

## INTRODUCING E-LIS, THE REPOSITORY FOR LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

This article describes E-LIS, “the open archive for library and information science” (LIS) documents (<http://eprints.rclis.org/>). Library workers in Saskatchewan and elsewhere in Canada can deposit content into E-LIS and also use E-LIS as a search tool for LIS information.

A non-profit, volunteer-run project, E-LIS started in 2003 and is hosted by the Italian Consorzio Interuniversitario Lombardo per Elaborazione Automatica (CILEA). As of late November 2006, it contains over 4600 documents.

E-LIS can be seen as an element in the Open Access (OA) movement. The aim of OA is to make the recorded output of scholarship, much of which is publicly funded, freely available over the Internet. Presently, much of this information is hidden behind “tolls”, such as subscriptions and pay-per-view. This means that access to this content is largely limited to those who have a connection to an institution that can afford to purchase this material. There are two main arms of OA: open access publishing; and author self-archiving in repositories. The latter includes institution-based repositories (usually the institutions are universities) and subject-based repositories. E-LIS is a subject-based repository.

E-LIS contains content of many different types. Most of the submissions are journal articles or PowerPoint presentations but E-LIS also includes books, book chapters, conference posters, datasets, library instructional materials, and newspaper articles, among many others. PDF is the preferred format for submissions but other formats can be accepted as well. The submission process is easy and is designed to be carried out by an individual, normally the author. Submitted documents are approved by the main E-LIS editor for the author’s country and, unless there are problems, acceptance usually occurs quickly after submission.

Why would someone deposit an article or other material in E-LIS? What are the advantages to putting documents in this subject repository? There are four main advantages:

- 1) Deposition in E-LIS helps to “spread the word” about the research, writing, and presentations (and more) that occur in the library world. We do many interesting things in libraries but we often fail to report these activities beyond local circles. E-LIS provides another route for showing how libraries “do it good”.
- 2) Second, a document in E-LIS receives increased distribution, something that every author wants (if an author doesn’t want this, then why write, why publish?). Content in E-LIS is picked up by regular search engines and by OAlster (<http://oalster.umdl.umich.edu/o/oalster/>) a search tool that

concentrates on content in repositories. As a whole, E-LIS experiences heavy use; for example, in October 2006, E-LIS experienced 116,438 abstract views and 120,781 content downloads. Some items in E-LIS have been downloaded thousands of times.

- 3) Having a document in E-LIS gives the item a measure of preservation and backup. Even if an item can also be found in another repository, a little redundancy, just in case, is a good thing to have.
- 4) E-LIS helps in the growth of Open Access content, providing toll-free access for all readers. This is particularly helpful for those users who will never be able to afford to pay for toll-access content; because of E-LIS, the LIS material they need is easily available somewhere.

Outside of its role as a repository, E-LIS provides another useful service in that it can act much like a fulltext article abstracting and indexing tool. It can be searched easily and content retrieved without difficulty. It is also possible to set up email alerts in and RSS feeds from E-LIS; I regularly receive messages indicating that new material has been deposited in E-LIS that deals with subjects of interest to me.

There is one big question that hovers around repositories. Much of the material that is deposited in E-LIS and in similar archives is published items, mostly journal papers. How do the publishers feel about content that has appeared in their journals also being placed in repositories? The answer is that the majorities of publishers have no trouble with this and permit article preprints and/or postprints to be placed in institutional and/or subject repositories. To this point, there is no evidence to suggest that having journal content in repositories leads to a decline in subscriptions. A list of many publisher policies regarding repositories can be seen on the SHERPA site at <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php>.

In conclusion, I invite members of the Saskatchewan library community to deposit their writings, presentations, and more in E-LIS. Contributions are always welcome and will help this great resource grow.

I am a member of the Canadian editorial team for E-LIS. Questions and comments about E-LIS are always welcome. My contact information is:

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As of December 1, 2006, the new Chief E- LIS Editor for Canada will be Kumiko Vézina. She can be contacted at:

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