Marketing and Promotion of OAR@UoM: The Open Access Institutional Repository of the University of Malta

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Abstract: In 2014 the University of Malta Library launched its Open Access (OA) Institutional Repository: OAR@UoM. Since OAR@UoM is the first and only online institutional repository on the Maltese Islands, it also plays a major role in promoting OA nationally and in forming partnerships with other stakeholders who lack the infrastructure but are interested to deposit in OA. This pushes the boundaries of traditional IRs and creates a new sets of challenges. The Outreach Department of the library was tasked with promoting OAR@UoM and to develop training workshops to instruct academics on how to upload their research on the IR, whilst also providing some background information on OA and the benefits associated with it. A number of promotional material was created and disseminated on campus to help increase the awareness of OA and OAR@UoM. During its annual OA week in October, the library organizes OA-related activities and talks on campus. In 2015, in collaboration with FOSTER, the library organized a conference to address the misconceptions regarding OA brought forward by a number of academics. The one-day conference was entitled 'Open Access and its impact on research and scholarship'. Discussions on the impact of OA on the Maltese research/academic community, and training on how to upload on OAR@UoM were the focus points.

This paper will look into the effectiveness of the promotion and marketing strategy followed by the Outreach Department in relation to the (OA) repository. It will also look into the increase in submissions done willingly by academics and how their perception of OA has changed. This paper will also investigate the creation of an Open Science Department to assist academics with OA-related queries. Will the creation of a
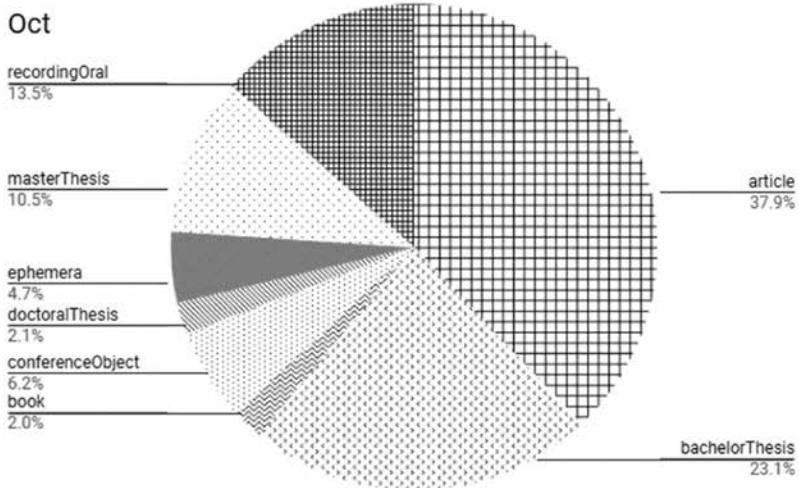
department exclusively responsible for OA have a big impact on the academics? How can the Open Science Department collaborate with the Outreach Department to create a more effective marketing strategy to promote OA publishing and submission of research papers on OAR@UoM? This paper will come up with suggestions for such questions by looking specifically at the case at the University but also compare this with other scenarios of how OA was promoted in different institutions.

Keywords: Open Access Publishing, Institutional Repositories – Malta, OAR@UoM, Library Marketing

In September 2014 the University of Malta (UM) launched its Open Access (OA) Institutional Repository (IR) – OAR@UoM. In line with other institutional repositories of higher education institutions, the repository's primary goal is to collect, preserve, and disseminate the research output of the UM. OAR@UoM is an online platform which supports academics and researchers in publishing their research output in OA and eliminating the hefty recurrent expenditures for licensing online journals hosted by commercial publishers.

After nearly two years, the library has managed to populate the repository with several important research resources. There are over 12,000 different authors who have items deposited on OAR@UoM. These items are also the result of the library's own initiative to find appropriate content and upload it on behalf of the creators. On a first glance 12,000 authors might sound impressive but at least half of them are students and their dissertations. Of the remaining half, about 10 per cent are voluntary submissions from academics (self-deposited or mediated), with the rest being the result of the library's initiative to collect Maltese-published research. As of the end of October 2017, there are a total of 20,825 items available on OAR@UoM, over 6,846 articles, 2,430 recordings, 366 books, 4,171 undergraduate dissertations, and 2,276 postgraduate dissertations. This is just a fraction of the total research output produced by University staff.

