Electronic Theses and Dissertations

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Overview

- Introduction
- Print environment – Ireland
- New developments - UK
- International developments
- The transition from print to digital - benefits, issues
- The wider context of scholarly communication
- The scholarly communication crisis - the role of ETDs
- Conclusion: The role of the university library in the development of ETDs

Introduction

- Rapid developments in electronic publishing
- Electronic A+I services, e-journals, e-books
- Theses slow to benefit from developments
- Theses remain in print format
- Self-archiving initiatives, opportunities for electronic theses

The Print Environment
Republic of Ireland

- Irish thesis environment is print only
  - Submission format is print
  - Theses held in print format in library
  - Print has advantages:
    - Tried and trusted
    - No complexities in relation to archiving
    - Copyright is easily managed
  - Disadvantages in terms of access

Access to Print Theses
Republic of Ireland

- Awareness:
  - Theses records in library OPACs
  - Included in 'Index to Theses'

- Access
  - Limited - through home institution or ILL

- Initiative to develop Irish Index to Theses
  - Will increase awareness
  - Will not improve access

UK - the transition from print to digital

- Print environment prevails in UK
- 'Index to Theses' and BL Thesis Service
- BL microfilms doctoral theses
- BL microfilm service to be converted to digitisation-based service
- BL plan retrospective conversion of all theses to electronic format

UK - ETDs

- UTOG theses digitisation project
- National effort to promote ETDs - three JISC projects:

'Theses Alive!' at Edinburgh University

http://www.thesesalive.ac.uk/

'Daedalus' at Glasgow University

http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=project_daedalus

'Electronic Theses' at Robert Gordon University

http://www2.rgu.ac.uk/library/e-theses.htm

Theses Alive!

- Promote the adoption of a management system for ETDs in the UK
- Two main deliverables:
    - Create an online repository of digital PhD theses
    - Create an online submission system for ETDs that mirrors the current submission process

Daedalus

- Will establish a network of Open Archives compliant digital collections at the University of Glasgow:
  - Theses

Electronic Theses

- The Electronic Theses project is exploring methods of e-theses production, management and use in order to produce recommended models for use within the UK information environment.

International developments

- Internationally, major advances in development of ETDs
- NDLTD http://www.ndltd.org/
- Aims:
    - To improve graduate education
    - Increase sharing of knowledge
    - Help universities build their information infrastructure
    - Extend the value of digital libraries

NDLTD

- Union catalogue of ETDs
- http://oai.dlib.vt.edu/~etdunion/cgi-bin/index.pl
- 14 contributing institutions including MIT and Virginia Tech
- 1000's of electronic theses freely available
- 201 NDLTD members worldwide
- Individual or consortial membership

NDLTD - benefits

- Submission software available
- Established standards for submission, conversion, storage, archiving, printing
- Advice on implementation of ETD archive
- Proceed according to institution's local requirements

Virginia Tech ETDs

- http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/
- Electronic submission mandatory
- Supporting infrastructure
- Training in conversion to pdf
- Streamlined workflow
- Theses submitted to server
- Accessed by academic and admin. staff
- Accessed by library, catalogued, made available on the web

Open Archives Initiative (OAi)

- OAi develops interoperability standards
- Aims to enhance access to e-print archives as a means of increasing the availability of scholarly communication
- OAi protocol for metadata harvesting (PMH)
- All archives should use OAi PMH compliant metadata
- Distributed documents can be jointly searched and retrieved as if they were in one global collection.

Institutional Repositories

- Open Society Institute guide:
  - Identifies seven systems
  - Open Source software
  - OAi PMH compliant
  - Global network of interoperable research repositories

Institutional Repositories e-prints

- http://www.eprints.org/
- 'A powerful tool for sharing scholarly works with the world'
- Extensive use - worldwide
- In place in two Irish university libraries

Institutional Repositories DSpace

- Http://dspace.org/index.html
- Developed by MIT and Hewlett Packard
- Access to all the university's research through a single interface
- User community orientation
- Focus on developing long-term preservation for digital content
- Edinburgh University has adopted DSpace for Theses Alive! project

Third party publishing

- Alternative to self-archiving
- Proquest/UMI – long history
- International ETD service – PQDD
- Each institution's subset on web site
- Theses microfilmed for preservation
- Free MARC records with hot links
- Retro conversion of paper theses
- Electronic or paper submission
- E-submission procedure developed
- Interested in Irish market
- Commercial publisher - issues

The benefits of ETDs

- Increased access and availability of university research to the international community
- Students' experience of publishing important for future of scholarly publication
- Savings in shelf space, binding, storage, circulation costs
- Range of formats accommodated
- Easily searchable and indexed by keywords
- Controlled levels of access possible

Issues

- Resourcing the transition from print
- Retro conversion of print collections
- Prior publication
- Plagiarism
- Peer review
- IPR

Issues
- Archiving

- Digital preservation
- Long-term access
- Uncertainties will impede growth and take-up of digital services
- Current options:
  - Refreshing
  - Migration
  - Tape backups
  - Copying to disk
  - Microform
  - Print

Issues
- Cultural

- Inclusion of stakeholders from wider university community
- Impact of change
- Supporting infrastructure for students
- Required culture change within the universities
- Little awareness of ETDs
- Gradual transition period

Wider context
- scholarly publication

- Perception of theses as part of library collection

- Theses - part of the scholarly output of an institution

- Valuable research content, deserve wider availability and easier access

- Achieve this through ETDs

The scholarly publication crisis

- The cost of scholarly communication is impeding access
- Authors/scholars surrender research output free to commercial publishers
- Academic institutions buy this material back at huge cost
- Authors publish with prestigious journals - tenure and career progression

Finding a solution

- Attempts to free up access to scholarly output
- OAi
- SPARC
- Attempt to attract authors away from commercial publishing model
- Scholars must buy into the principle of open access
- Universities can influence graduate students to adopt this principle
- Thesis – first major research project

Conclusion:
Role of library in development of ETDs

- Libraries suffering financial effects of scholarly publication crisis
- Budgets consumed by rising cost of journals
- In libraries' interest to work towards solution - open access to scholarly publication
- ETDs support this principle
- Libraries - take the lead in promoting development of ETDs