

For release Friday 27th January 2006

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Release of OpenDOAR listing

University of Nottingham, UK and University of Lund, Sweden have developed a new service to help open access to research information.

OpenDOAR - the Directory of Open Access Repositories - is pleased to announce the release of its primary listing of open access archives, available from www.opendoar.org.

This classifies archives holding research papers, conference papers, theses and other academic materials that are available as "open access". This means that anyone with an internet connection has access to this information without paying any charges. Open access to information has grown rapidly as researchers and scholars increasingly put their work on the web for free in these repositories. Some of these archives hold material on a single subject: others are based in universities and hold information from across many different subjects.

Leading universities in the UK, Sweden, Germany, France and across Europe, Australia, India, the USA and world-wide have built an expanding international network of archives. Repositories have been built by research funders, like the US National Institutes for Health or the UK-based Wellcome Trust. There are now large numbers of archives of different sizes, composition and scope and new repositories are regularly established. Keeping track of these repositories and the range of information that they hold is a challenge.

Although most open access repositories have been designed to allow information about themselves to be gathered automatically, discrepancies can creep into the system. Therefore, each of the OpenDOAR repositories have been visited by project staff to check the information that is gathered. This in-depth approach gives a quality-controlled list of repository features.

In addition, while reviewing these archives, project staff are building a picture of the world-wide development of open access repositories, noting new features and directions. This information is being analysed to create the next version of the listing, with further information and categories being noted for each repository. In the meantime, the newly released list will continue to grow as new repositories are added.

The aim is to create a bridge between repository administrators and the service providers which "harvest" repositories. A typical service provider would be a search engine, indexing the material that is held. General search often brings back too many "junk" results. Information from OpenDOAR will enable the search service to provide a more focussed search by selecting repositories that are of direct interest to the user - for example, all Australian repositories, or all repositories that hold conference papers on chemistry.

Bill Hubbard, the joint OpenDOAR manager said: "We are very pleased to launch the initial list of OpenDOAR. The range and number of repositories we are seeing coming on-stream is inspiring. We are working to classify these and produce information for search-providers, funding agencies and others, which will benefit scholars and researchers around the world. We would like to thank all of the contributors that have sent in information and suggestions."

OpenDOAR is a joint collaboration between the University of Nottingham in the UK and Lund University in Sweden. Both institutions are active in open access initiatives. Lund operates the Directory of Open Access Journals (www.DOAJ.org), which is known throughout the world. Staff at Lund University Libraries have created the initial OpenDOAR technical set-up and carried out repository review and classification.

Nottingham leads SHERPA, a partnership that has helped establish archives in 20 leading UK research universities. SHERPA also runs the SHERPA/RoMEO database, which is used worldwide as a reference for publisher's copyright policies. OpenDOAR builds on open access work done by other researchers and projects to record and list repositories. Among others, thanks go to the Public Knowledge Project, and the open access work at the universities of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Southampton.

OpenDOAR is jointly funded by four agencies, led by the international Open Society Institute (OSI). The UK higher education funding committee, JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) has provided support, along with funding from the UK-based Consortium of Research Libraries (CURL) and from SPARCEurope - an alliance of European research libraries, library organisations, and research institutions.

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For more information, go to the project website - www.opendoar.org

Internet Links:

Directory of Open Access Journals -
www.doaj.org

OSI -
www.soros.org

SHERPA Project -
www.sherpa.ac.uk

JISC -
www.jisc.ac.uk

SHERPA/RoMEO -
www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php

CURL -
www.curl.ac.uk

SPARCEurope -
www.sparceurope.org