

TRANSFORMING LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE RESEARCH THROUGH OPEN ACCESS FOR ENHANCED RESEARCH VISIBILITY AND IMPACT

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Abstract

The transformation of Library and Information Science (LIS) through open access (OA) has significantly altered the publication access, and utilization of research in the academic community. This study explores the potential of OA to enhance the visibility and impact of research in LIS based on previous empirical science and current observations of OA platforms. It discusses how open access has enabled a more equitable and inclusive exchange of LIS research, and enabled researchers and practitioners all over the world, including developing nations, to access valuable resources and partake in knowledge bases across the globe. Empirical science demonstrate that OA LIS publications have improved citation rates and increased scholarly usage compared to traditional subscription based publications. Open access repositories and institutional repositories have become the necessary tools for enhancing the visibility of LIS research, increasing its accessibility, and promoting international collaboration. Existing research also suggests that OA promotes transparency in research processes, makes ethical publishing models easier, and promotes the open science movement by making research reproducible and accessible to the public. This paper synthesizes key conclusions from the literature and offers the features of current OA platforms that raise research visibility and influence. It discusses the advantages and disadvantages of OA in LIS, with attention to its capability to transform the accessibility and breadth of LIS scholarship. The study concludes with recommendations for LIS professionals and scholars on how to leverage OA to maximize the global reach of their research and help shape an open, accessible system of scholarly communication in the future.

Keywords: *ethical publishing, institutional repositories, international collaboration, Library and Information Science, open access, open science, research visibility, scholarship impact*

Introduction

Over the last few years, higher education has undergone a significant transformation with open access being a significant key to altering the publication of research. Library and Information Science (LIS), being a profession entirely based on information management, access, and organization, has witnessed immense growth due to the integration of open access platforms. As scholarly communication moves toward more inclusive and global sharing, OA has been an effective tool for broadening the visibility and scope of research in the LIS community. Open access is a method of publishing research results on the web available at no

cost to anyone in the world who can access the web. OA's adoption was driven by needs for greater access, openness, and equity in research dissemination. In LIS, OA holds the promise of bridging gaps in knowledge for knowledge dissemination, particularly for scholars from developing nations. It also holds the promise to create a more open research environment (Suber, 2012). In the words of Piwowar, Priem, Larivière and Alperin (2018), OA articles are more frequently cited and used in research compared to pay walled versions, demonstrating its intrinsic role towards increased research visibility.

The major findings of current research emphasize the transformative potential of OA in LIS. In a study by Gupta and Paliwal (2020), open access repositories and institutional archives significantly increase the visibility of LIS research, making it more readily accessible to a global audience. This is particularly important in a field where research outcomes have a tendency to influence policy, practice, and education and timely access to information can directly influence decision making. Further support from a study by Greco, D'Andrea, and Carmichael (2019) indicates that OA journals in LIS not only increase citation rate but also promote greater global collaboration. These collaborative endeavors, facilitated by the open availability of research, help in developing global networks and creating more equitable knowledge systems. OA has also successfully supported research impact by providing equal access to frontier research to researchers from under represented regions and institutions (Alonso, 2021).

As demand increases for research that is distributable and high impact, open access has emerged as a LIS research revolution driver. It offers unmatched potential for ending historic publishing limitations, speeding scholarship dissemination, and facilitating a more global research landscape that is inclusive. However, despite the potentials, limitations such as low awareness, institutional resistance, and concerns about quality persist. This paper, therefore, has the objective of examining how open access is transforming LIS research through enhanced visibility, accessibility, and citation impact. It covers current trends, benefits, and open access adoption hindrances within the LIS community and provides evidence based recommendations on how to leverage open access in attaining optimum research dissemination and scholarly impact. By doing so, the paper aims to contribute to ongoing discussions of knowledge democratisation and the future of LIS research in a digital networked world.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the impact of open access on the visibility and citation of Library and Information Science research.
2. To examine the role of open access platforms and institutional repositories in promoting equitable access to LIS knowledge, particularly in developing countries.
3. To determine the strengths and weaknesses of open access in the context of ethical publishing and scholarly communication in LIS.
4. To provide recommendations to researchers and professionals in LIS on how to best use open access for optimum research dissemination, collaboration, and global impact.

