

Self Archiving Practices of University Academics: Special Emphasis on the Social Science and Humanity Scholars in the Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya

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Introduction

Self archiving can be defined as “the publishing by an author of his or her own work, on a personal website or in a repository, in addition to its publication in a journal (Miller, 2006, p.1) According to Bailey, self -archiving is “When authors make their articles freely available in digital form on the Internet, they are said to be ‘self -archiving’ them. These articles can be either ‘preprints’ or ‘post prints” (Bailey, 2006, p.14). Self-archiving serves two main purposes; 1) it allows authors to disseminate their research articles for free over the internet, and 2) it helps to ensure the preservation of those articles in a rapidly evolving digital environment.

Self -archiving is a relatively young concept, only as old as the internet. It has experienced rapid growth in the last two decades, as the web has become more widely available and net work speeds have increased (Suber, 2010). As a result, the study of self -archiving practices among research faculty is quite new, and methodologies and conceptual frameworks for understanding them are still under development. Researchers are just starting to uncover the incentives and influences affecting faculty self-archiving and open access publishing behavior, and little work has been done to synthesize these results into a comprehensive understanding of what impact the open access movement is having on the scholarly communications system as a whole. This study was conducted to gain knowledge on self archiving practices of the social science and humanities scholars which none of the researchers have touched so far in Sri Lanka.

Objectives

The objective of this study was to understand the current practices of self-archiving of academic scholars in the Faculty of Arts University of Peradeniya.

Methodology

A survey method was adapted and a questionnaire specifically designed and pre tested to collect data was used to achieve the objectives of the study. The study population consisted of all permanent academics in the Faculty of Arts of University of Peradeniya. A self administered questionnaire was distributed to all 171 academics in June, 2016 and they were requested to send completed questionnaires within one month. Due to low rate of responses received after one month a reminder was sent in August, 2016 and the

received data were analysed using SPSS (17.0). Out of 171, 97 duly completed questionnaires were received making 56.7 Percent response rate.

Analysis of the Data

Awareness on Self-Archiving

At the outset with a brief definition of self-archiving, the respondents were asked whether they were aware of the concept of the self archiving. Overall, the majority of the respondents (51=52.5%) had not heard of self-archiving and only 46 (47.4%) mentioned that they know about self archiving.

Self Archiving Experience

To get an idea about the experience of the self archiving , the respondents were asked to indicate whether they have experienced self archiving and out of 171, only 36 (21.1%) mentioned yes, while 135(78.9%) mentioned that they have not experienced.

Length of Self Archiving Experience

Those who have experience in self archiving were asked to indicate how many years they have been self archiving their work. They were given four options: Less than one year, 1-3 years, 4-5 years and more than 5 years. The responses are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Period of Self Archiving

	Period of Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1	Less than 01 year	09	25.0
2	1-3 years	21	58.4
3	More than 05 years	06	16.6
	Total	36	100

The results revealed that most of the respondents (58.4%) have one to three years experience whereas 25 Percent of the respondents have less than one year and only 16.6 Percent have more than five years experience in self archiving.

How they learned About Self-Archiving

It is of interest to delve a little deeper into the data on how they learned about self archiving and the results are presented in the table 2.

Table 2 : Sources of Information on Self-Archiving

	Sources of Information	Frequency	Percentage
1	While surfing internet	19	52.8
2	Through journals	08	22.2
3	From professional friends/colleagues	06	16.7
4	From faculty	03	8.3
	Total	36	100

Of the respondents 19(52.8%) got information on self archiving while surfing internet, followed by 08 (22.2%) through journals and 06 (16.7%) came to know from professional friends or colleagues. (Table 2)

Contribution of Publishing and Type of Material Self Archived by the Scholars

The breadth and depth of self-archiving practice of the faculty members is shown in Table 03. It provides the number of publication of the scholars who have self-archived different types of publications.

Table 3 : Contribution and Type of Materials Self Archived

	Type of Material	No. of Staff Who Contributed	Percentage	No. of Publications Self Archived
1	Conference paper	26	26.8	49
2	Post print (Peer -review research article)	18	18.5	31
3	Research report	15	15.5	28
4	Preprint (research article before peer review)	12	12.4	26
5	Presentation	12	12.4	24
6	Theses (Full text or Part)	10	10.3	18
7	Book	09	9.3	11
8	Departmental paper (Eg. Seminar paper)	08	8.2	09
9	Dataset	04	4.1	06

In terms of material types, the data suggest that at least more than 26 Present of the respondents self archive 49 conference papers while nearly 19 Present self archive 31 post print materials and more than 15 Present self archive 28 research reports. The results further revealed that more than 10 Present of the respondents self archive preprint materials, presentations and full text or part of their theses.

Findings and Conclusion

Findings suggest that the majority of the scholars in the Faculty of Arts (52.5%) are unaware of self-archiving practices or did not hear about it. However only 21.1 Present of respondents had exposure to self-archiving practices and most of them (52.8%) learnt about self archiving from the internet and most of them self archive conference papers.

It can be concluded that the level of awareness and exposure to self archiving practices of academics are low. In light of these results, there is a need to create more awareness and educate academics on the importance of self archiving.

Recommendations

Since the results indicate that the academics knowledge and exposure to self archiving practices is low, following recommendation are made to create more awareness and educate them on importance of self archiving for carrier development of individual personals as well as the university as a whole.

1. University and library authorities must organize some promotional events such as workshops and seminars to increase awareness of self archiving among academic scholars.
2. Librarians must increasingly serve as change - agents to promote self archiving.
3. The library must disseminate promotional materials among faculty, to encourage self archiving, indicating benefits to them.
4. University and library authorities must develop institutional policies to encourage self-archiving by the faculty.

Keywords: Academics; Humanities; Scholars; Self archiving; Social science

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