

UbuntuNet CONNECT 2018

Contribution ID: 67

Type: Presentation

Institutional Repository as a tool for research data management: A case study of BIUST Library

Management of research data is a service area of increasing interest to the academic libraries. This has been necessitated by the large volumes of data that is generated every day largely due to increased use of technology in all parts of research and the fact that research is now more collaborative and data intensive. The establishment of data management and sharing mandates by research funding bodies has motivated academic libraries to develop measures to meet the ever changing demands of its users and consider how best they can engage the “e-research” through the development of library based research data services. Academic libraries have strategically positioned themselves through the implementation of institutional repositories (IR’s) as an archiving tool used for the management and dissemination of the institution’s intellectual research output. All these establishments has resulted in academic librarians having to now change their roles and learn new expertise by playing a pro-active role in research data management and curation issues. The transformations in Botswana’s economy sector is reflective of the national commitment towards the 2063 Africa agenda of a sustainable development and principles. Through the adoption of the vision 2036 the government of Botswana has taken a stand to define and manage its path to “prosperity for all” based on the four pillars being:-

- Sustainable economic development
- Human and Social development
- Sustainable environment
- Governance peace and security

These pillars are used as drivers by the country to be a knowledge economy as well as to adjust to the rapidly changing global research landscape. Therefore, librarians and other infomediaries hold the keys to the growth of knowledge economy of Botswana. Hence, academic libraries as research centres are now mandated to play a key role in supporting all areas of research and can only be attained through knowledge, information sharing and collaboration.

The Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) mandate is to become a pioneer in scientific research with the intention to transform the Botswana’s economy. In undertaking this role the university has an obligation to take the lead in the holistic management of research life cycle process and advice the government on research policies. This is evidenced by the different roles played by the university such as community engagements through the Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) movement with the mandate to change the community perception towards science and technology especially the girl child. During the STEM festival participants showcase their inventions.

The adoption of research information management systems such as PURE system and institutional repository aims at supporting research collaboration, access, dissemination, sourcing of funds, resource sharing, data collection and preservation. In addition to that the tools are also used as a marketing tool for both the university and the academic. It is on the backdrop of this understanding that the BIUST found it necessary to develop an institutional repository to support the management and dissemination of the university’s research output. This paper therefore seeks to share the lessons and experiences learnt during the process of developing an IR.

Keywords: Institutional Repository, Research data management, Academic libraries

Summary

This paper therefore seeks to share the lessons and experiences learnt during the process of developing an Institutional repository with special focus on, but not limited, to the following areas:

- support for research collaboration,
- data collection
- data analysis
- research dissemination
- research resource sharing

Sub-Theme

SMART Research: Services and tools

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Session Classification: UbuntuNet-Connect