Problem Statement

While open access is being ever more accepted in scholarly communication, researchers in Library and Information Science, particularly in developing countries, continue to face challenges in accessing, sharing, and making their work visible. Traditional subscription based models limit the reach and inclusiveness of LIS research, while acceptance of OA remains patchy across institutions and geographies. Furthermore, not much is understood about OA's general potential to transform research practices, boost citation success, and facilitate international collaboration in LIS. This study seeks to bridge these gaps by exploring how OA can be leveraged strategically to expand the visibility, openness, and influence of LIS research in an increasingly digital and networked scholarly landscape.

The evolution of open access in library and information science

The evolution of open access in Library and Information Science has witnessed transformative changes during the past two decades. OA as a mechanism for disseminating scholarly research has evolved as a response to rising costs of academic publishing, limited access to research, and the growing demand for open, transparent, and accessible knowledge. Its integration into LIS signifies a major paradigm shift in library and information professionals' practice of interacting with and participating in the global research base. The origins of OA in LIS date back to the late 20th century, when researchers and librarians started clamoring for more openness to scholarly study, which had historically been locked behind paywalls dominated by big publishing companies. The Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) of 2002 was a turning point in the evolution of OA. The BOAI's declaration promoted the free online access to scholarly literature, and it opened the door for the overall application of OA publishing models in various academic disciplines, such as LIS (Suber, 2012).

As the open access movement gained momentum, LIS professionals were some of the earliest advocates for OA repositories and institutional archives as vital instruments in research dissemination. Janssens, (2022) argues that institutional repository development became a milestone for the OA movement among LIS professionals, establishing a strong mechanism for authors to self-archive and distribute their work without charge to the global academic community. Repositories allowed researchers to publish their research in electronic formats accessible to all, bypassing the subscription based system prevalent in the traditional publishing environment. In LIS, open access journals and repositories emerged in tandem with advances in digital technologies and the growth of the internet. By the early 2000s, big databases such as the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) were available, providing one platform on which to discover and access OA content in a wide range of disciplines, including LIS. These platforms were central to main streaming OA journals as major, high quality sources of scholarly research. As observed by Laakso, Welling, Bukvova, Nyman, Björk and Hedlund (2011), OA journals in LIS have been characterized by their stringent peer review processes and the promotion of research visibility.

Existing research still supports the growing significance of OA in LIS, with particular focus on the growing visibility and citation advantage of OA research. A study by Piwowar et al. (2018) found that OA articles are much more cited than subscription based articles, which contributes to the academic success and global spread of LIS research. This is particularly so in LIS journals, where OA publications have become the mode of preference among scholars and practitioners. Piwowar's findings emphasize that OA not only makes research more accessible but also facilitates the scholarly engagement with science, creating a more networked international research community. Another investigation by Greco et al. (2019) demonstrated that OA for LIS facilitates international collaboration through the equitable sharing of access to science, regardless of geographical location or institution of origin. This is particularly significant for developing countries, as access to subscription journals is often limited. The study highlighted the realization that OA platforms, such as subject based archives and institutional repositories, provide a channel for democratizing access to knowledge and bridging the gap between researchers from around the world. The authors argue that this shift towards open access would lead the way towards more inclusive and equal global research cultures, one of the core

aims of the open science movement. Moreover, OA has impacted research dissemination and utilization in the LIS community critically. OA, as argued by Houghton (2015), not only enhances the dissemination of LIS research but also improves the effectiveness of knowledge exchange. Free access to research findings results in faster dissemination, thereby influencing practitioners, policy makers, and educators who make informed decisions based on up-to-date information. This immediate availability supports the function of LIS professionals in leading library customers to the latest and most related information.

OA has numerous advantages, but the OA movement within LIS has some challenges. One of the initial hindrances is the financial viability of OA journals and archives. Most OA sites are based on the model of free access; which usually experience financial difficulties because of the absence of subscription revenues. As such, there has been increasing reliance on author fees, which can be a deterrent to researchers with insufficient funding (Mosleh, Roshani and Coccia, 2022). In addition, the integrity of OA journals has also been a problem, with some researchers questioning whether OA journals utilize similar rigorous peer review processes as traditional journals (Björk et al., 2014). The future of OA in LIS is bright, however, with several efforts underway to bypass these hindrances. In the wake of the "Plan S" program, a movement launched by a coalition of research funders in 2018, wants every research funded by the public to be made available for publication in OA journals by 2024 (European Commission, 2018). This movement is set to further accelerate the switch towards OA publishing in LIS and other scholarly fields. Further, the growing acceptance of open data and open peer review frameworks may open new doors to enhancing transparency and cooperation within LIS research (Borgman, 2018). With the evolving nature of OA platforms, the future of LIS is promising. The growth of OA infrastructure, the rise of OA journals in LIS, and the development of funding agency support guarantee that OA will continue to be a pivotal force in LIS. Through OA, LIS will continue to expand the accessibility, visibility, and reach of research, leading to the growth and enhancement of the field.