University-published journals, such as the *International Journal of Emotional Education* (IJEE), *Journal of Malta College of Family*

Oct

recordingOral
13.5%

masterThesis
10.5%

ephemera
4.7%

doctoralThesis
2.1%

conferenceObject
6.2%

book
2.0%

article
37.9%

bachelorThesis
23.1%

*Data as of end of July 2017

Doctors (JMCFD), *Images in Paediatric Cardiology* (IPC), *Xjenza*, *Bulletin of the Entomological Society of Malta*, *Antae Journal*, *Malta Journal of Health Sciences*, *Malta Medical Journal*, *Think Magazine*, and *Symposia Melitensia*, upload their issues to reach a larger audience. All pdfs uploaded are searchable and, since OAR@UoM is OpenAIRE compliant and indexed by Google and Google Scholar, this increases visibility to the material exponentially.

Apart from scholarly works, OAR@UoM hosts other material. University Campus FM sees OAR@UoM as a means to archive their programmes and also benefit from the visibility boost. Electronic dissertations uploaded on OAR@UoM are not available in OA although the metadata of these dissertations is. In fact, the library receives a number of requests from various researchers from different countries to gain access to these dissertations. The School of Performing Arts is also digitizing and uploading its collection of ephemera.

The library is presently working on digitizing Melitensia pamphlets (material related or talking about Malta by Maltese authors or of Maltese heritage importance) and uploading them on OAR@UoM. Since OAR is the only repository on the island, an External Research Collection section has been created to collect digital cultural heritage not published by the UM. This collection is serving as a national repository.

OA marketing

Since OAR@UoM is the first and only online institutional repository for the UM and the only academic repository for the whole country, it serves as an opportunity to expand partnerships with other institutions. This pushes the boundaries of traditional IRs and creates a new sets of challenges for librarians.

One such challenge is promoting the idea of uploading research in OA to academics who are unaware of OA or their copyright obligations and restrictions. For this reason, awareness is crucial and the library actively promotes OAR@UoM to academics as a platform where research created by the University is preserved and also showcased online in OA. This highlights the value of having University-created research available on the repository both for preservation purposes and also to make research available on an international level without any restriction.

The library staff organizes training workshops on how to upload research output onto OAR@UoM and shows academics the benefits of OA publishing. Librarians also offer direct one-to-one training sessions with academics addressing copyright and plagiarism issues as these might be one of the many issues holding back academics from submitting their research. The library takes part in several events, both at National and also at European level, to constantly raise awareness about the repository and also learn new trends in OA. Every October the library organizes 'OA week on Campus' where more in-depth training is given and awareness about research in OA is raised. In May 2015, the library in collaboration with FOSTER (Facilitate Open Science Training for European Research) hosted a conference, specifically aimed at academics who publish on a regular basis. The goal of the conference was to address main concerns and issues academics have with uploading their research on the repository in OA.

Furthermore, the library was quick to identify champions to serve as ambassadors of OA. These individuals are researchers with the most articles available in OA on OAR@UoM and, by recognizing their support, the library worked with them to help promote the practice of uploading research on OAR@UoM via various events both on campus and off campus.

This also helped to market the idea of OA in an informal way by word of mouth and is the building block to start changing the culture and mentality of researchers in Malta. The OA champions were crucial in the yearly OA week activities. Talks and workshops highlighting the many benefits of OA, together with practical examples provided by the champions of OA, help reach a wider audience and put the spotlight on OA.

Linking with Open Archives Initiative (OAI) service providers

To further promote Maltese academic output, OAR@UoM was linked with various Open Archives Initiative (OAI) service providers. The OAI was established in 1999 with the singular goal of developing and promoting technical interoperability standards which would aim effective dissemination and sharing of metadata. OAI introduced a simple technological framework based on metadata harvesting that would consist of two types of participants: data providers and service providers. Maximizing exposure of Maltese academic research uploaded on OAR@UoM increases the chances of establishing new collaborations with international entities and presents new funding opportunities.

