

Editorial

Michael Seadle

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

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Open Access

World Digital Libraries is becoming an open access journal for all except the most recent issues. With this decision it joins a wide range of other journals in the Library and Information Science field that offer some form of open access, either Green Road (which is free of cost to both the authors and the readers) or Golden Road (which requires authors to pay but still gives readers free access). Open access has many benefits, especially for scholars in countries such as India where not all institutions can pay the subscriptions costs, and for scholars who have no institutional affiliation and would have to pay all the subscriptions costs themselves.

Nonetheless, journals are costly to run. For paper publications there are printing, distribution, and back-issue storage costs, and for digital journals the costs include server maintenance, electricity, and connection costs. Good journals also need staff to do a significant amount of editorial work, format correction, peer-review management, and marketing. Making content available via open access can also increase server loads, which is good for authors but adds to the resource needs. Happily, the experience of JSTOR and related projects suggest

that journals get most of their income from the newest issues. As long as subscribers continue to support the journal financially, they benefit themselves not only in getting the most recent issues, but they benefit from the added value that comes when open access attracts better authors who care that their works will be increasingly accessible over time.

Readers will find five articles in this issue that touch on various aspects of digital libraries. The article by Anna Maria Di Sciullo on “Biolinguistics, Natural Language Processing, and Digital Libraries” looks at semantic issues involving access to digital library content and how to implement the “principles of efficient computation” for information retrieval systems. The article by Anna Kaushik on “Content Analysis of Political Party Websites in India” provides a usability rating for political party websites in India including recommendations that apply not just to political parties but to websites generally. The article by M Madhusudhan on “Use of 3G Services by Research Scholars in Central Universities in India: A Study” looks at two of India’s elite universities and how their students use—or fail to use—3G networks for their own research and for exchanging ideas. Mobile phones that are

enabled for this technology are widespread, but their use for academic work is apparently not.

The article by Zahid Ashraf Wani and Tariq Shafi on “Citation Analysis in Open Access World: A Case Study of Health Science Open Access Repositories” looks at a specific subset of open access repositories. The author’s conclusion makes a key point: “The emergence of Google Scholar as a free citation tracking tool has given something to cheer-upon, to the scholars interested in carrying out the citation based studies, belonging to the institutions who cannot afford to subscribe to the proprietary based citation indexing tools.” The final article by D Vinay Kumar, B T Sampath Kumar, and D R Parameshwarappa on “URLs Link Rot:

Implications for Electronic Publishing” addresses a critical issue for digital publication. The failure of links undermines the reader’s ability to check sources. The authors found that almost half of the links in references in Emerald library and information science journals between 2008 and 2012 no longer functioned. This is an important issue in part because there is no clear expectation within the community about who should be responsible for link maintenance. Publishers can identify broken links, but they cannot independently know where a new link should point, and authors often lack the time and tools to fix broken links. This is a topic that should be addressed in the near future.