Open access as a catalyst for enhancing research visibility in LIS

The open access movement has been a revolutionary force within the academic sector, particularly in the field of Library and Information Science. In making scholarly information freely accessible and without limitation, OA enables research to be read by the entire world, enhancing visibility, boosting citation rates, and promoting increased academic engagement.

Recent literature stresses the way in which OA platforms are revolutionizing the dissemination of LIS scholarship and are the passport to extending the scope of scholarship in the field. Perhaps one of the main benefits of OA is that it facilitates easier access for individuals worldwide to research, making geographical location, institution, and funds irrelevant. OA journals in LIS have reported across the board, higher levels of visibility than pay walled publications. In a systematic review conducted by Piwovar et al. (2018), the results showed that OA articles in various disciplines, including LIS, are more highly cited than their subscription counterparts. This increased visibility is a result of the ease of access provided by OA, which makes it possible for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers around the world to access the most recent LIS research without any impediments. In their report, Piwovar et al. (2018) note that OA articles are not only more frequently cited but also attract more readers. With easy access to OA research, there are higher possibilities of LIS scholars interacting with the research, hence stimulating intellectual debate and application of research findings in practical situations. OA in LIS has effectively enhanced channels of distribution for research and provided researchers coming from diverse groups with an opportunity to gain access to quality materials.

The Impact of Institutional Repositories and Digital Archives

Recent literature supports the role that institutional repositories (IR) and digital archives can play in amplifying the accessibility of LIS research. These websites are now the linchpin through which authors get to share their work with a wide audience, often to subscribers who otherwise could not afford to read professional publications. Crow (2002) suggests that IR are focal infrastructure for OA in that they enable LIS scholars to place their research, where upon it can be made free to anyone having internet access. These repositories not only raise the visibility of research but also allow LIS institutions to promote their scholarly output. In addition, OA platforms such as the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and Google Scholar provide one-stop access to scholarly content that enhances discoverability of research. These platforms have enhanced the visibility and accessibility of OA articles, and according to Laakso et al., (2011), this has made them more accessible across disciplines such as LIS. In their work, they point out how the increased number of OA repositories worldwide has played a major role in exposing LIS research so that scholars are able to disseminate their findings to a global community.

Open Access and Collaborative Research Networks

Evidence today indicates that OA is not only a tool for visibility but also brings about cooperation among global research communities. Greco et al. (2019) argue that OA enhances the potential of LIS scholars to engage with researchers from regions and institutions worldwide. They observe that OA's ease of international collaboration is particularly relevant to scholars from developing nations, where subscription journals are scarcely available. By making LIS research openly available, OA eliminates barriers to access and facilitates a diverse group of scholars and practitioners working together. The collaborative environment enables sharing of ideas which leads to more robust and effective research. OA also makes it possible to create collaborative research instruments such as open peer review and shared data, which are being used increasingly in LIS research. Its use of open peer review, in particular, has provided transparency in the reviewing process and enhanced the credibility and recognition of OA publications. Borgman (2018) asserts that more legitimization of research is made through the open peer review process, resulting in research getting extra attention and getting cited. As a result, OA not only makes the work more visible but also encourages increased interaction with the work, both from the academic community and beyond.

Growing Citation Rates and Intellectual Impact

Perhaps one of the strongest benefits of OA among LIS research is its association with increased citation rates. Numerous science have documented the positive relationship between OA publishing and increased citation impact. A research project by Houghton (2015) found that OA articles are cited more than non OA articles, particularly in fields such as LIS, since research is widely conducted in the actual world in libraries, archives, and information management systems. OA facilitates quicker dissemination, which is paramount in a field as dynamic as LIS, where every now and then, there are new technologies and methods developed. According to Björk et al. (2014), OA model published research articles are more discoverable and cited because they are read more and readily available. This is especially crucial for LIS researchers who rely on the widespread dissemination of their outputs to influence policy and practice. OA platforms, through increased visibility of research, enable LIS researchers to contribute more significantly to the discipline and beyond, to those groups of people who otherwise might not have been able to access their research.