However, even with all the listed benefits of exposure and similarly to other institutional experiences, some academics are still reluctant to submit their research on OAR@UoM. Furthermore, in the introduction of IRs in other institutions, the initial years are the time when the library has to be the most active in the promotion and the encouraging of academics to upload their research in OA.

The need of an OA policy

Unfortunately, similarly to other institutional experiences, some academics are reluctant to submit their research on OAR@UoM (however, some of them are happy to submit their publications to social media platforms like http://academia.edu or http://researchgate. net). The initial years are the time when the Library has to overcome

various reasons which hinder the submission of material to OAR@ UoM by academics. At this stage institutions could consider adopting an exclusive Gold OA policy to mandate research to be published in OA journals but institutions expecting to adopt such an approach can be criticized for not taking into consideration the financial requirement for doing so, especially catering for APCs (Article Processing Charges). This is similar to what happened in the UK when the government tried to implement a national OA policy favoring the Gold model at the expense of the Green model.[1] With the implementation of an OA repository instead of an OA policy first, the UM promoted the self-archiving route (Green OA) while also recommending and supporting Gold OA Publishing. Unfortunately, disseminating information and speaking at local conferences, was not enough to persuade academics to upload material on OAR@UoM. Since at the UM, we do not have a structure to guarantee funding of APCs, the library started working on an OA policy to mandate submissions onto OAR@UoM (Green OA) while supporting OA publishing (Gold OA).

The library's goal is to bring together the Maltese research community by enhancing their awareness on OA; however, owing to the reluctance of academics to upload, in order to guarantee that researchers will submit material onto OAR@UoM in OA, the UM has to issue a mandate that clearly outlines the responsibility involved with such an obligation. This may further impact the country as a whole owing to the fact that research produced will be internationally visible and can result in foreign entities investing in local research.

Developing an OA Policy for the UOM

IRs are major players in the OA movement. However, in order to guarantee that researchers submit material onto the IR in OA, the UM has to issue a mandate that clearly outlines the responsibility involved with such a task; hence the development of the OA policy at the institutional level. For this reason, a committee was formed by a number of UM librarians to develop an OA policy that requires research

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1 Kamil Mizera, 'Parliamentary Committee Criticizes Current Policy on Open Access in the UK': http://openscience.com/parliamentary-committee-criticizes-current-policy-on-open-access-in-the-uk.

being created at the UM to be publicly available on OAR@UoM.

It was decided that the OA policy should reflect such themes by dividing the policy in different sections. The first section deals with clear definitions of OA, peer-review material, and non-peer-reviewed material. This needs to be clear as to provide guidance on what will be and will not be accepted as submissions.

The second section deals with an outline of responsibilities that each stakeholder has. For example, the Institution (University of Malta) should provide an OA platform for researchers and also provide support regarding copyrights. Authors/researchers must ensure compliance with the OA policy while also making sure that they own the copyrights of their submitted material. They can further request embargos instead of waiver options/opting out except specific cases which need to be tackled on a case-by-case basis. The library will be dealing primarily with Green OA, where no charges are imposed on submitters to make research submitted OA-compliant. The library shall manage the IR, provide training to submitters about OAR@UoM, review the metadata of submissions, and be responsible of marketing and promotional campaigns about OAR@UoM.

The third section is all about copyright issues. It must be clear that each submitter will retain the copyright on his submissions. Furthermore, the OA policy will recommend that every research funded or supported by the University, either in full or in part, must deposit the final research paper/report in OAR@UoM. This will take priority over publisher's agreements, unless the research was published in OA journals that allow for IR submissions.

The final section of the policy will tackle waiver options and embargo periods. The policy guides researchers/UM academics to submit research on OAR@UoM and provide OA to their research created/ funded by the UM or the EU. Waiver option should be restrictive as much as possible. Instead of waiver options, embargo periods will be favoured. This will restrict academics from opting out of the policy.

Once drafted this policy was reviewed by the UM legal executive and forwarded to the University of Minho in Portugal for feedback. Once approved by the Library Committee, it was forwarded to the registrar's office to be presented and approved by the UOM Senate.

