Chapter 18
Institutional Digital Repository and the Challenges of Global Visibility in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the issues around building and sustaining an institutional digital repository and its corresponding challenges to global visibility in Nigeria. The chapter argues that building and sustaining an institutional digital repository project requires the state-of-the-art technological infrastructure, skilled manpower, and strong financial backing including ICT skilled user community.

INTRODUCTION

Nigerian Universities have been making efforts on how to manage the journal articles, conference papers, reports, theses and dissertation, teaching materials, artworks, research notes, and research data they produce. Technology has made it easy to create, store and access these materials in digital form. While there is potential for instantaneous access, many materials are not usually made accessible to many users and they remain marooned in the authors’ computers. According to The Open Citation Project (2004) about 80-85% of digital intellectual output of Nigerian Universities is never made accessible to the public. In a similar view, Warren (2013) states that the escalating costs of online databases limit the subscription and thus becoming more unrealistic and challenging for academic libraries to subscribe to all, or even most of the online academic journals.

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The rationale behind the institutional digital repository is to collect, organise, store and disseminate the output of the educational and archival materials in the institutions. Institutional digital repositories are becoming a new method of academic, scholarly communication and dissemination that are considered as an ideal vehicle for making the working of an institution more visible. Sastry and Reddy (2010) reports that institutional digital repositories are collections that have been captured and preserved digitally as an intellectual output of a single or multi-university community. The general idea is to store, manage, and preserve an institution’s born-digital and digitized assets, making them freely available via the Internet. Institutional digital repositories of any institution include a wide range of content for its users. The focus of each institutional digital repository is different in terms of content development, and therefore what content it will store largely depends upon the policy decisions made by each institution or repository administrator.

Academic libraries are one of the major stakeholders in the deployment and content recruitment of institutional digital repositories as they are becoming involved in managing electronic scholarly products and participating in the evolving scholarly communication process. Academic libraries are being funded by government, international donors and other agencies to digitise valuable parts of their special collections, especially theses and dissertations, both to preserve the original and make the content readily accessible. As institutional digital repositories are flourishing to preserve the scholarly output and to make it openly accessible, more and more academic libraries are in favour of providing open access to the university research output, maintained either institutionally or on a subject basis.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Significance of Institutional Digital Repository to the Academic Community**

Institutional digital repositories have nowadays gained relevance world over. Repositories are often mentioned in connection with the Open Access movement. Among other organizations, universities appeared to be the most popular in creating and deploying institutional repositories, the availability of which is increasingly tied to their global visibility and increased research circulation, especially in Nigeria. Therefore, efforts to identify those factors that are responsible for slow penetration of institutional repository in Nigeria is very necessary. This work is intended to reveal the entire obstacles hindering the adoption of institutional repositories in Nigeria and propose a working plan for implementation and sustainability. The ideas presented can be adopted by the institutions and other organizations/agencies that have the mandate on scholarly communication in Nigeria. It can also be of significant value for researchers and scholars in Nigeria and beyond hence it contributes to the body of knowledge.

Institutional Digital Repository involves the process of managing the local research output digitally. It is embarked upon for a number of reasons which may include promoting the collections and visibility of the institution globally in order to promote access. Hughes (2004) noted that institutional digital repository improves preservation. Academic libraries in Nigeria digitize their local research collections in order to make information that was previously available in print format and for customers who physically visit the library into electronic documents which larger number of customers can search rapidly and comprehensively from anywhere at any time of the day. Thus, allowing multiple search and faster access to institutional collections, thereby reducing loss of documents to theft.
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