

# ANALYSIS OF THE DEGREE OF INFORMING OF THE USERS OF THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY CONCERNING THE INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORY

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**Introduction.** In the digital age, the commitment of a scientific publication is to circulate as much as possible, including exploring new publishing technologies and economic models to improve access to scientific publications. Open Access (OA) can stimulate the exchange of information and knowledge in the education and science communities.

University libraries are at the forefront of the Open Access to information movement. OA has numerous impacts on university libraries: economic, technological, information collection and management, reference services, information literacy. For university libraries OA is a prerequisite for surviving and prospering at the present stage. Due to the strong link between open access and the mission of the library, it is not surprising that libraries are involved in a wide range of activities related to open access (Țurcan 2012).

Institutional repositories, a new phenomenon in the scientific community of the 21st century, become an indispensable element in the scientific activity of any university. Repositories, which have emerged in the information space of the Republic of Moldova in the last decade, are becoming more and more popular among teachers, researchers, PhD and masters students, specialists in libraries.

The advantages of the institutional repositories are: opening, creating a unitary electronic collection of scientific materials of universities, promoting them in the international scientific community, promoting researchers and their publications, increasing the citation index of scientific articles, etc.

By creating and disseminating new knowledge, universities accumulate the intellectual capital of the country, which also includes

research capital. By taking the first steps in creating institutional repositories within the projects, the university libraries face some difficulties in creating, managing, completing and promoting this innovative information product (Волкова 2014).

Any new product based on modern technologies is difficult to implement on the market, even if its advantages are obvious. The society is accustomed to solving the same problems in the traditional way and it is difficult to convince it to adopt a new way to meet the existing need.

To create and successfully develop institutional repositories significant resources are needed: intellectual, financial, creative, time. As a rule, the creation of institutional repositories in the Republic of Moldova was initiated within the international projects. Further the objectives regarding the development, management and promotion of electronic archives will be assumed entirely by librarians (Railean 2017).

The management of the institutional repositories is successfully done, relying practically exclusively on the enthusiasm of the librarians, without financial and technical support from the university management.

We also mention that in the last 3 years in the academic community there has been an increased interest in open systems and platforms that ensure the visibility of institutions. Thus, the Doctoral School of the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova obligated all PhD students to publish their articles, abstract of dissertation thesis and doctoral thesis in the IREK institutional repository. Due to such actions, the coordination of the activity of the different departments of the institution regarding the promotion of this innovative information product is intensified [1].

Specialists in university libraries use various tools to promote this informational product for all categories of researchers and teachers, including among university administrations, but promotion techniques do not always meet current requirements and need adjustments.

**Identification of the degree of informing of the PhD students and of the thesis supervisors regarding the institutional repository.** There is an assumption that some of the information about the repository and its potential does not reach the recipients, which requires optimization of the promotion program of the IREK digital repository.

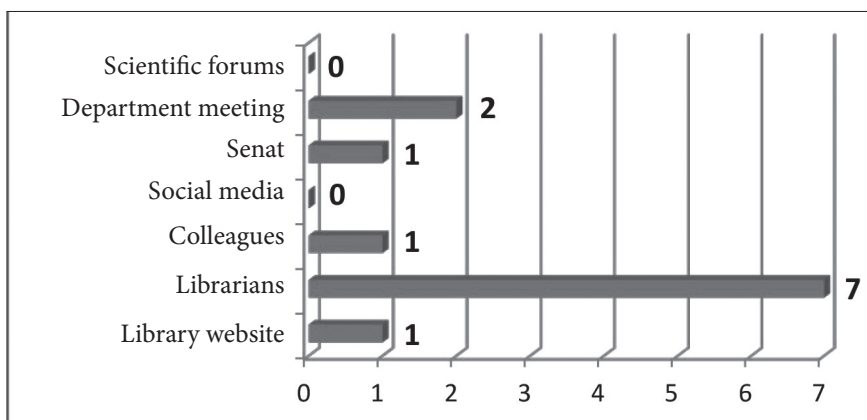
In a survey (focus group) conducted in 2018, were identified the level of informing and the respondents' opinions regarding the institutional repository of AESM - IREK. PhD students and thesis coordinators were interviewed; the survey included seven questions about the IREK repository.