The Open Science (OS) department

While working on the OA policy, the library managers agreed upon the creation of the OS department to be responsible for providing assistance to academics regarding OA matters. OA has influenced the mechanism of publishing research. Quite often researchers are unaware of the number of publications available via OA, of how to access them, how to publish in OA, or how to use an IR. Subsequently it was of utmost importance to increase awareness of OA with UM researchers and educate stakeholders of the benefits of publishing in OA both for themselves and for the institution, the various approaches towards OA, including both Green and Gold OA models, and the reasons why UM has an OA policy. The idea was to have a better-equipped team to both promote OA and carry out research to upgrade and enhance the IR, while seeking advice from foreign institutions regarding OA.

Once the OA policy is implemented, the OS team will set up meetings with deans and directors of University faculties/institutes/centres and their respective heads of departments. These meetings should serve as a direct approach to the main stakeholders; subsequently during said meetings the OS team (for any queries regarding OA) and Outreach team (for any training regarding uploads on OAR@UoM) will coordinate and a representative from each team will be present. Furthermore, either the director or deputy director will be present to guarantee that both teams will be able to assist and provide more clarifications to the stakeholders present.

During the first year after implementation, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) faculties will be targeted, owing to the high turnover of their research. Nonetheless if, during the first year, other academics/researchers are interested, the Open Science Team should cater for them accordingly. Topics to be discussed will include the benefits of publishing in OA both as individuals and for the institution's benefit, which could lead to the possibility of financing research through private sectors and collaboration with foreign institutions. Similarly academics will be made aware of the appraisal of their research being carried out by the faculties/institutes/centres and possibility of asking for further UM research grants. The OS team

will provide assistance regarding the various approaches towards OA, including both Green and Gold OA models, including copyright issues with publishers and deposits (encouraging self-deposit rather than mediated deposits) on OAR@UoM.

Furthermore with the implementation of the OA policy, the OS team will organize group and individual meetings with UM researchers on a regular basis and will give the necessary support to researchers to publish their works in OA. Since copyright clearance is one of the major issues that researches are sceptical about, the OS team will provide the adequate copyright advice. Academics should also seek help from the UM Legal Office and the Knowledge Transfer Office.

Many UM researchers upload their research on Academia.edu and ResearchGate. It is important that researchers are made aware that in reality OAR@UoM is not that different from Academia.edu and ResearchGate and also that their work will still be indexed by Google and Google Scholar. Key stakeholders need to be encouraged to take positive concrete steps to make their research openly available, thus encouraging fellow researchers to follow suit.

Communication between all stakeholders is essential to identify win-win situations and mutual benefits in promoting and implementing OA. Webinars, similar to the ones which are being organized and marketed during OA week and which are available throughout the year, will be organized and marketed with UM researchers all year round via email and social media.

The OS team will organize author/publishing training workshops, organized in collaboration with publishing houses to help clear problems with regard to copyright issues. During these workshops academics already publishing in OA will be asked to share their experiences. A UM OS blog will be created through which the OS team will give advice to researchers and where researchers can share their experiences with regards to OA.

The OS team will be encouraging and supporting author self-deposit on OAR@UoM, but will also support mediated deposits. Since there is a waiting list, mediated deposited research will be uploaded on a first-come-first-served basis. This must be made clearly especially when there is a substantial number of mediated deposits, for example when there are calls for academic progression and promotion at the UM. In order to implement the policy, the promotions and reviewing body will

be responsible for enforcing the OA policy. This will ensure, together with other initiatives still being discussed, that academics are compliant with OA policy. As a means to help and support the performance and reviewing body at the UM, the OS team will be providing indexing services to monitor and implement OA policy. So when an academic publishes his research with a publisher like Web of Science, JSTOR, Ebsco, etc., members of the OA team will check if the research has also been uploaded on OAR@UoM; if not, contact the academic to help them upload the research on the repository.

Some UM departments publish departmental journals. The OS team will be contacting the respective editors of these journals and encourage them to deposit electronic copies of these publications. Furthermore, some UM researchers are editors of journals not published by the UM; during the meetings with researchers, they should be made aware and encouraged by the OS team of the possibility of uploading these journals on OAR@UoM. Researchers must be made aware that this will increase visibility of their publications, enhance their academic profile, and enrich the Library's Melitensia digital collections. When contacting these editors, the OS team should check with editors if electronic copies of past issues are available to be uploaded. The OS team should push editors and website managers to upload their respective journal articles on OAR@UoM and create links from their websites directly to the respective research on OAR@UoM instead of having the same journal/ article (in full text) uploaded on their websites.

