OPENACCESS.SI – Slovenian National Open Access Web Site

Case Study Overview
EIFL Open Access Programme
Open access advocacy campaigns to reach out to research communities

Identifying Quotation

Detailed and well-organized information at the openaccess.si web site will stimulate wider adoption of open access to publications and research data by all shareholders for the benefit of the increased visibility of Slovenian researchers.

Introduction

Within the research community in Slovenia, awareness about the importance of open access to the results of publicly financed research is generally low. There are no funder or institutional mandates for the deposit of publications or data from publicly financed research into open access repositories. None of the Slovenian higher education or research institutions has signed the open access declarations.

There are currently no OpenAIRE compliant repositories in Slovenia. The repository of the National and University Library, accessible through the Digital Library of Slovenia, the repository at the Digital Library of the University of Maribor, and the repository of the Faculty of Computer and Information Science of the University of Ljubljana are compliant with DRIVER Guidelines. Four other electronic theses and dissertations repositories are also in operation. Social Science Data Archives, a member of CESSDA, maintained by the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana, is collecting raw data from social sciences research.

The Research Infrastructure Development Plan 2011–2020 lists and briefly describes the important international and national research infrastructure priority areas. One of them is the establishment of the national open access infrastructure for the deposit of research data and publications from publicly financed research, linked to the national CRIS system (SICRIS). Deposit of data and publications will be made mandatory after the infrastructure is established.

The Slovenian Book Agency is co-financing a preliminary survey for the establishment of the Portal of Slovenian scientific and literary journals. Open Journal Systems has been proposed as the software platform.

From the above it is clear that there is constant need for advocacy to promote the importance of open access for the Slovenian research community. In February 2011, a meeting of representatives of the largest Slovenian research institutions and libraries was organized in order to discuss this issue. It was decided by consensus that developing a web site would be the most effective and flexible instrument for the promotion of open access in Slovenia.
Project Description

The consortium of thirteen largest research institutions and libraries has built a central national web site, providing quality information and guidelines on different aspects of open access in Slovenian language. Content of the web site is licenced with the Creative Commons Attribution license (CC BY), thereby enabling its further maximum use and unlimited distribution.

Actual vs. Proposed

The National Institute of Biology joined the project after the grant has been allocated. The consortium is therefore at the end of the project composed of all four universities, the six largest Slovenian research institutes and three research libraries.

There were no changes to the desired final outcome of the project, i.e., the establishment of a national web site with information for Slovenian open access shareholders. The stepwise building of the site proceeded as planned. However, since the participating library professionals were working for the project in addition to their regular work, slight delays occurred to the milestones, given in the application form. The content and web structure definition, technical development, and testing of the web site have been completed, while the promotion and evaluation are still being carried out.

Additionally to the proposed structure of the web site, a page in English language about the open access situation in Slovenia has been incorporated into the site.

Strategies, Tactic, and Tools

Primary intended audience of the project are researchers, research funders, and research policy makers. Each consortium partner brought into the project the expertise on the needs and modes of action and operation of one or more target groups. The wide network of collaborators and their enthusiasm were the key to our success. Since the grant covered only the server set up and web page design, all other activities (editorship, content provision, promotion, evaluation) were carried out within the collaborators’ free time.

Web site content was prepared in teams, each team covering one of the aspects of open access: open publications, open data, topics for researchers, international and national policies, and publishing practices. An FAQ section and a presentation of the state of open access in Slovenia in English language were included as well. Besides preparing the content, all collaborators were active in testing the web site prototype. They are currently actively evaluating it and disseminating the information on its establishment.

The web site was built using WordPress open source software. Web page design was outsourced to a web design studio. Coordination and communication was carried out by the project coordinator.
Key Benefits

A central national information point established through a coordinated approach on a national level. This is judged to be the most important benefit of our project. Before, the information on open access in Slovenian language was scarce and scattered, provided by individual enthusiastic advocates. Consequently, the usual misconceptions about open access were common among the research community.

Support of policy makers and funders. A very important aspect of the project was the attention, support, and cooperation of the main national actors in R&D: policy makers and funders. Though not formally listed as partners, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, and the Slovenian Research Agency actively supported the project. The Science and Technology Directorate at the Ministry also leased the openaccess.si domain.

An open access network. Important strength of the project is the cooperation of thirteen major Slovenian research institutions (universities, institutes and libraries), representing almost all active researchers in the country. For each institution, the permission to join the project was granted by its management (rectors, directors), which signifies their support of open access. Taking part in the project, the participants were acquainted with the idea and state-of-the-art of open access worldwide and in Slovenia. Relations were formed, resulting in a network that might have important influence on the development of open access in our country.

Better informed and proactive researchers; information available to scientific publishers, SMEs and lay public. The web site will enrich these shareholders with knowledge on open availability of publicly financed research results. It will especially assist the researchers in complying with open access mandates and scientific publishers in need of guidelines and standards for open publishing.

A core group of open access advocates. Another key benefit of the work on the project is the formation of a dedicated core group of open access advocates and promoters who will use the web site for further promotion of open access in Slovenia.

Lessons Learned

- In any project it is vital to clearly define its goals and plan its sustainability at the very beginning as well as choose the proper tools for the job.
- When the project is connected with research, it is very important to have a varied group of collaborators with different fields of expertise that can address the needs of different members of the research community.
- When building a web site, it is crucial to design a logical structure and a recognizable appearance, including a well-designed logo.
- For better performance it is advisable to hire a professional web site developer.
The Future

New content will be added to the web site as it becomes available and the structure of the site adjusted, if the need arises. The work on the project marks the beginning of the development of open access community in Slovenia, which will have the possibility to use the web site for practice, advocacy and promotion of open access in our country.

Project Cost

The grant funding allocated in the amount of 4,000 USD was used for covering the costs of the development of the web site. All other activities were donated to the cause by the collaborators and partnering institutions (e.g., editorship, content provision, promotion assistance, evaluation and travelling expenses).

Case study overview prepared by the consortium of thirteen institutions, collaborating in the project:

- University of Ljubljana
- University of Maribor
- University of Primorska
- University of Nova Gorica
- Jožef Stefan Institute (coordinator)
- Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts
- National Institute of Chemistry
- National Institute of Biology
- Institute of Oncology
- Agricultural Institute of Slovenia
- National and University Library
- Central Technological Library
- Library of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

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