

OPEN ACCESS POLICY TO RESEARCH OUTPUTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA. STATE OF THE ART AND PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

According to the Registry of Open Access Repository Mandates and Policies (ROARMAP) only 8 research institutions from the Republic of Moldova (12%) approved an Open Access Policy (OAP). All these institutions are universities and none is a research institute or research funder, although research and development activities in the Republic of Moldova are funded basically from the state budget.

The paper contains analysis of the situation regarding Open Access Institutional Policies in the Republic of Moldova. Results of a study regarding the attitude of Moldovan academia to open access to research outputs and identified problems on this issue are presented in this work. Emphasis is given to tools and information systems like Institutional Repositories (IRs) that promote open access for research outputs. The paper reveals the barriers for adoption and / or implementation of an open access policy in a research organization and provides ways for their overcoming.

1. Introduction

Beginning with the second half of the twentieth century, traditional scientific publishing is still increasing although there are big differences between fields. At the same time, publication using new channels, for example conference proceedings, open IRs, open access journals and home pages, is growing fast. The increasing rate and further development of scientific publishing has led to a flood of information which is difficult for a single researcher to access or manage [5]. A description of this situation was made by John D. Bernal in one of his reports „It is easier to make a scientific discovery than to learn whether it was already made”.

There have been a number of studies that have examined the growth of journal titles [8, 9, 14]. The huge size of these estimates and their variability has inevitably generated complaints about the flood of literature and its effect on scholarly communication [7]. Thus, it is now more than crucial to select the most important resources so that relevant is not missed.

At the same time, the difficult situation on the information market is worsened by the expansion of the number of scientific publications in digital format. According to the data from Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, in 2014 there were 34,585 reviewed scientific journals, [0] whose number is increasing by over 3% annually [15]. Ernest Abadal notes that in 2013, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory registered 8,000 open access (OA) journal titles, which represents 13.5% of all peer-review journals (60,000 worldwide) [0].

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Currently, the number of open access journals is growing. The number of journals registered in the *Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)* at the end of 2016 was 9,454 journals from 128 countries [0]. The representativeness of open access journals in international databases such as Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus is smaller. From 22,000 journals indexed in Scopus, 2,930 journals (13%) are open access, while WoS includes about 726 open access journals (9%) [0].

Now, access to information is restricted by some permission barriers and by price barriers as well. Because of annual serials price increases, libraries, publishers, and vendors search for innovative ways to fulfil information needs of researchers, faculty members and students.

Alternative models of publishing and open access help provide scientific research outcome and make it possible to unify the entire text in a single informational space which is accessible to all the public. Open access is an innovative way of dissemination and use of scientific information, which is promoted to offer users free access to information. Open access is an alternative to the traditional model of scientific communication, based on digital technologies in the network. These factors influence the transformation of the scientific communication system and change social interactions in the academic environment, as well as between the players involved in the scientific communication – scholar, editor, library and user. At the same time, open access strategies transform the relationships between the actors of the communication process, providing a higher public visibility to research outputs and an increase in the scientists' and country's rating due to the increased number of citations.

Open access is supported by two strategies that provide free and unrestricted access to scientific publications, primarily financed from the public budget. While Gold OA provides a quick and direct access to articles through the websites of open access journals, Green OA provides indirect access to an article or an earlier version of the manuscript which is available on the web at a location other than the website of the journal [0]. Hence, publishers give researchers a free hand to make their publications available through institutional or theme repositories with open access.

While publishing policies are important to clearly define the authors' rights on the previous versions of articles or manuscripts, the content of institutional policies encourages researchers to make their publications accessible for free.

2. Open access institutional policies in the Republic of Moldova

According to the national legislation and the number of open access policies approved at national and institutional level, the Republic of Moldova cannot be called a politically open territory. However, there are some encouraging examples, as well as a positive forecast for the future to support open access in the Republic of Moldova.

In the Republic of Moldova the state policy in the field of science and innovation is carried out under the *Code on Science and Innovation of the Republic of Moldova*, approved in July 2004 [0]. Several articles of the Code assure guaranteed access to scientific information. The state, in accordance with the current legislation, guarantees: support through access to information, through its dissemination; information assurance of the topics from the scientific and innovation field; free and non-discriminatory access to scientific-technological information resources. However, open access to scientific research at state level is not confirmed in the Republic of Moldova, primarily that financed from the public money, and besides this, the mechanisms for ensuring free and open access to the scientific and technological information resources are not specified.