E-LIS: the Open Archive for Library and Information Science

http://eprints.rclis.org/

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The 2006 Charleston conference marks the beginning of a partnership; articles for the proceedings will be deposited in E-LIS for the first time, with the permission of the authors, of course. For E-LIS, this means the addition of many high-quality papers; for Charleston presenters and organizers, this adds the impact benefits of open access to the dissemination of work traditionally provided by the print proceedings. E-LIS is an open access archive for library and information studies. It is free for searching and depositing. As of January 2007, there are over 4,900 documents, all full-text, including peer-reviewed research articles, conference proceedings, working papers, and more. E-LIS is growing rapidly. E-LIS is hosted by the CILEA group in Italy, and managed by an international group of volunteer editors from over 40 countries. The archive supports 22 languages. There are many reasons to consider E-LIS as a search tool. E-LIS means access to more LIS literature, not only for the librarian in the smaller or more remote library, but even for the librarian in the large research library. Because E-LIS is a global collaboration, a search in E-LIS will bring results from many countries, a broader perspective than is typical with more traditional search tools in western countries. There are many reasons for authors to deposit in this open access archive, particularly enhancing impact, sharing our work with professional colleagues, and gaining expertise with self-archiving, so that we will be prepared to provide good advice to our faculty.

Overview

Founded in 2003, E-LIS is a collaboration of volunteer editors from 45 countries (as of October 2006). The archive, which uses the GNU E-Prints Software Version 2.3.3, is hosted by the AEPIC Team, CILEA (Italy). There is support for 22 languages, and the interface has been translated into 5 languages.

Why use E-LIS for searching?

For the searcher, E-LIS means access to more literature. This is true of the librarian in a developing country, or a smaller, poorer or remote library; however, even the librarian at the largest research library will have access to documents in E-LIS that would not be found in the local collections. E-LIS also means access to more in another sense. Results of a search in E-LIS are likely to include documents from many countries, reflecting many cultures and perspectives; a broader perspective, in other words, than a search in many of our customary search tools, likely to include only English-language materials.

There are many good reasons for authors to self-archive their work. First of all, there is the citation impact advantage, as illustrated by the works included in Steve Hitchcock's bibliography[1] of studies on the subject.

Self-archiving means conveniences for the author as well. For example, when a document is archived in E-LIS, a URL is automatically generated, which can be used to alert others to the author's work. The author also has ready access to their own work from wherever an internet connection is available. In addition, once an author has contributed a number of works to E-LIS, they will have a URL that links to all of their works at once. This URL can be inserted into a website or document; then, when the author adds more documents to E-LIS, the URL still links to the full collection of the authors' works, a kind of author's E-LIS. For example, an author search for Johnson, Richard (founding Executive Director of SPARC, the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition), yields a list of 10 documents by this author.

There are many more reasons for authors to consider self-archiving. Open access is the most effective way to disseminate or share your work; there are no barriers for anyone who would like to read it, except of course for the need for a computer and internet access.

Open access facilitates equity of access, one of the key values of librarianship. With paid access, there is unequal access. The librarian in a city university library, especially one at a university with a library school, has much more access to the LIS literature than a librarian at a small town college library, rural public library, or library in a developing country. Open access can be the basis for the development of evidence based practice for our profession[2].

Another reason for librarians to self-archive, is to gain expertise, so that as we help our faculty members with self-archiving, we will be familiar with the issues, software, and procedures.

Authors will appreciate a new E-LIS feature: download statistics. Authors can view how many times the abstract of their work has been viewed, and how many times the document has been downloaded. For example, statistics for the author's own article, *The dramatic growth of open access: implications and opportunities for resource sharing*. Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Delivery & Electronic Reserve 16(3). http://eprints.rclis.org/archive/00004558/, indicate over 800 abstract views and over 1,100 downloads of the article per se, as of January 2007. The largest number of downloads is from the U.S., with Canada close behind.

E-LIS accepts works from individual authors, and also works with journals and conference organizers for bulk loading of documents. For example, papers from the 69th Annual Meeting of the American Society for Information Science and Technology (ASIST) can be found in E-LIS at: http://eprints.rclis.org/view/conftitle/69th_Annual_Meeting_of_the_American_Society_for_Information_Science_and_Technology_=ASIST=.html

E-LIS is thrilled with the new partnership with the Charleston conference. We look forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship.

1. Hitchcock, Steve. The effect of open access and downloads ('hits') on citation impact: a bibliography of studies. http://opcit.eprints.org/oacitation-biblio.html (viewed January 16, 2007)

2.   Morrison, Heather (2006) Evidence based librarianship and open access. Evidence

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