The aim of the study was to popularize the IREK institutional repository and, therefore, to optimize the activity of publishing in open access of AESM employees. The objectives of the study were:

1. Identification of the degree of informing of the PhD students and of the thesis coordinators regarding the IREK institutional repository;
2. Increasing the level of informing of the academic community on the advantages of publishing in open access;
3. Determining respondents' preferences regarding channels and forms of information promotion;
4. Developing of a program to promote the IREK institutional repository.

To the question *“Do you know about the existence of the institutional repository on the AESM Scientific Library website?”*, 12 respondents answered in the affirmative, 3 - negative. Among the respondents who answered negative are two thesis coordinators and one PhD student. Thesis coordinators mentioned that they are integrated in several scientific activities compared to other groups of users. For these reasons, the information about the IREK institutional repository was not received by them. A PhD student who did not have the information about the existence of the institutional repository of AESM was from the first year of part-time studies and stated that he has not yet encountered the publication online in open access.

Analysis of the answers to the question *“Where did you find out about the existence of the institutional repository in your organization”* configured the following results (Fig. 1):



**Fig. 1: The source of information about the existence of the institutional repository of the organization. N = 15**

Thus, it can be stated that the main source of information about the IREK institutional repository are the librarians, who constantly inform the PhD students both at the lectures within the Information Literacy course and through individual consultations on the new information product and its implementation in the academic practice.

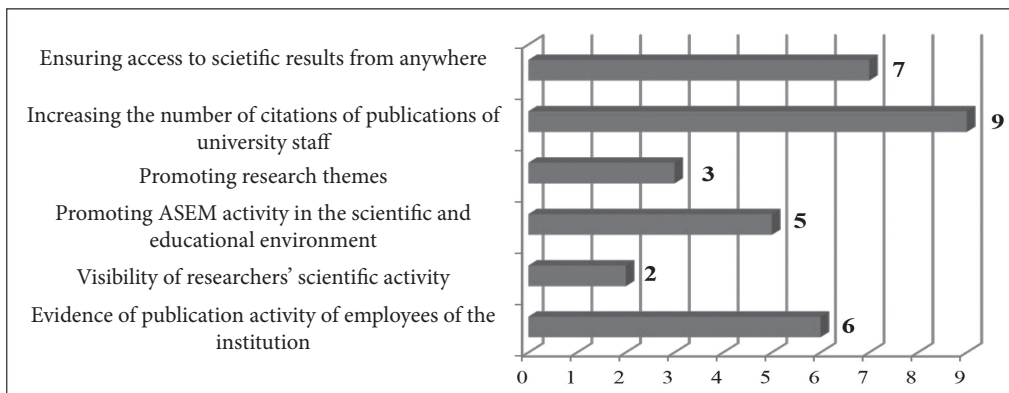
The meetings of the departments (chairs) are also used by librarians as a communication channel, through which the digital repository is actively promoted. Thus, informing of 2 respondents through this channel has reached its purpose.

According to the respondents, the library site is important for promoting informational products, but they do not have enough time to study it.

The University Senate is also an effective platform for promoting the IREK institutional repository, but it works only for the members of this institutional forum.

Unfortunately, social networks are practically not involved in promoting of the institutional repository, although, according to experts, this channel is currently the most popular and most effective for promotion. The advantage of using this channel is the accessibility, the ease of access, the possibility of monitoring and the feedback.

From the answers of the respondents to the question “*What do you think about the advantages of the institutional repositories?*”, the knowledge of the PhD students and thesis coordinators regarding the IREK institutional repository and its advantages were identified. The interviewees’ opinions were distributed as follows in Fig. 2:

