Current Status Of The Omani National Research Repository

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Abstract:

This paper discusses the current status and the next steps to be taken in order to adopt a national digital repository at the Sultanate of Oman. Outlining the current processes conducted to adopt the national repository in Oman and presenting these steps at the ETD conference will help to get a wider overview about the project and may open discussions about possible modification and changes in the project.

This paper presents the processes that are currently conducted to adopt a national repository in Oman. One of these process is wrting policies. this paper presents standards and policies that will be applied in this project. Such standards include mission, goals, benefits of the project, targeted groups, several policies (open access, content, submission, metadata, selection and retention, replacement and withdrawal, copyright, quality control, preservation, and policy review).

In addition a promotional campagin to let people get aware about this project was proposed. People are informed about the importance of this project, what they need to do in order to praticipate in the project, and also provide clarifications about the possible issues and concerns they might have like copyright, plagiarism, quality of theses, prior publication and the instiutions reputation. Sultan Qaboos University was selected to be the first institution to hold the initial promotional campaign. Postgraduate students at SQU will be informed about this project and also will be encouraged to submit their theses and dissertations in electronic format in order to be included in the project. Academic staff and other staff at SQU will be also targetted during this campain.

Keywords: Electronic Theses and Dissertations Programmes, Sultanate of Oman, national repository, policies and standards, marketting plan.

1. Introduction

Digital repositories are gaining great importance within universities and research centers because they allow the possibility for digital content saving and provides availability at a local, regional and global level. They have the potential to greatly contribute to the development of the educational curriculum and increase research production, as well as acting as a regional collective between libraries, universities and research centers.

The important role played by research repositories in providing various open access informationresources, have resulted in the increase of research production over the last decade, which is in line with the needs of the beneficiaries of those repositories.

Moreover, in accordance with international statistics, the number of digital repositories have risen to exceed four thousands in various disciplines, which shows their importance in developing educational and scientific processes within higher education institutions and universities. The digital repositories have facilitated the task of providing open resources for researchers, which have led to increased number of articles and magazines with free/open access, as proven in the statistics showing an increase in the numbers of articles and magazines during the past ten years.

Therefore, the current project aspires to create an electronic database of research, studies, journal articles, abstracts research, Omani specialized academic statistics, and innovation materials that were written or compiled in the Sultanate of Oman and make this database available through a single website.This repository will be indexed and classified according to modern systems in order to ease the access and utilization of researchers and users and to clarify the role of the institutions and responsible bodies for the dissemination and issuance.

2. Mission

- Providing the opportunity for the scientific community of Oman to conduct scientific research and education locally and internationally, in order to improve sustainable development.
- Facilitate the access of Omani intellectual production.
- Create an educational research environment.
- Share resources between research and non-research institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.
- Activating the Sultanates role for providing free/open resources access and availability of local and international resources.

- To be a pioneer model both regionally and internationally for the provision and availability of free/open access resources.

3. Importance

The digital repository contributes significantly to scientific research in the Sultanate and is a great opportunity to provide value-added services to the research community by providing free/open resources online. The benefits of digital repositories include the following:

- Raise the quality of research output by classifying and providing research, information and supporting statistics.
- Encourage researchers in Oman to share their intellectual production and increase the level of awareness of scientific communication between researchers.
- Serve as a central archive for Oman's production, which increases the chance of the dissimination, access rate, the reference citation, and factor impact in the Sultanate through a unified site that connects all research institutions in the Sultanate with the international community.
- Cooperation between individuals, Omani academic research institutions, intellectual and cultural organizations in order to support and share academic research, which will be accessed through a single electronic portal.
- Communicate and observe new research results with colleagues, which will result in greater scientific knowledge accumulation and feedback and comments which called informal review.
- Cooperation with local and international academic organizations and government institutions, as well as with local, global, and regional databases to obtain experiences.

4. Objectives

- Collection of research outcomes and Omani academic research innovations, and make them electronically available for the research and academic community.
- Preservation of scarce resources without blocking access to all who wish to study them.
- Classification of collected material on the basis of global standards. After obtaining the direct approval of the owners of the rights, users will be able to read a summary or full-text article, print and download.

- Provide special audio-visual research services in accordance to the rules and principles of research and innovation and make them available for people with special needs according to the guidelines of access to web content (WCAG).
- Organization and management of the outcomes of Omani academic research innovations by indexing, categorizing, and saving them in theOmani digital repository.

5. Project benefits

The project provides benefits both for individuals, either depositors or readers, and for local and international community.

5.1. For individuals:

A number of advantages are granted to the individual researchers, authors or readers, such as:

- The expansion of knowledge scale that can be shared.
- Providing free/open-access to published research, which therefore increases the impact factor of research.
- Promote scientific communication, and identification of new research results.
- Considered as a mediator broadcasting of materials which cannot be deployed in traditional publishing channels as video and audio files, graphics and other materials.
- Recording priority ideas and intellectual production, especially in the fast developing disciplines.
- Abolish restrictions on the number of pages in the publication of research in scientific journals.

