OPEN ACCESS IN AFRICA: PROVIDING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

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Outline

• Context
• Open Access Expression
  – IR
  – OER
  – OA publishing
• Challenges
• Way forward
• Conclusion
• “The emergence of Africa will ultimately be measured by its ability to sustain itself,...to create, store and disseminate its own knowledge and technology.”  
  Shamsa Abdulrasak 2009

• Southern Africa
  – SARUA support of OA, Gaborone 2007
    • Institutional repositories
    • Open Educational Resources
    • Open Access Publishing
Open Access Expression

• 2000……
  – Open archiving/institutional repository
  – Open access journal publishing

• 2005…..
  – Open educational resources
  – Open broadcasts
Potential of Open access to Africa

• Visibility of African scholarship
• Opportunity to shape digital knowledge space through contribution---not mere consumers of digital content
• Expanding intellectual and knowledge development sphere
• OERs, and digital repositories expanding African ways of learning, teaching & research
INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORIES
Institutional repositories

• Mainly located at universities
• Open Standards
  – D-space
  – E-prints
• Language: English and local languages
• African knowledge in the web
• Enhancing visibility of African academics
Proportion of Repositories by Continent Worldwide

- Europe (815 = 49%)
- North America (433 = 26%)
- Asia (204 = 12%)
- South America (88 = 5%)
- Australasia (79 = 5%)
- Africa (39 = 2%)
- Caribbean (7 = 0%)
- Central America (6 = 0%)

Total = 1663 repositories

OpenDOAR 19-May-2010
Proportion of Repositories by Country in Africa

- South Africa (23 = 59%)
- Egypt (4 = 10%)
- Kenya (2 = 5%)
- Namibia (2 = 5%)
- Botswana (1 = 3%)
- Cape Verde (1 = 3%)
- Ethiopia (1 = 3%)
- Ghana (1 = 3%)
- [4 Others (4 = 10%)]

Total = 39 repositories
Geographical Distribution of Repositories in Africa
OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
Open Educational Resources

- OERs university and NGO based
- OER-Africa project
- TESSA project
- Virtual University of Small States of the Commonwealth led by the Commonwealth of Learning
While many OERs are developed in the industrialised countries, less industrialised countries ought not to be merely consumers of these.

OERs are to be *shared*, *exchanged*, *expanded* and *adapted* with appropriate attributions.
• **OER Africa**
  - is an innovative new project, headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, under the auspices of the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE).
  - OER Africa has been established to play a leading role in driving the development and use of Open Educational Resources (OER) on the African continent.

Example of OER Resources

First of its kind South African study finds low HIV rates among university students

plusnews.org – HIV prevalence rates among South Africa’s university students remain low, but risk is never far off according to one of the largest surveys ever conducted in the country. The study of almost 24,000 students and staff found a national HIV prevalence rate among college students of about 3 percent – a sharp contrast to the national prevalence rate of around 18 percent estimated by UNAIDS. A combination of individual questionnaires, interviews, and dried blood spot HIV testing was used.

Added by Laura Lopez Gonzalez, PlusNews on March 30, 2010

Use of School-based Telecentres by the broader Community and Possibilities for Revenue Generation by Schools in South Africa

info.worldbank.org – South Africa as a young democracy is going through interesting and innovative changes, especially at this stage of heightened transition. These changes and developments are very evident in various sectors including government policy. These changes and developments are very evident in various sectors including government policy.
Growth of African Open Access Journals

[Graph showing the growth of African Open Access Journals from 2003 to 2009 for countries such as Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Libya, Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia, and Morocco.]

• Open access publishing
  – Academy of Sciences statements- (South Africa)
  – Human Science Research Council Model (Gray 2007)
  – Avenue for limited run publications e.g journals of small learning societies (Mazonde 2010)
  – African Feminist Review – (accredited journal)
CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD
Challenges and Issues

• Limited knowledge among academics
  – Nigeria Study (Richman, 2009)

• National policy frameworks and Open Scholarship
  – National policy
    • Accreditation of OA publishing
  – Institutional policy
    • Tenure and promotion

• Unequal knowledge development processes
  – Exportation
  – Hegemonic
Way forward

• Alignment of OA and Academic traditions critical
• Open Scholarship Frame work essential
  – Institutional Repositories-mechanism for dissemination and archiving
  – Open Access Publishing-publication of digital knowledge
  – Open Educational Resources-exchange and adaptation mechanism
  – Future
Conclusion

• OA valuable vehicle for Africa’s digital content

• OA facilitates access to knowledge and also creates platforms for uploading knowledge developed in Africa.

• A new way of scholarly communication in African scholars ought to embrace and exploit to place African knowledge in digital spaces
• Welcome to Open Access day celebration!

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