



knowledge without boundaries

EIFL-OA: Open Access

Removing barriers to knowledge

UZ 2011 OPEN ACCESS ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN: SAY “NO! TO SECRET KNOWLEDGE: SUPPORT OPEN ACCESS” A CASE STUDY FROM ZIMBABWE

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Results of the EIFL-funded project: UZ 2011 Open Access (OA) Advocacy Campaign
implemented by the University of Zimbabwe Libraries

INTRODUCTION

The University of Zimbabwe has a student population of approximately 12,000 students and the University Library serves all these students and also the academic staff and support staff, estimated at 2000. A significant number of the students are coming from the rural areas which are disadvantaged communities.

The **Mission** of the University is “Enabling our clients and customers to make meaningful contributions to sustainable development in Zimbabwe. To this end we provide high quality education, training and advisory services on a needs oriented basis. We guarantee the above by maintaining excellence in Teaching, Learning, Research and Service to the community”.

In line with the above, and being the engine and heart for scholarly information, the University of Zimbabwe Libraries is very clear of its pivotal role in the university structure. The Library’s **mission** statement is explicit in its acknowledgement of the role it is expected to play, that is “Provide access to scholarly information resources required to meet the learning, teaching and research needs of the University of Zimbabwe”.

BACKGROUND: OA ACTIVITIES

OA activities at the University of Zimbabwe Libraries are coordinated through an OA Initiatives Committee and it reports to the Library Management Committee. Its members are drawn from Sub-Librarians, Faculty Librarians and Assistant Librarians.

The University library has over the years taken a lead in embracing OA issues and also in making its contents available through OA. The Library has the following accessible databases via its website:

- Past Exam Papers Online (OA)
- DATAD (intranet)
- e-Theses (intranet)
- Institutional Repository (OA)
- Zimtheses (OA) (on planning stages)

As noted from above, the University library has only two online databases available freely on OA. The e-theses database is a full text collection of UZ theses. The Library also managed to get support through African Association of Universities to host on behalf of all universities in Zimbabwe (under the national consortia Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium ZULC) a national theses database for graduate degrees. Technical staff was sent for training and also the relevant equipment was installed. However, the challenge was to have the above free available on the Internet.

Against this background the UZ Library OA Initiatives Committee realized that advocacy was needed to ensure adoption of a campus wide OA policy.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Vice Chancellor has agreed that the UZ Electronic Theses and Dissertation Database should be openly available since UZ is now a member of Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD).
- The university community has fully embraced the OA concept.
- Over 300 participants, from 6 of the 10 Faculties at UZ, attended OA workshops.
- After attending an OA seminar, faculty librarians felt confident enough to approach researchers and advocate for OA.
- An OA policy is being written, a draft should be available by June 2012.
- OA resources portal has been included on the UZ Library e-resources web page http://www.uz.ac.zw/library/inner/open_access_resources.html.
- Several researchers saw an increase in usage and global visibility of the articles deposited in the UZ IR (e.g. see the statistics of Mr. E. Chapanga, Faculty of Arts OA champion person, at http://ir.uz.ac.zw/jspui/displaystats?handle=10646%2F512&submit_simple=View+Statistics)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The campaign sought to create a platform for greater understanding and appreciation of OA and the adoption of the University OA Policy by the academic community and the university management.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives for the campaign were:

- To lobby for University management to get their buy-in to the concept of OA and the subsequent support and adoption of an OA policy for the University of Zimbabwe.
- To document and publicise local and International OA success stories
- To create awareness at the ten Faculties on both the concept of OA and the materials available to them in OA

PRIMARY AUDIENCE

- University management (Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellors, Bursar, Registrar and Deans of Faculties)
- Chairpersons of departments
- Lecturers

- Researchers
- Post graduate students
- Undergraduate students

OUTREACH STRATEGY

The following table illustrates our road-map during the OA Advocacy Campaign

Audience	Outreach Strategy
University's Management	Interactive discussions to stimulate appreciation on OA concept at the local, national and international level
Chairpersons of departments	Faculty workshops and presentations
Lecturers	Faculty workshops and presentations
Post graduates and Undergraduates Students	-Presentations during e-resources and Information Literacy Skills Trainings -Advertising through the Library Facebook page (http://www.facebook.com/uzlibrary)
University Community	Campus wide advertising through posters and brochures, presentations, discussion forums and workshops during the International Open Access Week (24-28 October 2011)

ADVOCACY STRATEGY

Clearly the work was supposed to be a bottom-up approach starting from the faculties and up to the University Management. Each faculty as stated has a faculty librarian who is a member of the UZ Library OA Initiatives Committee. The committee met on the 10th of May to prepare for faculty based advocacy groups and decided to have an internal half-day workshop for faculty librarians (who would essentially be library champion persons).