Open Access and the Role of Libraries in Promoting Visibility

Libraries are also leaders in the open access movement, both through facilitating OA publishing and making LIS research more visible by promoting and managing resources. Library professionals have played a critical role in the push for OA, championing open access efforts in academic libraries and advocating for LIS research visibility and accessibility to the world beyond. According to a study by Gupta and Paliwal (2020), libraries have been at the forefront in disseminating OA journals and repositories, helping LIS researchers achieve success within the OA setup and raise the profile of their publications. Libraries have further helped by establishing institutional repositories and hosting OA websites, adding to the dissemination and exposure of LIS science. Through the provision of upload facilities for research materials to OA sites, libraries increase the visibility and availability of LIS content, making research easily accessible to scholars and practitioners alike. As Gupta and Paliwal (2020) indicate, libraries are central to the OA environment, serving as go betweens between researchers and international readers, and thus increasing the influence of LIS research.

Barriers to open access adoption in library and information science

The open access revolution has been gaining significant momentum throughout academia, and even in Library and Information Science. Nevertheless, despite its potential to open research to all, a number of challenges are in the way of OA adoption. Recent research indicates ongoing challenges for LIS researchers, researchers, and institutions to adopt OA in full swing. Financial constraints remain one of the largest challenges in OA adoption. Current science have shown that OA transition typically involves high initial costs, particularly to journals and institutions. According to a study conducted by Alzahrani and Luyt, (2023) LIS researchers in most developing countries face serious budget constraints in utilizing OA platforms due to the high article processing charges (APCs) incurred when publishing in top ranked journals. The cost of publishing in OA journals is prohibitive for researchers in institutions with limited funds, thereby hindering the application of OA models. Alzahrani and Luyt (2023) state that "while the use of open access publishing has grown globally, financial limitations continue to be a powerful obstacle for researchers, particularly in developing nations." Similarly, a study by Noh and Lee (2022) explored the attitudes of LIS researchers in South Korea and found that economic challenges, particularly the inability of libraries to cover

APC, was a primary obstacle to the uptake of OA. These findings reflect a greater issue in most countries where OA journals take high fees that most researchers and libraries cannot afford.

Institutional and policy constraints also play a major role in hindering the widespread uptake of OA in LIS. Current research indicates how a lack of defined institutional policy regarding OA and scholarly publishing can be a barrier to change towards OA models. It has been analyzed in a study by Piro, García, and López (2024) on the institutional issues in Spain, where most LIS departments continue to function in the conventional publishing paradigm with no encouragement or transparent direction for OA implementation. Piro et al. (2024) emphasize that "without institutional policies and strategies that encourage open access publishing, researchers are unlikely to shift away from the conventional subscription based models that have long dominated academic publishing." Furthermore, a study by Khine and Lee (2023), examined the barriers to OA adoption among university libraries in the Middle East. The authors found that while there were some universities that had adopted OA policies; they lacked the infrastructure that would allow them to facilitate OA publishing, e.g., repository systems and OA journal access. Khine and Lee (2023) assert that "institutions need to invest in both technical infrastructure and policy frameworks to effectively facilitate the adoption of open access models.

One of the challenges to OA adoption in LIS research is the perception that OA journals are not so good or high quality as traditional subscription journals. This was indicated by a 2024 study by Zhang and Wu in their research on opinions about OA in Chinese universities. The authors discovered that numerous LIS researchers in China were hesitant to publish in OA journals because of the perceived lower impact factor and academic standing of such journals. According to Zhang and Wu (2024), "there is a lingering belief among LIS scholars that OA journals are not as academically rigorous as traditional publishers, discouraging scholars from publishing their research in OA outlets." This perception is shared by the findings of a study by Gomez and Martinez, (2023) where they conducted a survey of LIS researchers in Latin America. They discovered that the fear of intellectual exclusion due to publishing in OA journals was a significant barrier to OA adoption. The study concluded that "the reputation of journals, in particular in the LIS discipline, continues to be an important consideration in determining whether scholars opt for open access channels.

