

Editorial

Sustaining scholarly publication using libraries and open access

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Editorial

Recent developments have put Open Access in the media spot light [1-4]. Beyond the glare of the headlines the march towards universal access to the outputs of research and knowledge is making new ground. A case in point is the developing world where budgets are strained and librarians and information scientists are seeking innovative means of providing scholarly communities with adequate informational resources [5].

On 21 May 2013, probably, the first ever conference on Open Access, knowledge sharing and sustainable scholarly communication in Uganda's history was held. It was organised by Electronic Information For Libraries (EIFL), Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) and the Consortium of Ugandan University Libraries (CUUL) at the Silver Springs Hotel in Kampala.

The overall objective of the conference was to "bring together stakeholders from academic and research institutions to discuss and lay strategies for OA adoption, addressing the challenges of maximizing the visibility of research output and improving the quality, impact and influence of research; publishing open access journals and books and developing open access repositories; promoting the adoption of open access policies etc. "

In attendance were librarians, information scientists, a lawyer, academics and government officials, journal editors and representatives of partner organisations and charities.

The excitement around Open Access journals was unmistakable so were the concerns about the quality and sustainability of Open Access initiatives. Librarians and universities are starting to see journals like PAMJ as a useful resource for future programs in human medicine and other medical sciences. A welcome development, if the sustainability question was suitably answered.

To that end, there were serious discussions around the idea of securing funding for publication fees for Open Access journals. Dr Leslie Chang (Biomedline) talked about a proposal that would have "rich" libraries give 1% of their subscription budgets to support Open Access initiatives. University libraries in Uganda are looking for ways to have the fees built into budgets.

There is a need to create awareness about Open Access. A lot of misconceptions and fears abound about, particularly, quality control issues, sustainability, and copyright. Technology has changed the scholarly publishing landscape and PAMJ is in a position to mentor institutions on how to develop their own approaches to delivering content through Open Access initiatives.

There is an emerging effort to create interoperable repositories led by the World Bank with its Open Knowledge Repository and plenty of opportunities for collaboration. The immediate opportunities lie in the support of Green Open Access initiatives and Institutional Repositories.

Competing interests

The author declares that there are no competing interests.

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