

Open Access in South Africa: preliminary results of a survey

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purpose of talk

- background
- present preliminary (descriptive) survey results for subset of questions
- discuss findings
- propose way forward (that's also tomorrow)

talk outline

- background: why survey the issue
- participants (who)
- how chosen
- survey: contents and statistical properties
- findings
- conclusions

background to study

- grounded in experience(s)
- four years ago, explored possibility of taking print journal online for Linguistic Society of SA
- two years ago, established Information Infrastructure Initiative as web hosting platform for scholars / academics
- what are we doing, if anything...
- rome is burning...

Open Access defined

- free or low-barrier distribution of scholarly research (de beer)
- finds expression through:
 1. publication in open access journals;
 2. making research available in an institutional or disciplinary (a.k.a. subject-based) archive;
 3. making research available via departmental or personal homepages;
 4. making the research output of postgraduates available.

note:

- 1 = research publication;
- 2 to 4 = research dissemination

study population: who

- South African Computer-, Library-, and Information science, and Information Systems professionals

This survey is directed at South African practitioners/researchers in the abovementioned disciplines, who are required to present and/or publish their research findings.

Typically, persons in the target audience will be situated in Academia, Research Units, the IT industry, and Library- and/or Information Services within South Africa.

study population: how

- Potential participants identified on an individual and group basis
- **Individuals**: Web homepages of academic departments
 - All Computer-, Library-, and Information Sciences, and Information Systems academic departments were identified
- **Groups**: subscribers to electronic discussion lists.
- **Library Directors** at higher education institutions within South Africa
- **IT Directors** at higher education institutions were targeted via a Tertiary Education Network (TENET)[\[1\]](#) mailing list. (The latter list however comprised of individuals other than just the IT Directors.)
- Other electronic **mailing lists** also identified for broad disciplines
 - LIASAonline (Library and Information Association of South Africa)
 - SABINEWS (South African library vendor)
 - SAICSIT (South African Institute for Computer Scientists and Information Technologists)
 - CSSA (Computer Society of South Africa)
- presenters for the 2004 annual SACLA (South African Computer Lecturers Association) conference



survey objectives

- gauge
 - level of **awareness** and
 - **investment / activity**
 - in four new expressions of scholarly communication:
 - publication in Open Access scholarly journals;
 - distribution of research via institutional and/or disciplinary repositories;
 - scholars making their research available via personal web homepages;
 - making research available of postgraduates via ETDs

definition of terms

- **pre-print** – version of an article which has been submitted for official publication, yet not yet accepted for publication;
- **post-print** – peer-reviewed version of article, accepted for publication and yet-to-be published, or already published;
- **e-print** – electronic version of a pre-print or post-print;
- **institutional repositories** – a central storage server for the management and dissemination of digital research (and sometimes teaching-) materials created by the institution and its research staff, excluding Masters theses and Doctoral dissertations;
- **ETDs** – acronym for Electronic Theses and Dissertations signifying a central storage server for the management and dissemination of postgraduate digital research materials created by the institution's Masters and Doctoral students;
- **Open access journal** – journal which makes research articles freely available online immediately upon publication, or makes articles available for free six months after the original publication date.

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[Exit this survey >](#)

2. Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions are used:

pre-print

version of an article which has been submitted for official publication, yet not yet accepted for publication;

post-print

peer-reviewed version of article, accepted for publication and yet-to-be published, or already published;

e-print

electronic version of a pre-print or post-print;

institutional repositories

a central storage server for the management and dissemination of digital research (and sometimes teaching-) materials created by the institution and its research staff, excluding Masters theses and Doctoral dissertations;

ETDs

acronym for **E**lectronic **T**heses and **D**issertations, signifying a central storage server for the management and dissemination of postgraduate digital research materials created by the institution's Masters and Doctoral students;

Open Access journal

journal which makes research articles freely available online immediately upon publication, or makes articles available for free six months after the original publication date.

Click "Next" to get started with the survey. If you'd like to leave the survey at any time, just click "Exit this survey". Your answers will be saved.