Copyright and licensing concerns are another significant barrier to OA adoption. Most LIS researchers are confused about how to cope with the intricacies of copyright law and licensing while making their research openly accessible. Recent research has investigated the ways these issues can be barriers to OA adoption, especially when authors are concerned about losing control over their intellectual property. A 2023 study by Rizzo and Cortés (2023) investigated the legal challenges of OA adoption in LIS research and found that "a lack of clear understanding regarding copyright and licensing options is a significant hurdle for LIS researchers looking to publish in OA formats." Rizzo and Cortés (2023) identify that while many OA journals have adopted Creative Commons licenses, the complexity of such licenses leads to authors' confusion, and so they are reluctant to submit to OA journals. They suggest that the availability of more explicit training and guidance on copyright issues could serve to minimize such problems and prompt more LIS researchers to take up OA publishing.

Technological challenges, in particular, digital literacy, also threaten OA uptake in LIS. Lee et al. (2022) found that some LIS researchers, particularly those in rural or developing areas, lack access to the technology and digital tools required for OA publishing. This digital divide is particularly significant in developing countries, where poor internet infrastructure and research platforms restrict the ability of LIS researchers to contribute to OA literature. Besides, a research by Zhang and Wang (2023) highlighted that digital literacy among LIS educators is crucial for successful OA implementation. Based on the research, LIS educators with little knowledge of OA publishing platforms and digital tools were less likely to incorporate OA into their curricula, thereby hindering the overall adoption of OA in the field. The authors affirm that "increasing digital literacy among LIS researchers and faculty members is a required step to surmounting technology hurdles to OA adoption.

Existing evidence also suggests various possible solutions to the barriers against facilitating OA adoption in LIS. The economic barrier could be tackled by the implementation of institutional funds or national programs to support APCs, as suggested by Alzahrani and Luyt (2023). Specific institutional policies promoting OA publication, such as article deposit mandates in institutional repositories, can help bridge institutional as well as cost barriers (Piro et al., 2024). To address the voiced concerns about the perceived quality and prestige of OA journals, efforts should be directed towards increasing the visibility and impact of OA LIS

journals. Zhang and Wu (2024) suggest that ensuring the use of quality assurance methods and promoting the benefits of OA, such as greater dissemination and citation, would encourage researchers' attitudes towards OA. Further, education in copyrights and licensing as well as training in digital equipment and platforms offered would overcome legal and technical hurdles to OA in LIS (Rizzo & Cortés, 2023; Zhang & Wang, 2023).

The Impact of Open Access on Scholarly Communication in Library and Information Science

Because the LIS profession is fundamentally concerned with access to and dissemination of information, the advent of OA has far reaching consequences for research production, dissemination, and utilization. Glimpses into emerging trends point to OA reassure academic visibility, collaborative practices, and knowledge democratization in LIS.

Democratization of Knowledge

Democratization of knowledge is among the most pervasive impacts of OA. A study by Ferreira and Santos (2023) found that OA has significantly decreased the entry barriers to accessing LIS research, especially to researchers from low and middle income countries. They reported that "open access has empowered researchers who had previously not been able to pay subscription fees, thereby creating a more level playing field scholarly communication system" (Ferreira & Santos, 2023). Also, OA platforms have allowed LIS practitioners outside the academic sphere such as public librarians and information officers to engage more substantively with scholarly literature, supporting practice based innovation and knowledge.

Greater Research Visibility and Citations

Numerous science confirm that open access heightens the visibility and citations of scholarly literature. A meta analysis by Ahmed et al. (2024) of LIS journals revealed that OA articles were 45% more cited than paywall articles. According to Ahmed et al. (2024), the open accessibility of research articles not only broadens readership but also accelerates the diffusion of new knowledge across disciplines. This "visibility advantage" helps early career researchers, junior researchers, and researchers in smaller institutions to become recognized more rapidly, ultimately helping academic careers and collaborations.

Acceleration of Collaborative Research

Open Access has facilitated more opportunities for collaboration in LIS. Based on research by Brown and Huang (2022), OA platforms make global and interdisciplinary

collaborations possible by breaking down access barriers. The research showed that "collaborative publications were 60% more common among authors who publish most frequently in open access journals than among authors who prefer the traditional model" (Brown & Huang, 2022). This shift towards more collaborative LIS scholarship has facilitated greater cross fertilization of ideas between subfields such as information science, archival science, and digital humanities.

Evolution of Publishing Practices

The publishing landscape in LIS has been greatly altered. OA journals have increasingly adopted new models such as preprints, post publication peer review, and data sharing mandates. As explained by López-González and Petric (2025), "the dissemination of OA practices has challenged traditional LIS journals to reinvent their publishing models to stay relevant in an increasingly open scholarship environment. This shift dismantles outdated assumptions of prestige on the basis of subscription journal listings alone, introducing fresh values of accessibility, openness, and social benefit.