5.2. For Oman and global community:

- Good image of Oman to all levels locally, regionally, and globally.
- Increase the percentage of availability of the Omani research which represents the Sultanate of Oman in this area.
- Demonstrate the research side of the Sultanate on a global level.
- The Sultanate will obtain the culture of research to rapidly respond to social and economic needs.

6. Target Group

- Higher education institutions, universities, technical colleges, education and research centers.
- Government institutions.
- Students, learners and researchers on post-graduate levels from inside and outside the Sultanate.
- Specialists and experts in knowledge, technical and information fields.
- People with special needs who needs assistant technology, electronic resources and audio-visual media.
- Specialist professional's association members, research centers and institutions of civic communities.

7. Policies

The Omani research repository applies international polices and standards to manage the content of the repository. The follwing sub-sections outline these policies.

7.1. Open Access Policy

Based on the Sultanate future vision of becoming a regional innovation center, owning research capacity and achieving research excellence in areas of national importance while establishing a stimulating environment for scientific research along with knowledge transfer, and because the intellectual output of Oman requires to be collected, organized in digital forms, the open access policy will be as following:

- Anyone who belong to any institution in Oman should deposits his/her scientific work in the Omani national repository and approve to make it available to the public, and empowers others to use it in a non-profit method.
- Policy applies to all works in which the person is a major author or participant were completed before or after this policy approved.
- No deletion or amendments shall be applied unless an official approval from the digital repository management, with accepted reasons.
- Anyone of the targeted groups should deposit an electronic (soft) copy of their works to the repository, but for the old resources, they will be accepted in any available format.

7.2. Content Policy

Determine the content types which are deposited in the repository, represented in:

- Omani theses and dissertations.

- Researches, national and institutional surveys.

- Arab and Gulf research related to the sultanate.

- Global and regional research related to the sultanate.

- Books and research documents related to the sultanate.

- School books.

- Survey statistics related to the sultanate.

- Government reports.

- Technical data for the ministries.

- Advisory works.

- Omani manuscripts (inside and outside the sultanate).

- Innovations, inventions and Omani research patents.

- Journals and research periodicals published in the sultanate.

- Conference proceedings held in the sultanate and conference papers which are presented by Omanis whether inside or outside the sultanate.

There is no classification of period to the materialsthat accpeted to be contained in the repository. However, selection criteria such as objectivity, integrity, honesty of scientific, and high-quality scientific material will be applied for any accpeted materials.

7.3. Submission Policy/Deposit:

The digital deposit policy includes the rights of authors, where they sign deposit licenses, and determines the repository responsibilities.

- Indexing department at the main library or any other specific institution will supervise the self-archiving operations and make sure it is in line with the digitization policy, in terms of Metadata, standard names, and keywords.

- The depositor (author) will enter data by himself, and in case of joint works, authors delegate one person to do the task and dopsit the full-text works.

- In cases when a work is not owned or copyrighted by the institutions or the author, only the bibliographic data will be submitted (Citation) until the full rights of the publisher is verified.

- The accuracy of the information and ownership is the responsibility of the author.

7.4. Metadata Policy

It is related to the organizing of digital entities in the repository and on the Internet, and can be determined according to the following:

- Metadata is based on the Dublin Core standard.
- The description shall be completed and new elements can be added,if necessary.
- Anyne can access any of the metadata feilds.
- Metadata can be reused in any other media without prior permission, for purposes than profit.
- Metadata cannot be used for any commercial purposes.

7.5. Data usage policy

- Anyone has the right to access the information and materials stored in the repository, without prior permission for research purposes, or rating, or learning as per intellectual property rights law, and in accordance with the digital repository access policy.
- It is Not allowed to sell any material from the repository without prior permission from the copyright owner.
- The repository is not considered as a publisher or owner of all rights, yet it is as electronic archive of Omani research.

7.6. Selection and Retention policy

The materials will remain in the repository, even if the depositor has changed his/her work/institution. In addition, all materials are deposited by the author or the concerned digital repository management and they will remain permanently, except in the following cases:

- If materials violate intellectual property rights law.
- These materials do not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- Established or created in away they cannot be loaded or saved.

7.7. Replacement policy

The depositor may apply for the replacement of any deposited materials in the following cases:

- There is an error in the content.
- Deposited version was not published, and thus the depositor wishes to deposit the published version.

7.8. Withdrawal policy

Materials can be excluded from the digital repository only in case of intellectual property rights violation, in this case they will be restricted from free access and availability. There are also exceptional circumstances in the following cases:

- Withdrawal in case of third-party ownership rights violation.
- Organizers of the digital repository has the right to keep or delete some materials for technical or administrative reasons and the depositor of such material shall be notified.

It is necessary to retain records of the excluded materials in one of these phrases:

- Withdrawn on authors recommendation.
- Withdrawn on the orders of the institution.
- Withdrawn due to legal reasons.

Reasons for the exclusion must be one of the followings:

- Written text proven breach of intellectual property rights, or fraud.
- Prejudice to the sovereignty of the homeland and national security.
- Weak and cheated research.

It is the repository final decision in case a depositor requested withhold some of the material from the open-source policy. In this case, it is important to retain records of data of any excluded materail.

