Enabling Knowledge Sharing with an Institutional Repository

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Abstract

The creation of Digital Institutional Repositories for knowledge sharing and management in Academic Institutions in a developing country like India is a growing requirement. The paper briefly describes a study conducted to determine the need of an Institutional Repository and implementation using Open Source Digital Repository software, DSpace at a Management Institution in India to enable knowledge sharing.

1: Introduction

Knowledge Management brings together three core organizational resources - people, processes and technologies to enable an organization to use and share information effectively. Digital Repositories, one of the components of knowledge management systems hold content-explicit knowledge and are concerned with managing, maintaining and distributing this content. A university-based institutional digital repository is a set of services that a university offers to the members of its community for the management and dissemination of digital materials created by the institution and its community members [1]. An institutional repository can include pre-print, post-prints, theses, books, conference proceedings, teaching materials etc. A popular open-source software package for building and managing digital institutional repositories is the DSpace software developed jointly by MIT libraries and Hewlett-Packard (HP) [3].

The creation of a Digital Repositories for knowledge sharing in academic institutions in a developing country like India is a growing requirement. The Directory of Open Access Repositories (OpenDOAR) lists 16 Digital Institutional Repositories in India like Indian Institute of Science, National Institute of Technology, Rourkela [2]. 10 of these repositories use DSpace software, indicating a wide acceptance of DSpace in India.

2: Need for an Institutional Repository in a Management Institution.

To identify the quality of management education imparted in various business schools in India, they are “Ranked” on a yearly basis on different parameters like placements, industry interface by surveys conducted by the Business Today-AC Nielsen ORG-MARG, Business Standard-All India Management Association (AIMA) and others. All the surveys give importance to parameters like faculty publications, quality of research papers of faculty, that is, the “Intellectual Capital” of the Institution.

The knowledge intensive scholarly publications and research material of faculty in Management Institutions consisting of papers published, presented at conferences, needs to be captured & maintained in a Digital Institutional Repository to be of utility to other faculty and institution, enable sharing and learning, identify the intellectual capital of the institute, bring it visibility & prestige [4].

Need & Use of an Institutional Repository

A study was conducted to determine the need of an Institutional Repository and faculty use of the repository. The study was based on a descriptive survey of the faculty from different subject areas, and experience at Icfai Business School (IBS), a Management Institute in India. Questionnaire was used as a tool to gather data. Data from the 112 responses was analyzed and can be seen in the Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Need and Use of an IR at IBS Ahmedabad
Majority of Faculty were of the opinion that they need a digital repository to share their knowledge (scholarly material, teaching material) and would use it. A small percentage was indifferent and very few did not feel the need for a digital repository.

3: An Institutional Repository (IR) using DSpace Digital Repository Software

Icfai Business School (IBS) is an Indian business school offering a two-year full-time campus-based PGDBA program. It caters to network of more than 6000 students, 500 faculties at 18 centers geographically distributed across the country.

At IBS, Ahmedabad one of the centers of Icfai Business School, faculty and research staff are actively involved in publishing scholarly materials. Awareness of what papers, books have been published or conferences attended by others is limited. Currently, the intellectual output exists as disorganized and decentralized digital objects held in personal computers, Web servers in the IBS system. Faculty need to store and retain their intellectual assets, make their work available and visible to others within and outside the institution, while managing their digital rights and maintaining the integrity of their work [5].

By implementing the DSpace Digital Repository Software an Institutional Repository at the Icfai Business School, Ahmedabad is being developed to collect, preserve the intellectual capital (contribution of faculty and staff) and enhance institutional visibility to promote a knowledge sharing and open culture.

System installation, though complex was successful using Fedora Core 4 Linux, DSpace Digital Repository Software 1.3.2 and prerequisites required like Postgres SQL 8.1.3, Apache Ant 1.6.5, Apache Tomcat 5.5.17 and J2EE 1.4 SDK Java platform all available for free download.

The Institutional Repository at IBS Ahmedabad consists of Communities like Books, Cases uploaded on European Case Clearing House (ECCH) and subject communities like IT & Operations, General Management, Marketing. Each subject area comprises of Collections like Articles Published, Conference Papers Presented.

Implementing DSpace @IBS Ahmedabad is a continuous learning experience. It is still in its initial phases and a lot of areas need to be explored as yet. DSpace @IBS Ahmedabad is currently available for access at DSpace Instances available worldwide. http://wiki.dspace.org/index.php//DspaceInstances. As the Repository development is in its initial phase, data is as of now, being entered by library staff, who have been trained with the use of DSpace Repository Software.

![Status of Collections in the IR at IBS Ahmedabad](image)

As on December 2006, the total collection is 145. The IR at IBS Ahmedabad has given a platform for a centralized availability of the “intellectual capital” and visibility to the work that is being done. Sharing of knowledge is enabled using the IR.

4: Conclusion and Future Work

Implementing the institutional repository at IBS Ahmedabad involved many challenges. Areas like populating and maintaining the repository, set up of workflows, peer review are yet to be addressed. The repository can be extended to other centers of the IBS, thus widening the scope of knowledge sharing.

Repositories can grow only when there is faculty participation and self archiving. The culture within the institution must encourage sharing and deposit of material in the Institutional Repository. Digital Rights and acknowledging authorship are also obstacles to sharing.

While many universities are pondering whether or how to implement institutional repositories, a growing number of institutions are actively engaged in setting up and running repositories with a hope to leverage the shared values, research outputs, teaching material ….presenting themselves as a new paradigm of knowledge sharing.

5: References