The Library 'OA training Seminar' was held in June and the following themes were presented:

- Definition, History and Development of OA
- Copyright and OA
- Fears, Myths & Benefits of OA
- An overview of OA activities at the University of Zimbabwe Library.

The sessions proved to be very good as they leveraged the staff skills and also provided a common approach and sample answers especially to fears and myths about OA that could arise from the academics.

FACULTY BASED ADVOCACY

Each faculty librarian was tasked to come up with an academic member of staff who he or she could work with in the campaign. This contact person would either be passionate about library or had deposited articles in the UZ Institutional Repository. The Library would also hand over to him T-Shirts and other promotional materials.

Each faculty librarian would work up a strategy that suited a particular faculty, as they differ in size and approach. For instance, in the faculty of law a group meeting did not work, but departmental meetings worked, while in the faculty of agriculture a whole faculty meeting worked.

FACULTY WORKSHOPS STATISTICS

Faculty	Month	Participants
Agriculture	August	19
College of Health Sciences	October	150
Veterinary Sciences	August	16
Engineering	October	20
Law	September	6
Social Studies	November	50
Total		311

Faculty workshops were carried out from August to November. Six out of ten faculties conducted OA training workshops where the main focus was on creating awareness of the OA concept (OA self-archiving and OA publishing). The remaining four faculties had challenges with time since the campaign took place during the semester. The Library will negotiate to have these trainings during vacation time.

The participants viewed the training as an eye opener in the academic society as it brought with it many benefits both to the student and the lecturers. T-Shirts and brochures were distributed during these workshops.

PARTICIPANTS FEEDBACK

- Academic optimism on the OA concept in providing access to scholarly information which support the teaching, learning and research.
- Participants were very pessimistic on the OA concept as a business model especially on how they will benefit in terms of monetary value and also in protecting their intellectual content.
- Participants were amazed by the vast amount of OA resources available on the Internet and they promised to cascade the information down to their students on these OA resources.
- They found the workshops very educative and useful especially on the searching techniques.

UZ EXECUTIVE

The original plan was to come up with a single meeting for the executive; this did not work due to busy schedules. The OA Initiatives committee resolved to use the newly constituted Research Board and also the University Librarian (who is a member of the executive) to start also lobbying for the adoption of the policy at relevant meetings attended by members of the executive.

The latter worked well as the University Librarian was successful in convincing the Vice-Chancellor to accept that UZ Theses go online and a committee headed by the Pro Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs has already been formed to look at the quality of information to go on the Internet. This was a major breakthrough for the campaign. This has paved the way for UZ theses to be available soon on the Network Digital Library of Thesis and Dissertations (NDLTD). The OA Draft policy is being worked on by the committee. The Library is still committed to train the Executive and will negotiate for time during the vacation.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Training of the trainers is necessary in order to equip them with essential skills and knowledge to train other people.
- Fully dedicated staff and support from the library management will go a long way in contributing to a fruitful lobbying and advocacy campaign.
- Participation by those who have most benefitted is a key to success in any campaign.
- OA Policy will only come as a result of stakeholder participation and the library has the role to facilitate stakeholder interaction from time to time.
- Beneficiaries of OA can be used as champion persons.
- Information communication technology infrastructure and Internet connectivity plays a critical role in enhancing access to OA resources.
- Advocacy should be held continually rather than a one off event.

THE FUTURE

- The Library needs to come up with an OA Draft Policy by June 2012.
- The Library will come up with Five Year Strategic Plan which will be used as a road map in implementing OA activities and ensuring continuity.
- Faculty based training workshops for the remaining 4 faculties will also be prioritized so as to equip the whole academic community with electronic resources that will enhance learning and research.