Formulation of Policies for the Institutional Repository of University of Ruhuna: Important Factors to be Considered

J. J. G. Arachchige

Library, Faculty of Engineering, University of Ruhuna

jagathga@lib.ruh.ac.lk

Abstract

Library of University of Ruhuna established an Institutional Repository (IRUR) in 2009 in order to facilitate the communities of the university deposit a copy of their research articles and other scholarly resources. IRUR is also aimed to provide a global exposure to researches of the university and enhance the impact on them. Although the academics of University of Ruhuna produce a large amount of scholarly resources per year, these resources have not been submitted to the IRUR as expected. It was revealed that the lack of proper policies for IRUR is one of main reasons for underutilization of this valuable tool. The purpose of this study was to find out salient factors to be considered when formulating a sustainable policy for IRUR. This study occupied a descriptive survey with a sample of 100 academics selected on random basis representing all seven faculties of University of Ruhuna. A structured questionnaire was circulated among the selected academics via e-mail and printed mode when required. The questionnaire was designed to collect data related to awareness and attitudes towards IRUR, Open Access (OA) initiatives and possible constituents of IRUR. Simple mathematical methods like percentage and mean analysis were used to analyse data. Results indicate that majority of academics (56%) know what Institutional Repository means. 30% of academics have tried to access to IRUR and 18% of respondents have tried to deposit their articles in it . It is revealed that majority of academics have not properly understood the advantages of IRUR. Regarding the resources to be deposited, academics prefer to deposit research articles (47%), Tutorials (29%), Technical reports (29%), research reports (27%), Lecture notes (25%), PowerPoint presentations (23%) and other resources (4%) in IRUR with varying access levels depending on the type of e-resource. With regard to the preferred mode of submission of articles to IRUR, 68% of respondents wish to deposit their e-resources themselves (self-archiving) while 25% of respondents wants that to be done by the library staff or faculty representatives. 7% of academics believe that it should be done by IR administration. The preferred access level is different for each type of resource and the majority of respondents preferred datasets, PowerPoint presentations, tutorials, lecture notes and technical reports to be set with password access. In conclusion, academic community of UR has not aware enough of this valuable tool due to lack of marketing and administrative issues such as lack of user-friendly community settings, non availability of self archiving facilities, and lack of clear policy guide lines. The attitudes of academics towards submission of their resources in IRUR also have a great impact on under utilization. The study highlights that the IRUR should be organized with more user friendly settings while facilitating self archiving by authors/creators. There should be a clear policy document and guide lines for users. When formulating a policy document, attitudes of academics as well as legal matters of publishing should be considered. Submission of resources to the IRUR can be mandatory for government and other funded research output while encouraging authors to deposit other e-resources on voluntary base. Publicity and awareness building are very important to encourage authors. Awareness among academics towards advantages of IRUR as well as OA should be promoted and they should be educated about the global trend on OA and legal background of their intellectual property rights when published in OA.