Grey literature, green open access: the BLDS Digital Library

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Rationale

By making available research generated in poor countries in addition to knowledge created in well-endowed institutions, IRs could play a role in bridging the global knowledge gap. Research institutions and universities have the primary mission of creating, sharing, and disseminating knowledge, which are public goods. Open access through institutional repositories is a low-cost and low-barrier strategy for achieving this mission.

(Chan, 2004, p.295)
The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) was founded in 1966 on the campus of the University of Sussex.

Six research teams, eight postgraduate courses, and a family of knowledge services working on global economic development and social change.

The British Library for Development Studies (BLDS) serves as the IDS library but is open to all.

Partly funded by the Department of International Development and others to work on international projects.
Our collection

- National and international resource for development studies
- Over 200,000 titles, 1 million physical items
- 60% published in developing countries
- High proportion of unique holdings including grey literature
- = good candidates for digitisation
Grey literature in repositories

55% of all repositories in OpenDOAR contain theses and dissertations, 37% contain unpublished reports and working papers, and 35% contain conference and workshop papers.

From OpenDOAR 19/5/14

Downloads per item are often higher for grey literature than for published articles. (Schopfel et al., 2012)

“grey literature,” which libraries used to receive from departments and research centers in paper, now often exist[s] only on the web; the risk of loss is great if there is not an archival system like an IR in place. (Kennison et al., 2013, p.1-2)
Project background and funding

- **Mobilizing Knowledge for Development (2010-2013)**
  - improving the profile and accessibility of Southern development research
  - digitisation of BLDS holdings
  - BLDS Digital Library on DSpace

- **Global Open Knowledge Hub (2013-2016)**
  - supporting local (Southern) digitisation
  - IDS institutional repository (OpenDocs) linkages
Our approach

- What’s not already online/widely distributed?
- Low hanging copyright fruit
- Focus countries in Africa and South Asia
- IDS research themes
- Openness – CC By-NC-ND compromise
Our partners

22 universities and research institutes based in

Bangladesh  Botswana
Ethiopia  Kenya
India  Pakistan
Philippines  South Africa
Tanzania  Uganda
Zambia  Zimbabwe
Partner benefits?

- 13 of our 22 partners already share all or some of the publications contributed to the BLDS Digital Library on their own websites
- 4 have not digitised anything from scratch as part of this project
- 4 have their own repository
- So what are the advantages to joining the BLDS Digital Library as well?
General repository benefits

- **Discoverability**
  - Searchable
  - Indexed by Google Scholar
  - Harvestable metadata created for each publication

- **Preservation**
  - Long-term storage of file information
  - Unique identifiers

- **Openness**
  - Freely available to target audiences (NGOs, practitioners, policy makers etc).
  - Reusable through open licensing and OAI-PMH

- **Licensing**
  - Licensing/reuse terms under Creative Commons are explicit
Specific BLDS Digital Library benefits

**Discoverability**
- Provided over fast internet connection
- Two-way links with BLDS OPAC records where print copy held
- Soon to be searchable directly via our VuFind resource discovery tool

**Preservation**
- Unlimited server space
- Stable infrastructure

**Authority**
- Association with IDS and BLDS brands
- Association with other organisations in the Digital Library
- Quality and rights control provided by BLDS librarians

**Metrics**
- All abstract views and download statistics are publicly available
- BLDS can provide custom statistics on request
Community benefits

- OpenDocs enriched as a repository – not just institutional.
- Wide range of research/voices in one place.
- Brings together dispersed outputs (‘development studies’ umbrella).
- Equity for Southern-produced research.
Content and usage

- 2595 full-text documents all CC By-NC-ND
- 15000 downloads per month on average
- As proportion of total repository downloads – more popular than our institutional content
- Accessed more by users in Africa and Asia
Citation advantage

- Paper in BLDS Digital Library\(^1\) – 49 citations since deposit in June 2013
- Paper by same author in African Development Review (Wiley paywalled journal)\(^2\) – no citations since publication in March 2013

From Google Scholar 3/6/14


Sustainability

• Our funding ends in 2016 – what next?
• Secure IDS institutional infrastructure (shared DSpace)
• Potentially self-sustaining, but…
• …requires internal institutional capacity of partners
Issues, barriers and lessons learned

- Permission seeking
  - non-response
  - licensing and IP/revenue protection
- Institutional politics
- Resource-poor contexts
- Partner needs vs funder restrictions
References


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