ETD and OA Initiatives in Africa

By

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ETD and Open Access Initiatives in Africa

- Early ETD and OA initiatives in Africa began in 1998, before the term OA was current.
- RU, like many institutions in South Africa, has developed an OA repository, using EPrint software, containing other digital knowledge products.
- The Database of African Theses and Dissertations (DATAD) programme of the Association of African Universities (AAU), which was designed to improve management and access to African scholarly work, was a precursor to the development of OA repositories by institutions which participated in the programme.
OA advocacy initiatives in Africa

• Most institutions in Africa are aware of the benefits of Open Access approaches to knowledge and dissemination of research.

• Many universities have Master’s and doctoral degree programmes which require students to submit theses and dissertations in order to fulfil the requirement for the award of the degree.

• Many of these institutions have established institutional repositories for Open Access to institutional knowledge products, including theses and dissertations or are in the process
UNESCO Sponsored ETD workshops

• South Africa (University of the Witwatersrand) in 2003

• Ethiopia (Addis Ababa University) in 2004

• In both countries, decision was made to establish national ETD projects

• In South Africa, a National ETD Project is driven by the Committee of Higher Education Librarians of South Africa (CHELSA) and sponsored by the National Research Foundation (NRF).
OA advocacy initiatives in Africa

• In 2007 SARUA organised the Open Access Leadership Summit in Botswana.
• Greenstone training workshops have been held in Namibia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Lesotho.
• In Nigeria, an open access working group has been created.
• Universidade Politécnica library in Mozambique has set up a national shared repository for three Mozambican universities.
• The Kenya Libraries and Information Services Consortium organised a digital repositories workshop to raise awareness about open access institutional repositories.
• In South Africa, the National Research Foundation, using DSpace, has set up a national repository for the institutions that have not been able to do so.
• In March 2009, the DATAD Programme organised an International Institutional Repository Advocacy Seminar.
Collaboration/Partnership

• Institutions are beginning to collaborate to develop IRs.

• Notable that two collaborative projects now exist in Mozambique and South Africa though, at the time of writing, they are not yet available to the public.

• Such collaboration has the potential to speed up the development of IRs in Africa, and this is an approach that could be adopted in the continent, given the financial constraints of most of the countries. (The GDP per capita of many countries ranges from US$ 175 – US$910).
Example of Institutional Repository Collaboration between Universities – Mozambique

- Centro de Formação Jurídica e Judiciária
- Universidade Eduardo Mondlane
- Universidade Politécnica

Link to the website - http://196.3.97.216:8080/jspti/
ETD 2009: Bridging the knowledge divide. June 10-13, Univ of Pittsburgh.
Conclusion

• General awareness among many universities in Africa of the need to develop OA institutional repositories, especially digital repositories of theses and dissertations (TDs).
• Many are now requesting students to submit digital copies of their TDs.
• Pace of developments remains slow but could be accelerated through collaborative initiatives such as partnerships and twinning between institutions.
• An institutional champion is a MUST (preferably in the library).
- Thank you