7.9. Intellectual property / copyright

- Oman national research repository is committed to all intellectual content granted to the depositors, originators and publishers, and in case of any violation of intellectual propertyconcerned materials will be excluded according to the terms of the exclusion (withdrawal).
- Written approval must be submitted by the depositor, that allows free access work and for permanent repository.
- Researchers and users must manaitain the copyright of all materials , and cite each article in a scientific method to ensure all intellectual rights.
- In case of joint actions, one person will be authorized to sign the intellectual property rights on behalf of partners.

7.10. Quality Control

The deposited material in digital repository represents the Sultanate of Oman and the research community in Oman, and therefore it must be adhering to quality control of data, according to the following terms:

- Merit the depositor/author and his knowledge of his depositing.
- Commitment to metadata fields.
- Accuracy of information on the submitted materials and documentation is the depositor responsibility.
- Any deposited martials do not meet the repository standards will be returnedto the depositor with the reasons for rejection.

7.11. *Preservation policy*

- The repository providesfree / open access to all deposited materials.
- All deposited materials will be stored in the repository for an indefinite period.
- Excluded material will remain in the repository, but will not be available for public.
- The citation record will be maintained and made available for public even after the exclusion.

7.12. *Compliance and Monitoring*

The success of the repository policies relies on everyone's commitment, starting from top management of the repository and ending with those responsible for the implementation of the following:

- Checking the safety of deposited materials with names checking.
- Organizing intellectual property processes and ensure originality.

The committee consisting of members from The Research Councile (TRC) and Sultan Qaboos University (SQU)should direct the process of managing and following all activities of the repository in order to achieve greater quality.

7.13. *Policy review*

Keeping up with what is new in the world of scientific communication between academics and researchers. A specialized committee will work constantly to review the repository policy to make sure it is in the right way to serve the community.

8. Disclaimer

Digital repository is considered as a digital online archive, yet not a publisher. The management of repository examines each material in terms of its forms, the eligibility of its authors, and adherence of the policy.Therefore, all parties must accept the signed agreement with them and thereafter, all parties will not take any responsibility for any errors contained within the repository after the submission.

9. **Incentives**

To ensure that the digital repository receive   the largest number of scientific and research deposits from inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman, a group of promotion incentives shall be granted for depositors in accordance with agreed regulations in advance.So the digital repository management must work as follows:

- Communicate with Omani academic research institutions to ensure that the submission in the repository is an element of promotions.
- Connect the digital repository with awards and national competitions in the research field, such as the national competition for scientific research and the deposit in the repository shall be an important criterion of being nominated for the award.
- Material incentives and certificates of appreciation.
- Program used should provide statistics of most quoted or cited works.

10. Marketing plan

Marketing plan helps this project to priorities, set goals and allocate resources to meet the main goals. Therefore SOSTAC was selectedas amodel for marketing because it is easy to remember and structure the plan for different planning activities. This model includes six phases:

- Situation
- Objectives
- Strategy
- Tactics
- Actions
- Control

The following sub-sections outlines these phases (in brief only).

10.1. *Situation*

Where is the position of Omani repository in Oman? So, we need to define internal strengths and weakness and compare them with external opportunities and threats.

Strengths:
- The first repository in Oman
- Will lead to greater reputation
- Follow up with new technologies

Weaknesses:
- Intellectual properties
- Plagiarism
- Quality of theses
- Institution's reputation
- Lack of experts and experience

Opportunities:
- Cooperation with all academic institutions in Oman
- Support from Sultan Qaboos University and the Research Council

Threats:
- The community culture
- The research culture in Oman
- Commercial publishers

10.2. *Objective*

The main objective is to convince the targeted groups with the importance of the project and motivate them to participate in it.

10.3. *Strategy*

Strategy on how to get the targeted groupsinformed about the repository and convince them to participate in the project. This can be done by defining the targeted groups (see section 6).

10.4. *Tactics*

What we need in order to go ahead with the marketing and contact the targeted groups?After defining the target groups we need to apply different methods for marketing, such as:

- Social media and emails
- Workshops and Seminars

- Visit to academic institutions

10.5. *Actions*

We need to have teams to conduct the marketing. So, we need people to conduct presentations and seminars in different institutions. We also need designers to design a logo for the project and also we need a budget.

10.6. *Control*

Finally, we need to check if we achieved our goals or if there was any errors during the previous steps.

In practical, one seminar has been conducted on February 2016 at SQU. About twenty represntators from differnt institutions in Oman were invited to the seminar. It was kind of a freiendly discussion. The first half an hour was an introduction about the project. After that, for about two hours and half, particpant were allowed to express their concerns, thoughts, suggusions and other opinions.

11. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper provides sumary of the main proposed plicies to be applied in the Omani research repository. These suggusted policies are in alighment with international policies for digital repositories. In addition a marketting plan is proposed, and yet, only one seminar at SQU have been conducted. This seminar was very successful and people were very motivated to the idea of the repository. Further workshops and seminaries need to be conducted in different institutions to get wider acceptance.