review of:

Bhardwaj, R. K. (2014). Institutional repository literature: A bibliometric analysis. *Science & Technology Libraries*, 33(2), 185-202. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0194262X.2014.906018>

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Abstract

Objective – Quantify the IR literature across the world by identifying countries with relatively high concentration of articles, describing the distribution of the literature by language, author (institutional and individual), journal, and examining characteristics such as the transformative activity index, and authorship and citation patterns.

Design – This exploratory study of the literature used several bibliometric research methods to describe patterns and identify highly represented articles, authors, institutions, and journals.

Setting – The Library and Information Science Abstracts database.

Subjects – 436 articles from 118 journals.

Methods – Research articles and review papers published through December 31, 2012, were identified by searching Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA). Citation data for the 436 articles selected was gathered from LISA and Scopus.

Main Results – The 436 articles from 118 journals had publication dates from 2001 through 2012, originated from 68 countries in 19 languages, and had authors affiliated with 159 institutions. The greatest number of institutional repository articles were published

in 2011 while year-to-year growth was greatest from 2005-2006. Most highly represented were the United States and the United Kingdom, followed by India, Australia, and Spain.

Twenty publishers were responsible for nearly half of the selected articles. The top four journals included *OCLC Systems & Services*, *D-Lib Magazine*, *Serials Review*, and *Library Hi Tech*. *D-Lib Magazine* alone published seven of the top 20 most cited articles. While most articles were written by a single author, the majority of the multiple author articles came from developed countries. Citation analysis reveals that the 436 articles were cited 2,071 times, for an average of 4.8 citations per article. However, 147 articles received no citations. The five most prolific authors were Elizabeth Yakel, Kim Jihyun, Karen Markey, Jingfeng Xia, and Sarika Sawant.

Conclusion – The author concludes that developing countries lag behind in establishing and publishing on institutional repositories and suggests that more authors will deposit in IR in the future. A proposed role for LIS professionals is to communicate the objectives, values, and principles behind institutional repositories.

Commentary

This study offers an international perspective in a body of literature that tends to focus on Western institutions and practices. The author attempts to broadly characterize the global IR literature. While the findings are novel, the reader is left to interpret their consequence without guidance from the author. Repository management as an evolving area of librarianship, changing institutional contexts, dramatic improvements in storage and discovery technologies, and the relationship between IR literature and practice in establishing and managing IR are not explored. The IR literature is not an appropriate proxy for the establishment and usage of institutional repositories across diverse national, academic, and library settings. The author appears to confuse the particularly issues and challenges in repository management and associated services as the field

growth of institutional repositories with the growth of the IR literature and presents no evidence for the growth and expansion of such repositories.

Though the author provides an ambitious list of study objectives, the methods section is truncated. It excludes crucial information about the methods used that is necessary to ascertain the validity of these results. More specifically, key details of the search terms were omitted, such as the search date range and the timeframe for conducting the searches. The search string itself was overly basic and may have excluded articles about platforms other than dSpace, Greenstone, and E-prints. Furthermore, it is difficult to perform a critical appraisal of the findings without knowing the criteria applied during the screening and selection process. These gaps leave the reader questioning how well this sample captures the institutional repository literature.

The results consist largely of descriptive statistics, which reveal some interesting trends. Unfortunately, the author does not delve into relationships between the variables. By emphasizing the educational role of librarians in helping users to deposit and use repositories, the author minimizes significant shifts in the scholarly communication ecosystem that have driven the expansion of IR. Although they serve other purposes than mechanisms for open access, the motivation and context for presenting IR has largely been to rectify unequal access and preserve the scholarly record. This gap is apparent in the literature review and bibliography, where key concepts and publications are missing. Charles Bailey's thorough bibliography on institutional repositories (2011) is an excellent resource that could have provided much needed structure and context for exploring the practical implication of these findings.

Despite the shortcomings, repository managers may find this broad account of the IR literature useful for positioning their own scholarship, within the global literature. Future studies could extend this work to explore the

has developed over time. Such information would be invaluable in understanding how institutional repository services respond to emerging technologies and the challenges facing higher education.

References

Bailey, C. W. (2011). *Institutional repository bibliography, version 4*. Houston: Digital Scholarship. Retrieved from <http://www.digital-scholarship.org/irb/irb.html>