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survey methodology

- self-administered questionnaire
- design: descriptive/observational & cross-sectional
- published via the WWW
- non-probability (a.k.a. convenience) sampling method
- three e-mails (advance notification + invitation to participate + reminder)
- 114 respondents over three weeks

survey content

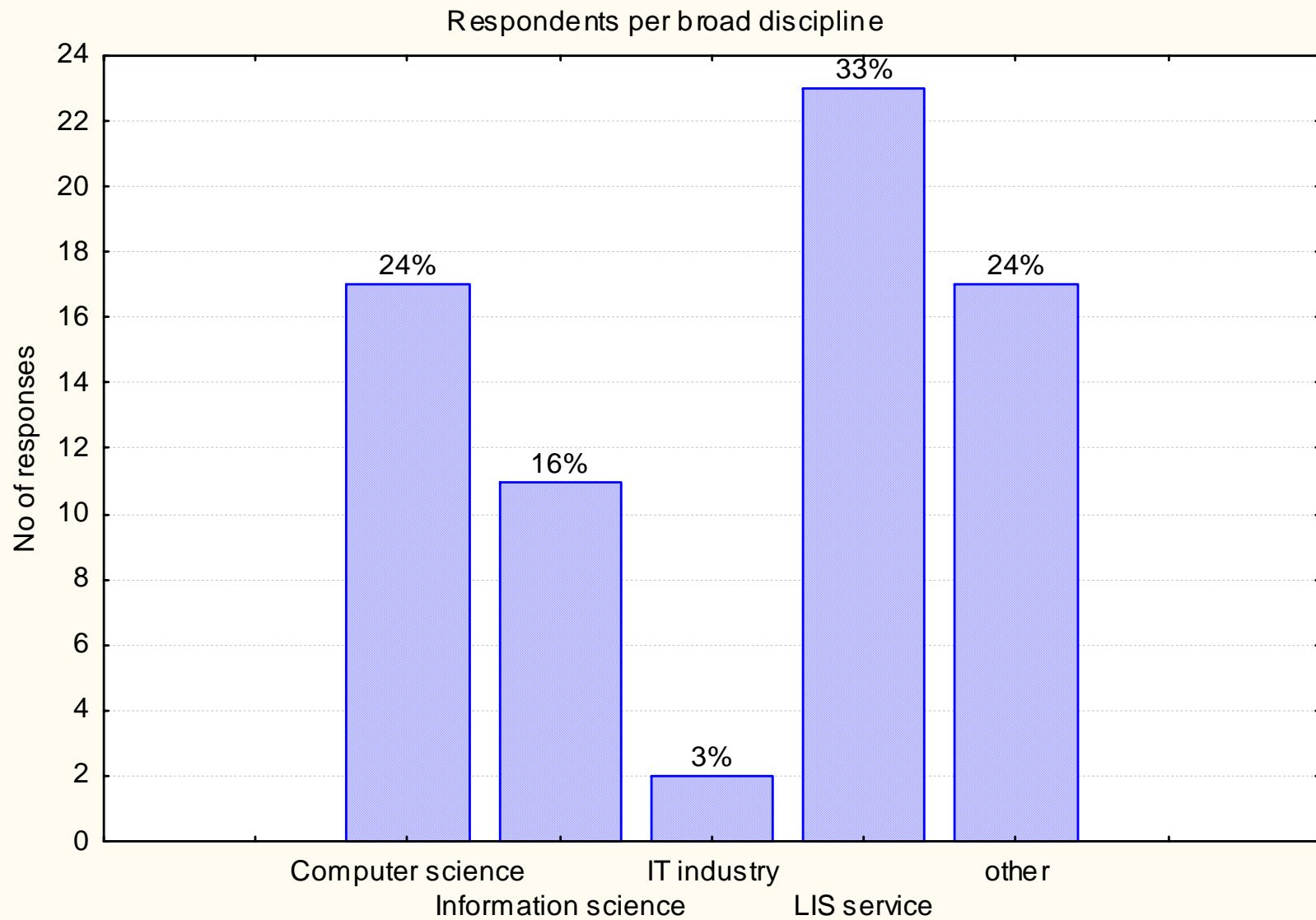
- 35 questions + declaration
- 10 sections
 - introduction
 - definition of terms
 - knowledge about OA initiatives (2 qstns)
 - electronic scholarship (15 qstns)
 - institutional electronic archives (5 qstns)
 - degree of involvement in journal publication (2 qstns)
 - use of others' scholarly output (4 qstns)
 - demographic information (7 qstns)
 - declaration (required)
 - thanks for participation

questions covered today

1. respondents per broad discipline
2. use of others' scientific works
3. current dissemination of own research prior to formal publication
4. general disposition towards OA methods of information dissemination
5. disposition to OA journals
6. creation/implementation of IRs
7. creation/implementation of ETDs
8. who should manage these archives (IRs / ETDs)
9. who should promulgate and fund OA

respondents per broad discipline

- majority of survey respondents were from:
 - Library– and Information services (33%);
 - the Computer Sciences and Information Systems disciplines (24%);
 - and Other (e.g. Non–governmental organizations which research ICT issues, and / or Information Technology units within Libraries) (24%).
- full respondent profile indicated in Fig.1 below.