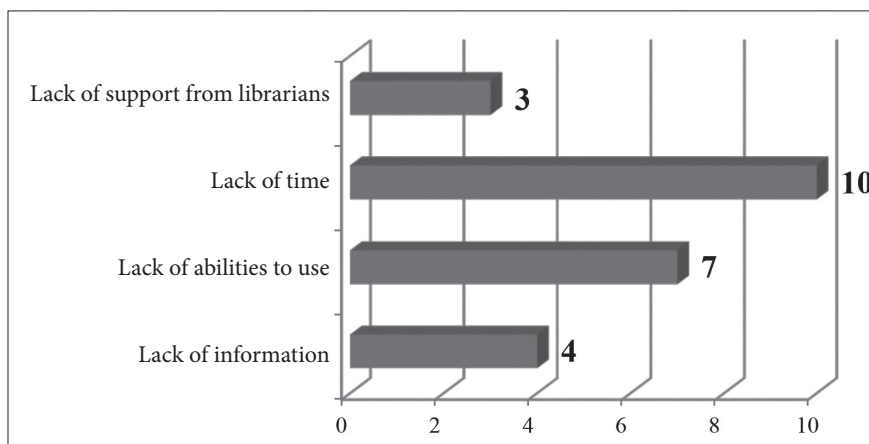


**Fig. 2: Respondents' opinion on the advantages of the IREK institutional repository.  $N = 15$**

Therefore, by promoting the scientific communication, the institutional repositories, according to the majority of the respondents, have such basic advantages, as: increasing the degree of citation of the scientific works of the university staff (9); offering access to research results anywhere in the world (7); the statistical record of the publishing activity of the employees of the organization (6).

To the question “*Do you have the experience of using the IREK institutional repository?*” - 7 respondents mentioned that they had such a practice, 8 people answered negative.

Thus, we can see that the respondents have sufficient theoretical knowledge about the open digital archives, but are using the IREK institutional repository a smaller number of interviewed. Obstacles related to the publication of articles in the IREK institutional repository were identified in answers the question “*What prevents the activity of publishing in the AESM institutional repository?*”. Thus, the following results were obtained (Fig. 3):



**Fig. 3: Barriers that impede the publishing activity in the AESM institutional repository. N = 15**

The main obstacle, according to the interviewees, is the lack of time (10 respondents). In order to publish their articles, the researchers use the specialist in the library, whose functions include publishing the articles in the institutional repository. Self-archiving as a process would save researchers time and increase publishing activity in open access.

The lack of practical skills also prevents researchers from publishing their articles in the IREK institutional repository (7 respondents). In this

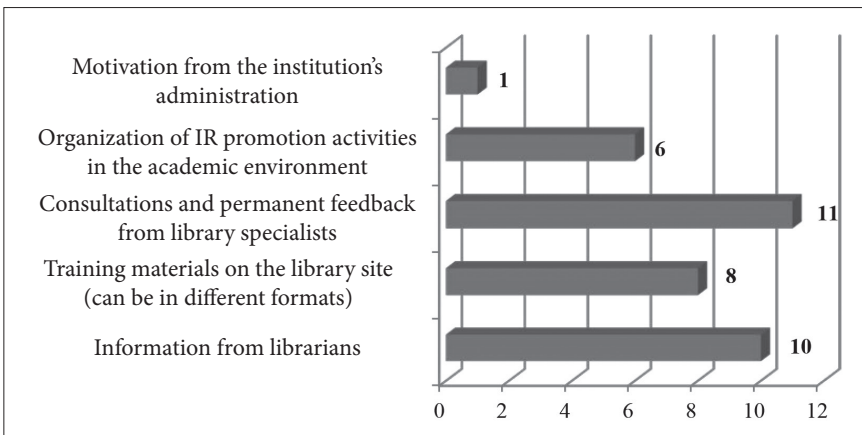
context, libraries need to pay more attention to individual consultations and to develop training and guidance materials, both in traditional and electronic format.

The current information and the permanent support from the librarians, according to the respondents, would help to overcome the barriers in publishing the articles in the institutional repository of AESM.

The researchers' answers to the question "What would contribute to the efficient use of the IREK institutional repository?" were distributed as follows in Fig. 4.

Thus, according to the opinion of the research subjects, the most important activity is the constant advice and feedback from the librarians (11 respondents); permanent informing by the library (10); various educational materials and tutorials on the library website (8).

