

Institutional repositories and copyright in Greek academic libraries

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Received: 19 January 2022; **Accepted:** 1 February 2022; **First Published:** 15 May 2022

ABSTRACT

1 Institutional repositories were created to collect, preserve, and make available the academic institution's scientific output. The purpose of this study is to investigate and illustrate how Greek academic libraries with institutional repositories deal with copyright challenges. The study aims to identify and describe if institutional repository managers apply a certain copyright clearance protocol, the problems they encounter, and how they deal with them. For this study, a quantitative research method based on questionnaires was employed. The questionnaire consisted of twenty-nine (29) questions separated into three (3) sections and was sent to thirty-one (31) academic libraries.

2 According to the survey results, the majority of academic libraries have an institutional repository and provide open access to its content. It was found that academic institutional repositories face intellectual property difficulties. The biggest issue highlighted was a lack of knowledge of the notion of copyright. Finally, communication amongst libraries seems to be the foundation for developing a common policy and addressing the difficulties that have arisen in institutional repositories as a result of Greek copyright legislation limits.

KEYWORDS

Institutional repositories; Digital libraries; Intellectual property; Copyright clearance.

Introduction

- 3 One of the roles of libraries is to provide free access to information, either through traditional means (written material) or by access to electronic resources or digital collections. Several factors, including technological advancement and the open access (OA) movement, have driven libraries to alter their services and roles to suit the expectations of the new era in recent decades. The advancement of information and communication technology (ICT) has resulted in new instruments and opportunities for the creation and dissemination of knowledge. The OA movement has established new possibilities for making knowledge available not only to researchers but also to the general population (Björk 2016). In reaction to these changes, libraries have begun to create digital collections by digitizing items in their collections, taking advantage of the opportunities initially offered by technology. The content of these digital collections varies and typically consists of items that must be protected from frequent usage or items for which copyright protection has ended. With the rise of the OA movement, digital or institutional repositories were established, primarily by academic institutions, to gather, make available, and promote their institution's scientific activities (Marsh 2015).
- 4 Members of the academic institution are authorized to present and provide open access to their work in institutional repositories through the procedure of self-depositing, skipping the usual publishing process. Grey literature makes up a sizable component of institutional repositories' collections (Marsh 2015). Many academic institutions and researchers have been depositing their manuscripts in institutional repositories in recent years, based on the imperatives of the OA movement, so that knowledge can be made available to the research community without financial or other constraints (Björk 2016).
- 5 Intellectual property rights are one barrier to libraries' freely offering access to knowledge. Intellectual property rights cannot be ignored or suppressed; they were enacted to protect creators' work from being plagiarized and commercially exploited by others. But to what extent may intellectual property restrict the free dissemination of knowledge? As previously stated, the OA movement seeks to limit these restrictions, and libraries are important allies in this effort. The ambition to enhance an institutional repository's collection with publications deriving from the scientific activity of the academic institution's members occasionally conflicts with intellectual property rights. Writers' rights to their work, as well as agreements between authors and publishers, frequently make depositing a work in an institutional repository unappealing. Clearing the copyright of a work is the process of identifying the copyright holder(s) of a work and obtaining permission to publish it in an institutional repository. It is a complicated and time-consuming procedure, and it is one of the most difficult issues that libraries face (Macklin 2013; Dawson and Yang 2016).
- 6 Having the aforementioned in mind, the purpose of this study is to discover what procedures academic libraries use to resolve copyright issues in their repositories. Furthermore, this study will investigate whether institutional repositories adhere to a defined workflow for the clearance process, who is in charge of the clearance process, what kinds of problems arise, and what services or technologies they employ to facilitate the task of copyright clearance. It will also examine whether academic libraries communicate with one another about copyright issues and whether they have formed common methods or policies to resolve those issues.