Q30 recoded: N = 70

Q30 recoded

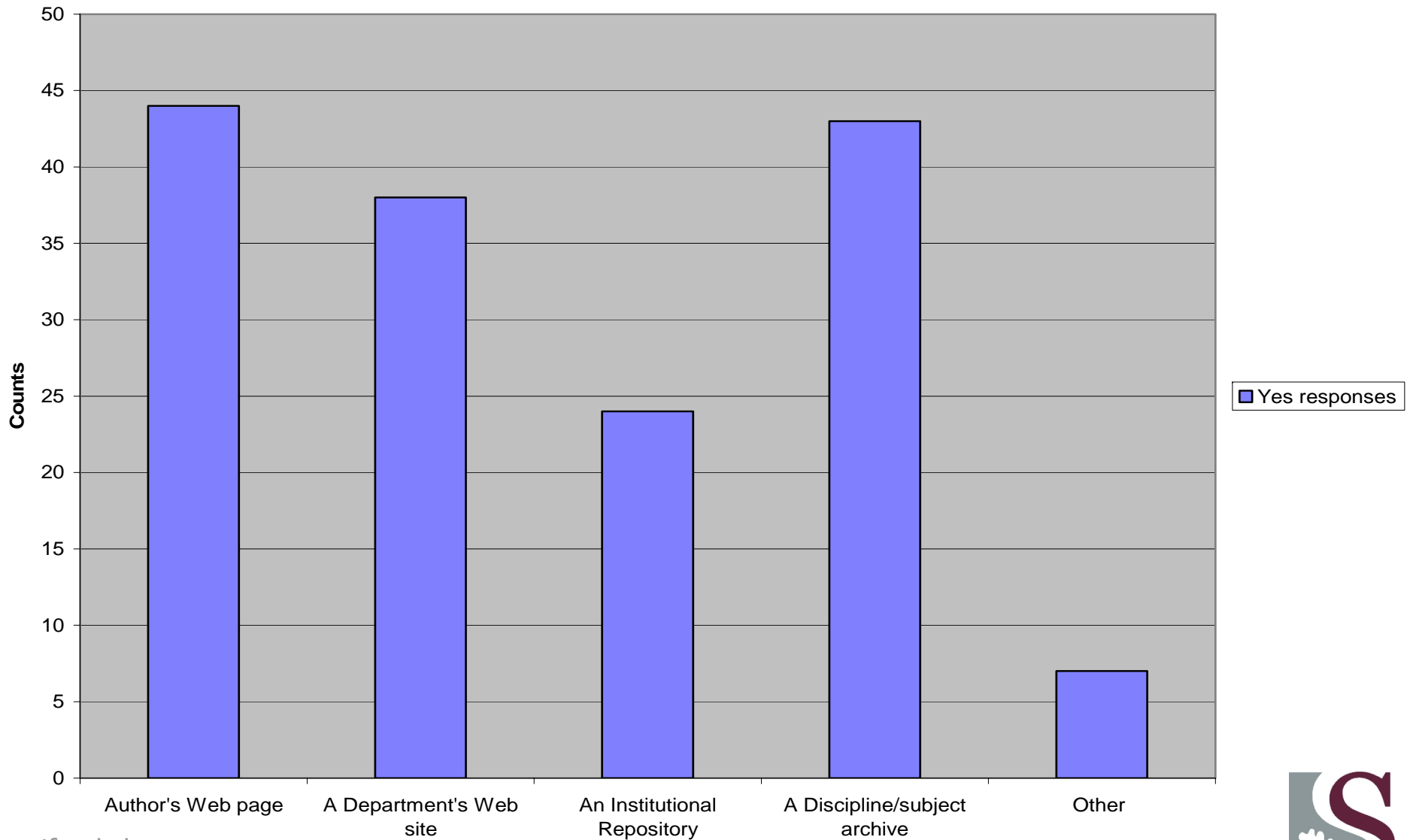
Fig. 1 – Respondents per broad discipline



use of scientific works of others made available via the World Wide Web

- 88% of respondents (N=72), did indeed make use of such freely available content,
- indicating further (N=64) that the preferred sources for such works were an author's Web page, and discipline/subject archives
- see Fig. 2 below.

Fig. 2 - Preferred sources for others' scientific works



current dissemination of own research output prior to its formal publication (1)

1. *How do you electronically disseminate or share the full text of your research output prior to its formal publication?*
(Please tick as appropriate— mark as many as apply)

I do not	<input type="checkbox"/>
My own personal Web page	<input type="checkbox"/>
On the Departmental Web site	<input type="checkbox"/>
On a freely available Institutional repository	<input type="checkbox"/>
On a freely available Disciplinary archive (e.g. NCSTRL, CoRR, E-LIS, DLIST)	<input type="checkbox"/>
On freely available (open access) electronic journals or conference proceedings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email (personal)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email (discussion list)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

current dissemination of own research output prior to its formal publication (2)

- preferred method for doing so was personal e-mail (49 % of respondents, N= 78)
- 26% of respondents (N=78) used personal or departmental web pages (secondary to e-mail then)
- neither should be read as a disinclination to making research available via other means or methods...

general disposition towards Open Access methods of information dissemination

- clear tendency to making already formally published articles (post-prints) available via Open Access journals
- & to making conference proceedings and research reports available via Institutional Repositories
- tendencies w.r.t. other types of research output can be seen in Table 1 below.