The promotion of the institutional repository, as a complex innovative product, must be based on a training program for its use. If the information product is complex and incomprehensible to the user, it will not be requested by the university community. Therefore, constant counseling and feedback from librarians represents the starting point in popularizing the IREK institutional repository among scientists and PhD students.



**Fig. 4: Mechanisms that facilitate the effective use of IR of AESM. N = 15**

Respondents suggested the following recommendations for promoting the IREK institutional repository among AESM researchers:

- the active promotion of the institutional repository at all scientific forums of the university;
- using of social networks to inform about the institutional repository;

- motivating PhD students, who publish more frequently the research results in IREK;
- use of modern communication tools: e-mail, Viber, Messenger to promote the repository;
- trainings on self-archiving to optimize the publication in IREK.

Also, for the active promotion of the IREK institutional repository, the following activities can be proposed:

*Cross-media marketing campaigns conducted in partnership.* These actions are like the networks of friends and acquaintances we have on different social media platforms. Individual users use them to expand their network of friends and followers, while cross-media marketing broadens the potential audience of the business. Joint promotional actions could be undertaken with partner institutions that have similar products that complement each other with IREK, organized for the same target audience.

Cross-media marketing includes traditional advertising and digital techniques, for example web banners, billboards, social media advertising and magazines or newspapers. 3 effective cross-media marketing strategies will be used, which are: cohesive and consistent message that will be understood by all customers; clear and efficient call-to-action if we want the user to act immediately after receiving the messages; personalized advertisements that help build a trustworthy brand and identity that stands out.

*Capitalizing feedback from users.* It is necessary to establish and develop relationships with users. It is important to offer them the opportunity to express their opinion regarding the institutional repository, its functions and possibilities, to participate in surveys, to get involved in the communication actions of the library; to challenge them for a response to messages. We can conduct online surveys on the library website and request the evaluation of some services and functionalities of the institutional repository. At the same time, we can obtain the consent for the distribution of the news and the shipment of the additional training materials.

*Contests, questionnaires.* This format of promotion will motivate the young researchers and will contribute to the development of the publishing skills in the institutional repository.

These low-cost marketing methods do not require a lot of financial costs; instead they require the investment of other resources, such as energy, creativity, imagination and knowledge of the specialists. It is



necessary to promote not only the IREK institutional repository and its benefits, but also the effect of open access publishing as an optimal and inexpensive way of entering the scientific world, in order to achieve success in the evaluation and certification of scientific staff.

**Conclusions.** Libraries must play an important role in the development of IR, based on the needs and support of faculties, simplifying the process of submitting publications, training of users etc. The key role of the faculty members is to present knowledge in the form of research results in the institutional archives. The institutional roles also include the introduction of the compulsory policy for submitting the works and the formulation of other documents for the operational management of the IR.

Most respondents have sufficient knowledge about the institutional repository of AESM - IREK, the main source of information are librarians. Not all respondents have the experience of publishing in the institutional repository due to the lack of knowledge and practical skills. In this case, more attention should be paid to individual consultations and practical training materials, both in traditional format and in electronic form.

The main barrier in the publishing activity in the institutional repository is the lack of time. In this context, self-archiving would save researchers time and stimulate online publishing. The respondents suggested a more insistent promotion of the institutional repository IREK among AESM researchers, at scientific forums, to intensify individual consultations, to use new online information tools. The motivation of the PhD students to publish in IREK will also contribute to increasing the popularity of the AESM institutional repository.

Libraries actively participate in the creation and maintenance of open electronic archives, promoting the benefits of electronic archiving among researchers. New models of scientific communication improve access to information and ensure efficient use of digital content. Open archives offer librarians a more active institutional presence, establishing lasting partnerships with faculties.

The university library will play an increasingly important role in ensuring the quality of academic research by providing training on information literacy, academic writing and digital culture in the field of research.

IR (Institutional repositories) provides to librarians an increased visibility and active institutional presence. Through IR, the library



establishes lasting partnerships with faculties. Libraries can ensure the skills needed to develop and maintain an effective IR and act as agents of change in support of Open Access implementation. It is a way to maximize the availability, accessibility and functionality of scientific research results. To make the IR more widespread, the roles and responsibilities must be assumed by different categories of people within the institution.

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