The OS team will also be populating the repository with retrospective research from UM academics. Having previously restricted research uploaded on the IR will provide an accumulated pool of knowledge which will be visible and accessible to more researchers, giving more benefits to academics and an extra incentive to upload current research in OA.

The OS team will be using Google, Google Scholar, Web of Science, Scopus, Academia.edu, ResearchGate, and other abstracting and indexing databases, to search for research being published by UM researchers and contact the researchers to provide the necessary copyright clearance so that this research can be included on OAR@ UoM. Departmental websites will also be monitored and checked for list of research being published under their auspicious, and request

and acquire publications accordingly. The OS team will try to contact authors of past Ph.D. theses which are already available in restricted access on OAR@UoM, and get copyright clearance from the authors to place them in OA.

As a result, the OS team will be directly responsible for monitoring what is being uploaded on OAR@UoM in restricted access (collected either through digitization projects or through browsing abstracting and indexing services), and contacting the respective authors/editors to provide permission to place their research in OA.

Conclusion

Since 2014, the UML has come a long way when it comes to OA but there is a lot more work to be done. The main priority is to implement the OA policy and continue to change the local mentality regarding OA. With the creation of the OS department, academics will be encouraged to upload their published work on the IR and the OS team will also be responsible for checking the UM researcher's publication to make sure they are compliant with the OA policy. With over 1,200 academics/researchers, one of the obvious obstacles to OA was the culture-change within the academic community. There was little or no understanding of OA before 2014; so when the UML decided to work on an IR and on OA, awareness and communication became a priority. Another hindrance to OA was the misinformation circulating among researchers. Misconception regarding peer-reviewing in OA, copyright, and plagiarism are the main concerns for academics learning about OA publishing. As a result a lot of work by the UML consisted in information sessions/training sessions. The UML also had to create the IT infrastructure to support OA. By looking at various free software available, the UML was able to choose the most appropriate and efficient system for the UM. This, however, required training and more research on best practices and OA data management. Subsequently, as there was no local expertise to guide the UM through OA-related queries, the UML staff had to go through a learning curve by conducting their own research to become well informed and kept up-to-date with OA-related news.

With the limited resources available, the UML could not target all the academics at one go. Having champions of OA as a point of departure helped the UML to spread a consistent message regarding OA and made the UML more approachable to support academics. A lot of academics found it to be a burden having to upload their retrospective research on the IR, especially when they had no electronic copy of the research available. As a result, the library staff had to provide the service of both mediated deposit and digitization. Some academics were only interested in publishing with particular journals which either had very high APCs or did not support OA. Since the UM has no funds related to APCs, this hindered the adoption of OA for these academics. Even though academics are offered an alternative to Gold OA by asking for permission from publishers to upload their research in the UM IR (Green OA). Many publishers who do not give standing permission will agree to case-by-case requests. Academics are recommended to use the SHERPA request template when asking for such permissions.

Another alternative is to use an author addendum – a proposed modification to the publishing agreement, written by a lawyer, giving the author the right to authorize OA (and sometimes other rights as well). Since it is only a proposed modification, publishers may accept or reject it.

As an emerging OA repository OAR@UoM is providing the best platform for Maltese research to be visible online. The next step to continue supporting OA in Malta is having an institutional OA policy which helps in multiple ways: it provides a clear message to researchers about how their university expects them to engage with OA, and for support staff it helps when structuring advocacy sessions and answering enquiries.[2] The fact that we have one university gives us the advantage of delivering a unifying and clear message without conflicting with other research-related policies, even on a national level. Considering the various aspects of OA, technological provision, policy provision, and attitudes of researchers, various countries follow different routes. In small countries there is also the aspect of IRs playing larger roles, providing OA to generic academic output, not only at institutional level. With a successful technological deployment what remains vital

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2   Hannah DeGroff, 'Open Access and Knowledge Sharing: Reflections on the Pathfinder Projects and Open Access Good Practice Initiative', *Insights*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2016), 133–9.

at this point is to find the best local policy tools to improve the local participation of Maltese academics/researchers.

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