The institutional/disciplinary divide, a barrier to open access

Danny Kingsley
danny.kingsley@anu.edu.au
Open Access Collections
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What is a repository?

• This talk is about Institutional Repositories

• Digital repositories are "usually considered to mean a place where one deposits (hence repository) born-digital objects such as peer-reviewed research manuscripts for the purpose of providing open access."

Repositories in Australia

- Of 38 Australian universities – 22 have repositories
- Five have < 1000 entries
- Thirteen have 1000 –5000 entries
- Four left:
  - Adelaide University >14,000
  - Qld University of Technology > 9000 items
  - Griffith University > 13,000 items
  - Swinburne University of Tech > 6000 items

Convincing people to use repositories

- In the past –
  ‘Build it and they will come’

- Currently –
  ‘If only they understood’

- Future –
  ‘How does this fit with current practice?’
Consider this

- A scientist working in a laboratory with high tech equipment
- A historian whose research is text based
- Are these the only differences in the way they work?
Research design

- 43 interviews at UNSW & ANU
- October 2006 – April 2007
  - Chemists
  - Sociologists
  - Computer Scientists
- Interviews analysed using Grounded Theory
Research Question

• What are the barriers to the uptake of Open Access publication options in Australia?

• Sub-questions explored here:
  ♦ How do you keep up with the literature?
  ♦ Why do you publish?
Disciplinary Differences

• Publication patterns are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the differences in disciplines.
Information seeking

Directed searching –
Is like following a map

• Undirected searching –
Is like navigating a maze
Keeping up

- Chemists –
  - Systematic reading

- Computer Scientists –
  - Specific conferences

- Sociologists –
  - Serendipity
Directed searching

- Chemists – use databases, less general searches
- Computer Scientists – almost exclusively use Google
- Sociologists – snowball (a mixture of text and paper)
Sub-disciplines are very small
Colleagues are scattered

- Those 10 people are unlikely to work in the same building, institution or even country as each other

- Undergraduate courses are partly the reason
Marketing 101

- What is your repository for?
- This will tell you what ‘message’ you are trying to sell
Institutional/disciplinary divide

- Institution: Promotional reporting
- Government: Grant applications
- Community: International reputation
“there is a tendency –

– for administrators to lay down uniform specifications to be observed across the whole range of departments, even where these are clearly inappropriate”

Institutional/disciplinary divide

• “there is a tendency – which a proper attention to disciplinary cultures can help to check – for administrators to lay down uniform specifications to be observed across the whole range of departments, even where these are clearly inappropriate”

How I view my research communities

- Copyright Law
- Sociology
- Economics
- Science communication
- Information Management
- Bibliometrics

My research
How the ANU views me

- Copyright Law
- Sociology
- Economics
- Information Management
- Bibliometrics

My research

Science communication
Marketing 102

- Innovations (repositories) are more likely to be adopted if they are perceived to have:
  - relative advantage (to status quo)
  - Compatibility (to status quo)
  - trialability
  - observability
  - less complexity.

Loyalty

- Academics have a greater loyalty to their research ‘community’ than they do to their institution.

- Invisible colleges vs institutions
Case Study – Economists

- QUT ePrints
Work out your message!

- Most institutional repositories exist to serve institutional and funding bodies
- Perhaps it is up to the institution NOT the individual to populate it?
- If it is about open access – choose your targets
Further discussion

• Please feel free to contact me:
  • danny.kingsley@anu.edu.au

• http://cpas.anu.edu.au/researchprojects/_danny_kingsley.php