Related work - Clearance of intellectual property rights

- 9 Looking through the literature on how institutional repositories deal with copyright issues, it appears that multiple methods of clearing copyright are documented, which are carried out by different groups of people. In the early years of institutional repositories' deployment, one of the most important criteria determining a repository's success was the clearance of intellectual property rights (Palmer et al. 2008). It was and still is a time-consuming and complex process, as a variety of issues, such as problematic communication between the author and the publisher (delay in responding to authors' queries, incomplete or ambiguous answers), very strict licensing conditions, and failure to keep proper records about the licenses granted, delay the clearance processes (Hanlon and Ramirez 2011).
- 10 But who is responsible for resolving the copyright riddle, the author or the institutional repository's library manager? In recent years, there has been a widespread belief that the obligation for copyright clearance lies with the authors. On the contrary, research suggests that the situation was different in the early years of the adoption of institutional repositories. In particular, it appears that in that era, librarians were in charge of copyright clearance procedures, even if the author was the one who submitted his/her work to the repository. They contacted publishers to learn about the agreements they had made with authors and recorded the policies of the publishers. Even if the repository's policy required the author to carry out the deposit (self-depositing process), librarians handled the copyright clearance (Hanlon and Ramirez 2011). However, as Dawson and Yang (2016) point out, in recent years, managers of institutional repositories, which are typically libraries, have been less involved in the copyright clearance process. Libraries have a management role in a repository that is related to the repository's technical operation or the provision of metadata. The author/depositor is responsible for deciding how to make the work available to the public, and if a publisher intervenes, libraries require authors to have obtained permission from the publisher to deposit their publication in the academic institution's repository. Indeed, Dawson and Yang (2016) discovered that the majority of libraries are not participating in the copyright clearance procedure after investigating the intellectual property policies of one hundred (100) US institutional repositories. Most institutional repositories provide information on copyright and the self-depositing process on their websites. However, a limited number of libraries take complete responsibility for copyright acquisition or have support staff available to authors to offer advice and guidance on publisher policies, and some libraries are willing to pay publishers to obtain the rights. In addition, some repositories provide a questionnaire to help authors explain copyright concerns during the depositing process to aid them in determining whether their work is subject to copyright during the depositing process. Finally, few libraries work with publishers on behalf of authors.
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- 14 The issue of copyright is critical for libraries because it affects many of the services they provide to the public. Library services such as digitization, lending of digital documents, and distribution of copies (photocopies) are provided in collaboration with copyright holders with whom they have achieved a monetary compensation agreement or, in some cases, an exemption from copyright limitations. Budget limits are also a recurring issue for libraries, posing a barrier to their function in providing access to knowledge. In response to this worry, research was conducted in the United Kingdom in 1993 on the impact of rising scholarly publication costs and

15 university library budget cuts (Muir 2019). The Follett Report (Brindley 2006) sought to study how information and communication technology could be deployed to university libraries to address these issues. One of the major issues addressed in the report's conclusions was the limitations imposed by copyright restrictions on information access. The Follett Report's findings and suggestions prompted the establishment of the eLib (Electronic Libraries) project, which aimed to fund several initiatives to assist academic libraries in integrating information and communication technology into their services (Muir 2019). Although efforts to collaborate with copyright holders and managers were limited within the initiative, two projects excelled in this area. The ACORN (Academic Course Readings via Networks) and SCOPE (SCottish On-demand Publishing Enterprise) programs. Both programs aim to give undergraduate students access to electronic resources (journal articles, books). This was accomplished through the employment of two distinct methods. On the one hand, they contacted publishers collectively, as was done with the ACORN program, where program administrators gained the trust of the publishers to participate in the program by working with a company that acted as an intermediary between the library and the publishers on subscription and copyright clearance issues. On the other hand, a strategy for copyright compensation was established, as was done in the SCOPE project. 17 Academic libraries essentially established a pricing model for copyright payments and negotiated the final price with each publisher separately.

Another service that has emerged and aids in the copyright clearance procedure is the SHERPA/RoMEO service. It gathers copyright policies from publishers. However, according to numerous users, the information it offers is not always sufficient. The reasons for this are primarily found in the fact that such services are frequently not properly informed about publishers' policies and the versions of publications that they allow for a deposit (e.g., post-print, pre-print, etc.), and they also do not provide accurate information about the text of the agreement between the publisher and the author (Hanlon and Ramirez 2011). When the information provided by the SHERPA/RoMEO service is insufficient, repository managers often make direct contact with publishers. According to Hanlon and Ramirez's (2011) survey, the majority of respondents contacted publishers for each publication individually. E-mail is commonly used for communication. They also reported that a small percentage sought and obtained general permission from the publisher to grant permission to deposit in the repository publications of researchers who had any form of collaboration with the academic institution. This way, they ensured that future publications by researchers could be deposited in the repository according to the terms of this agreement, thus reducing staff time spent on copyright clearance and avoiding frequent contact with publishers. Regardless of how they communicate and enter into an agreement with the publisher, several librarians reported keeping a record of their communication with publishers, and some others even attaching the publisher's permission with the file of the publication to the repository.

18 In another survey, Palmer et al. (2008) report that copyright clearance processes are time-consuming and reduce the success of a repository. As a result, they argue that copyright management strategies must become more automated and coordinated to provide a common ground for dealing with these issues, which will also increase the repository's impact. There are areas of the copyright clearance workflow that could be improved, such as the development of a standard form of communication with publishers, more regular communication on this topic among information scientists to handle difficulties jointly, and the development of common policies.