

Students' Perception of Building a Digital Repository for the Intellectual Outputs of Saudi Scholarship Students

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Abstract

The intellectual output of students may receive insufficient attention in terms of preservation and distribution. The present study focuses on the perceptions of students toward a digital repository for collecting the works of students awarded scholarships. The study found that majority of participants have the desire to archive or publish in a digital repository because they appreciate the quality of students' research and trust it when writing projects and study reports. However, only a small proportion of participants understood about digital repositories and a few of them had previous experience in publishing their works online. The findings indicated that copyright infringement is the biggest concern that prevents participants from depositing their work, followed by the unawareness about a university repository or appropriate digital repositories that accept students' work.

Keywords: Archives, Archiving Students' Work, Digital Repositories, Institutional Repositories, Open Access Publishing, Saudi Culture Missions, Scholarship Students

1. Introduction

The Internet plays a major role in scholarly communication and knowledge sharing due to its high speed and huge capacity for storing information in different forms. Scientists and researchers use the Internet to disseminate the results of scientific research. The development of this practice has led to the reconsideration of traditional publishing systems and creation of a new scholarly communication system based on an open access publishing model that aims to make scientific information freely available online without restriction or hindrance as well as free of charge for all people.

Supporters of open access started to publish their works on personal websites or the portals of the institutions to which they are affiliated; however, this was found to be ineffective for popularizing research outputs due to access restrictions and unorganized content of the Internet¹. Digital repositories emerged as a solution by imposing a new pattern in scholarly publication and facilitating knowledge and information sharing. Such repositories collect a variety of information resources including journal

articles, conference papers, books, book chapters, theses, dissertations, and video and sound files. In the academic environment, these types of resources have been increasingly extended to include students' work such as honors projects, capstone papers, conference papers, multimedia projects, and research papers². One study of 283 U.S. repositories indicated that 71% include undergraduate and graduate theses and dissertations and 38% contain other research such as posters, presentations, and papers³.

There are many incentives and reasons to collect students' work in digital repositories. Some students may not preserve their work accomplished during university studies, which might lead to the loss of significant resources after graduation. Moreover, students are enthusiastic about making their work available in a digital repository. In particular, they are motivated by the possibility of disseminating their work and receiving feedback and commentary⁴. The presence of a digital repository is good opportunity for students to share their research with the wider community and engage in a system of scholarly communication without going through the typical journal route⁵.

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