**Table 1- Disposition to making research available via Open Access methods
(N=71)**

	Institutional repository	Discipline/ subject repository	Personal / dept. homepage	Open Access journal	I would not make available
Letters to Editors	20	13	23	27	9
Review articles / opinion pieces	27	26	29	33	5
Data sets	19	11	19	10	13
Working papers	23	19	31	16	6
Journal papers (pre-prints)	20	19	26	25	10
Journal papers (post-prints)	26	27	28	39	6
Conference papers	32	31	31	33	3
Technical reports	24	21	27	23	4
Research reports	32	28	32	27	4
Book (chapters)	18	17	24	18	15
Book (complete volume)	15	15	10	13	20



Note:

Mode per method, per material/publication type is indicated in bold text above.

Counts/frequencies are indicated.

other findings (1)

- assessing disposition to Open Access journals,
 - 30% respondents (N=73) amenable to making their works available in OA journals, and
 - 13% indicated having already done so.

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5. Institutional electronic archives

18. Does your institution have an Institutional Repository (IR) (a central storage server for the management and dissemination of digital research materials created by the institution and its research staff, excluding Masters theses and Doctoral dissertations) ?
(Please tick as appropriate – mark only one; comments can be added)

- Yes, at present
- We plan to implement one
- No plans at present
- Comments?

19. Does your institution have an Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) Repository (a central storage server for the management and dissemination of postgraduate digital research materials created by the institution's Masters and Doctoral students, excluding works of research staff other than postgraduate students)
(Please tick as appropriate – mark only one, comments can be added)

- Yes, at present
- We plan to implement one
- No plans at present
- Comments?

20. Regardless of whether your institution has an ETD Repository, does your institution require the electronic submission of students' Masters theses and Doctoral dissertations, in addition to print submission? (Please tick as appropriate – mark only one)

- Yes, mandatory
- Yes, voluntary
- Yes, in near future (1 year)

other findings (2)

- creation / implementation of Institutional Repositories (N=72),
 - 13% have already implemented an IR at their institution;
 - 17% aware of plans for doing so, and;
 - 50% do not have such initiatives underway
- creation / implementation of ETDs (N=73)
 - 26% have already implemented an ETD at their institution;
 - 21% aware of plans for doing so, and;
 - 41% do not have such initiatives underway

other findings (3)

- who should manage these archives (IRs / ETDs) (N=72) (percent total: 100%)
 - 53% : the central library
 - 26% : pre-existing central structure
 - 15% : purpose-built central structure
 - 6% : a structure with connections to my faculty
- who should promulgate and find funding for OA (N=79) (percent total: >100%)
 - 75% : research institutions
 - 63% : governments
 - 61% : academic departments
 - 56% : professional associations / societies
 - 42% : funding agencies

discussion (1)

- large number of responses from LIS services: keen awareness of issues
- percentage of respondents from across the research disciplines indicates (notional/profound) awareness
- make postprints available via OA journals(?)
- levels of activity and investment in Open Access methods of information dissemination: **we have work to do!**

discussion (2)

- though 26% of respondents (N=78) reported making their research results available via personal or departmental web pages (secondary to e-mail then),
- significant that the more 'formal' means of doing so such as Institutional Repositories (9%) and Discipline/subject archives (1%) have not found a greater level of investment.

discussion (3)

- surprising!
- we have free software (e.g. e-prints, Dspace, etc)
- ever-expanding user-communities
- but note, there is a tendency to making information available about
 - types of research conducted, or
 - research areas covered, but
- rarely are the full-text provided.
- notable exceptions:
 - CS => UCT
 - ETD => RAU

survey limitations

- convenience samples indicative of range of opinions, but not the proportions in which those opinions are found (antonius, 2003: 116)
- response rate: difficult to calculate due to use of WWW (hewson et al, 2003: 38)
- non-response is not insignificant
- open-ended responses not coded
- requires augmentation by qualitative study

way forward

- we need a greater level of exploration of and investment in OA
- we need a debate in South Africa around scholarly communication, not just within libraries, but within academia

“In short, there is a serious problem, known best to librarians, and a beautiful solution, within the reach of scholars.”

Peter Suber, 2003

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speak and share findings

thank you

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