

Eloy Rodrigues



University of Minho, PT

eloy@sdum.uminho.pt

Eloy Rodrigues is currently the Director of the University of Minho Documentation Services, responsible for running the University libraries. In recent years, he has devoted much of his work to the development of digital libraries, education and training of librarians and library users. In 2003, he led the project to create RepositoriUM – the institutional repository of Minho University. At the end of 2004, he participated in drafting the formal policy of Minho University on Open Access to its scientific output. Presently, his other main focus is promoting and advocating Open Access and institutional repositories in Portugal and throughout the Portuguese speaking world.

GRL2020 Position Paper

In the research university context, users are increasingly expecting an information rich environment, where all the needed information is freely available at the point (class, office, laboratory, etc.) and time of use. Information resources are also expected to be findable and searchable in a single, simple user interface “à la Google”. From experience in Portugal, library facilities are still valued and heavily used (mainly by students), but physical transactions (loans, reference interviews, inter-library loans and document supply) inside library walls have been clearly decreasing in the last eight years. On the contrary, usage of online digital services (including OPAC) and information sources, as well as requests for assistance from remote users, have been significantly increasing.

On the other hand, awareness about the importance of providing Open Access to their publications (and, still in a small number of cases, to research data) is rising amongst researchers. Despite the effort made in recent years to meet user needs such as: developing big collections of digital information resources (through digitization of collections, “Big Deals” and bulk acquisitions with publishers); developing integrated/federated search portals to the wide variety of resources in those collections, offering virtual reference services to remote users, creating and maintaining institutional repositories, etc.; libraries which are still far from offering researchers the services and information environment they expect.

Besides the “traditional” role of intermediating and facilitating the access and use of external information sources, libraries should increasingly focus on adding value to the information and data produced by the members of the community(ies) they serve. Building, managing and maintaining repositories, with various forms and stages of the information produced in the research process (published research literature, preprints and gray literature, research data), promoting their visibility and accessibility, and guarantying their preservation and curation, are some of the most important missions of research libraries in the near future.

In the coming ten years, local research libraries can and must be nodes of a global network of research information providers. This global network will be composed of different types of

repositories that will store, preserve, expose and provide access to the research outputs of the communities to which they are attached.

The global network of distributed repositories will constitute the basic infrastructure upon which several value-added services may be built and made available. Some of those services may be created and managed in the library environment, while others will be produced in several different settings. In any case, those new services will be exclusively automated and use the best computational tools and techniques, for exploring, mining, classifying, relating, counting, ranking, re-packaging and re-using the products (publications and data) of research. By doing this, those value added services will not only promote the efficiency of the scientific communication and unveil all the potential value of existing information and data, but also contribute to individual and institutional networking, by exposing “invisible” and implicit relations between researchers and/or their research organizations.

To achieve this vision of a global network of repositories, supporting the emergence of value added services, there are two main conditions: 1) Research output must be openly accessible 2) A new generation of protocols, standards, tools and platforms must be developed and used. Consequently, research libraries must contribute and support current efforts to achieve these two objectives. Firstly, by assuring the availability of repositories on their organizations, helping their researchers on using them, advocating Open Access to research literature. Secondly, by supporting self-archiving mandates that are becoming more numerous and frequent, from different sources (research funders, universities and other research institutions). Libraries should also collaborate with the recently emerging movement of Open Data.

Research libraries must also continue to actively participate in current initiatives and projects to develop new protocols, standards and tools (like OAI-ORE, Open Data Protocol, etc.) and promote the interconnection and interoperability between the distributed repositories.

On this respect, the European DRIVER project is particularly important and relevant. The future federation of European repositories envisaged by DRIVER and it's interconnection with similar initiatives that are being, or will be developed, in other parts of the world (USA, China, India, Brazil, etc.) may constitute the embryo of the future global network of research information and data.