Challenges and New Inequalities

While it has offered numerous benefits, OA has also introduced new challenges. One of the biggest problems is the growth of "predatory journals" that exploit the OA model for financial benefit without providing proper peer review. A study by Osakwe and Ndlovu, (2023) observes that LIS researchers, especially early career researchers, are still vulnerable to predatory actions due to the need to publish openly. Also, while OA enhances access, APCs create economic barriers to certain authors, potentially replacing the "reader pays" model with an "author pays" model, which can be detrimental to researchers from underfunded institutions (Osakwe & Ndlovu, 2023).

Shaping the Future of Scholarly Communication

In the coming years, OA will continue to influence scholarly communication in LIS profoundly. The transition towards Plan S compliance, transformative agreements, and the addition of OA mandates by institutions and funders show that in the near future OA would be the norm rather than the exception. According to the European Open Science Cloud report (2024), "open science and open access will become the normative framework for all scholarly communications

How Open Access Facilitates Global Research Partnerships in Library and Information Science

Open Access (OA) has proved to be an effective driver of collaborative research partnerships across the globe, especially in Library and Information Science. By eliminating paywalls and subscription barriers, OA has created avenues for cross-continent research collaboration among scholars to create a more richly textured and diverse global research community. Existing evidence shows that Open Access strongly increases the visibility and availability of scholarly materials, leading to increased collaboration. According to a report by the LIS Education and Research Network (LiSEdunetwork, 2024), "Open Access initiatives are democratizing knowledge exchange by making research outputs freely available to all, irrespective of institutional affiliation or geographic location."

Such an open environment allows LIS researchers from resource poor regions to contribute to and benefit from global scholarly discussions, thus promoting collaborations that were previously limited because of economic and infrastructural limitations (LiSEdunetwork, 2024). Of particular concern here is the increased African research visibility in Open Access. Specifically, Taylor & Francis's report of 2024 confirmed that the number of articles authored by Africans published on OA had grown by 20% annually in the last two years. The report quotes that "Open Access partnerships are key to increasing the global impact of African research," reporting that 'Read and Publish' agreements have allowed African institutions to allow their researchers to engage in international research discussions (Taylor & Francis Newsroom, 2024).

Libraries have also played an integral part in promoting OA to create worldwide collaboration. Research published by IGI Global (2024) indicates that librarians are not only advocating for Open Access but also act as intermediaries by leading researchers through publishing routes, securing funds for publication expenses, and building institutional repositories. As per IGI Global, "Librarians are the unsung heroes of the OA movement, creating infrastructures that enable cross border research collaborations" (IGI Global, 2024). A shining example of regional cooperation led by OA is the LIBSENSE project for West and Central Africa. LIBSENSE brings together libraries, research institutions, and education networks to develop Open Science policies and infrastructures. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) states, "LIBSENSE has shown that collaborative Open Access models can empower regions that have traditionally been under represented in

international research to lead new initiatives and contribute meaningfully to global knowledge creation" (IFLA, 2024).

Despite these promising strides, there remain challenges. Nigerian universities were subject to a research study by Onyebinama and others (2024), which reported a lack of joint research between librarians and lecturers. In the report, it was reported, "Collaborative research among LIS professionals is important but underdeveloped; Open Access offers a beginning but needs to be followed up with institutional support and professional development programs" (Emerald Insight, 2024). Momentum worldwide in Open Access's favour is also mounting. UNESCO's 2024 launch of the Global Alliance of OA Scholarly Communication Platforms (GLOALL) is a milestone step toward democratizing knowledge. UNESCO argues that "Open Access is critical to ensuring that scientific and scholarly knowledge becomes a true global public good" (UNESCO, 2024). Current evidence emphasizes that Open Access not only revolutionizes scholarly communication but also is a major catalyst of global collaborations in research throughout Library and Information Science. It enhances access, aids in equity, and promotes collaboration across national and institutional boundaries, thereby establishing a more united and innovative global research community.

Legal, Ethical, and Copyright Considerations in Open Access Publishing for Library and Information Science Research

Open Access (OA) publishing has a number of benefits for the field of Library and Information Science (LIS), including broader dissemination and greater impact of research. However, engaging with OA publishing also engages researchers in complex legal, ethical, and copyright issues to ensure responsible and sustainable scholarly communication.

Legal Considerations

Copyright law compliance is one of the most important legal considerations of OA publishing. In traditional publishing, authors typically transfer their copyright to publishers, limiting their permission to distribute or reuse their own work. In Open Access models, however, authors typically retain some or all of their rights. Creative Commons (CC) licenses are often used in OA publishing to establish permissions in the use, redistribution, and adaptation of a work. According to Suber (2012), "Choosing an appropriate open license is crucial because it determines the legal freedoms granted to readers and researchers. Besides, different countries have different copyright acts and intellectual property legislation, making international

collaborations difficult. LIS researchers must ensure their work remains compliant with national as well as global legalities while publishing or going public with research. Libraries and institutions are likely to be focal agencies in providing consultation and legal advice to researchers working in these complex areas.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines in OA publishing involve transparency, equity, and integrity in knowledge sharing. Among the major ethical concerns is the emergence of "predatory publishers" that are institutions which exploit the OA model by charging publication fees without providing real editorial and peer review services. For Beall (2015), "Predatory journals damage the scholarly record by publishing unchecked and often substandard research. To LIS researchers, the maintenance of ethics means taking careful decisions of quality OA journals with rigorous peer review processes, declaring sources of finance and actual conflict of interests. Ethical publication through OA also involves maintaining privacy and research subjects' data as well as ensuring that information discovered through the channel of OA is anonymized and agreed to. But yet another moral obligation is ensuring fair share in OA publishing. According to Poynder (2016), "The true promise of Open Access is not just free access to knowledge, but also the opportunity for scholars from less advantaged institutions and countries to contribute to and shape the scholarly conversation."

Copyright Considerations

Copyright management is the core of Open Access publishing. LIS researchers should be aware of their rights to authorship, ownership, and reuse of their publications. With the use of Creative Commons licenses such as CC-BY (Attribution), CC-BY-SA (Attribution-Share Alike), or CC-BY-NC (Attribution-Non Commercial), authors can exercise control over how others use their research. One significant decision researchers have is whether to retain all rights to copyright and license their work as OA or relinquish some rights to a publisher under particular conditions. A widely used tool is Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) Author Addendum, which allows authors to negotiate publisher contracts in order to retain substantial rights, such as posting the article in an institutional repository or for educational use (SPARC, 2020). Furthermore, LIS researchers should remember third party content included in their publication whether a figure, table, or quotation from another publication which may entail permission except under fair use or similar provisions.

Mismanagement of third party rights can result in legal problems and retraction of the published work.

Recommendations

1. Training and sensitisation exercises should be carried out regularly by professional bodies and institutions to raise awareness and knowledge on open access publishing, repositories, and licensing (e.g., Creative Commons).
2. Policies mandating or encouraging the deposition of research outputs in institutional repositories should be set or revised by research institutions and university libraries.
3. Funding bodies and academic promotion must recognize and reward researchers who make their publications visible and their research of high impact in reputable open access high visibility journals.
4. Libraries need to take the lead in developing easy-to-use, interoperable institutional repositories that will render locally generated LIS research visible, accessible, and discoverable to the global audience.
5. Open access needs to be leveraged as a strategy for enhancing cross-institutional and cross-border collaboration in LIS research, and for advancing knowledge sharing and mutual visibility across borders.
6. Institutions should implement mechanisms to assess regularly the effectiveness of their open access initiatives, using metrics such as citation counts, download statistics, and altimetric to track the visibility and impact of LIS research outputs.

Conclusion

The configuration of Library and Information Science (LIS) by Open Access (OA) is a deep transformation towards a more varied, visible, and effective research environment. By removing traditional barriers to knowledge dissemination, Open Access has expanded the global reach of LIS research, enabling researchers from various geographical and institutional backgrounds to contribute to and benefit from shared knowledge. This study has shown that OA not only makes research outputs more visible individually but also optimizes their social and scholarly impact by enabling collaboration, accelerating innovation, and enhancing evidence-based decision making. Moreover, Open Access allows LIS professionals to fulfill their ethical responsibility of universal access to information and therefore align themselves with the core

values of the profession. However, the shift to Open Access also requires ongoing attention to legal, ethical, and infrastructural concerns, including viable business models, copyright, and quality control of OA platforms. As Open Access continues to evolve, it requires concerted efforts from researchers, librarians, policymakers, and universities to develop robust frameworks that maximize its benefits while guarding scholarly integrity.

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