

## **THE GREEN AND GOLD OF JOURNAL PUBLICATION: AUSTRALIAN PROPERTY RESEARCHERS' PERSPECTIVE ON OPEN ACCESS PUBLICATION.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The pressure on property academics to published research papers is ever increasing with an emphasis on selected 'high profile' journals. The need to demonstrate the impact of property research through the level of citation and other output metrics is growing. At the same time many governments around the world are requiring funded research reports to be openly accessible resulting in a rapid growth of open access journals and a response by many established journals to offer open access publication. This paper reports on a survey of Australian property academics to assess their knowledge level of open access publication resources and the impact such resources may have on research output measures. The results point to a need for greater understanding of the open access environment and issues associated with copyright in published papers.*

Keywords: Open Access, auto-archiving, personal branding, Australia

### **INTRODUCTION**

The world of academic research is rapidly changing with ever increasing pressure placed on academic researchers to publish more and more papers in the most highly ranked journals. No longer do academics have the luxury of preparing lengthy research papers published after years of painstaking research and multiple reviews and rewrites. Now researchers often tend to write shorter papers in order to achieve multiple publications from a research project. The short shelf-life of academic papers and the ability to publish and search for papers online is changing the way academics behave.

The way that academic research is disseminated is also undergoing a significant shift, with a move away from the traditional hard copy journal stored on the shelf of a library to a more dynamic approach in which research findings are available online. Indeed journal publications are often available online well before the official publication date of a journal and release of the hard copy version. The advent of easily accessed online journals has meant that fewer and fewer hard copy journals are retained by libraries and researchers rarely seek the printed version instead undertaking their literature search online, collating relevant articles into a digital library for instant citation in any subsequent papers. Online publication brings with it a significantly different publication paradigm in which anyone can quite cheaply establish a new journal and disseminate papers without the need for costly printing and distribution associated with hard copy journals. As more journals move toward the online publication of research the presence of open access (free) research journals are exerting a growing presence. The rise in the number of open access journals is also being fuelled by many governments insisting that any government grant funded research be made freely available to the public and not locked within a subscription based journal. In the USA there have been several attempts to mandate open access publication with the Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPAA) having been introduced to Congress on three occasions in May 2006, April 2009, and February 2012, but has never been voted on. In February 2013 The Fair Access to Science and Technology Research (FASTR) Act was introduced and is still under consideration. Both the FRPAA and FASTR bills would require open access to papers reporting the results of US federally funded research (HOAP 2013). Similarly in the UK the Research Councils UK is following a similar agenda to move to open access (RCUK 2013). In Australia the Australian Research Council (ARC) introduced an open access policy for ARC funded research under which from 1 January 2013 any publications emanating from ARC funded research must be deposited in an open access institutional repository within twelve months of publication (ARC 2013).

In the Australian scenario researchers are able to publish a version of the research within an institutions own publication source in addition to seeking traditional journal publication, however the preferred option other governments is to pursue a high impact open access approach in which the research findings are widely distributed internationally in an

open access form in addition to any institutionally based resource. While the volume of open access journals continues to rise issues of research quality and international impact are becoming increasingly significant (Warren, 2012).

Open access publication is occurring in two quite different formats often expressed as golden and green road (Harnad et al., 2004; Kim, 2010). In the golden approach there are also two potential routes to publication, the fully open access journal which is available for free public access to all articles and usually funded by an author payment and secondly a traditional subscription journal which publishes some of its content in open access form and funded by author payments.

The alternative, 'green' approach to open access publishing occurs where an author publishes their research in a journal either open access or subscription based, but also publishes a copy version of the research on a website often operated by their university. In order to publish a version of the journal paper authors are given the "green light" by the publisher self-archive to an open access source (Harnad et al., 2004). The green light to publish typically comes with some limitations. Emerald Publishing Group for example welcome the republication of an article on a university repository but retain the copyright in the journal format such that the version published in the repository is effectively the final author version submitted rather than the published journal version. Other journals adopt a creative commons attributions agreement which allows authors to retain copyright of their work and to publish the paper as book chapters or in university repositories as long as they name the original journal as the first publisher.

According to Ulrichsweb (2013) there are about 58,000 peer reviewed research journals worldwide across all disciplines and languages. The majority 50,000 are published in English. This figure is more than double the 24,000 peer reviewed research journals reported by Harnad et al (2004). The number of 'gold' open access journals has also doubled in the period since 2004 from 5% to a current 6,600 (13%) English language journals. There are also many more online only e journals at 5,800 (11.5%), although in total still only 22,200 (44%) journals are available online.

While many universities maintain an open access database with over 1,100 library members of the OAlster database of open access research papers (OCLC 2013) and 25,000 members of OCLC Worlds Libraries Connected, there are still only around 10% to 20% of articles auto-archived (Bjork, Roos, & Lauri, 2008). The extent of auto archiving is increasing as some universities move to make the practice compulsory in order to increase the impact of the published research (Gargouri et al., 2010).

Building on the open access and auto-archiving of research there is a rapid increase in the number of independent auto archiving web portals which offer researchers the opportunity to disseminate their research and search for papers. These profile management sites offer a variety of links to other researchers in the field or within institutions and most offer some form of ranking to illustrate the number of researcher visits and paper downloads. Along with the increasing range of publication and citation sources available the need for a uniform method of identifying and tracking an individual's researchers in a web based environment has led to the establishment of ORCID the Open Researcher & Contributor ID. Launched in November 2009 ORCID aims to solve the author name ambiguity problem in scholarly communication by establishing a global, open registry of unique identifiers for researchers (Fenner, Gomez, & Thorisson, 2011).

The rapid advancement of the online research profile has the potential to separate the digitally savvy from those less familiar with the technology or less inclined to embrace the change. Higher Education has evolved in recent years and the online presence of a university now defines what the institution is and what it stands for (Wæraas & Solbakk, 2009). This essential online branding does not stop at the institutional level and increasingly the personal branding of the individual academics is an important factor in establishing an international reputation for the institution and individual's research profile (Labrecque, Markos, & Milne, 2011)

One aspect of growing concern in the open access publishing arena is the rapid rise in journals of questionable quality. It is difficult for some researchers to evaluate the credentials of a journal as many open access journals are of good international standing while others are described as predatory. It is not sufficient even to only rely on the reputation of the publisher as in a recent scam publication test undertaken by a Harvard University scientist bogus scientific articles

were submitted to 304 open access journals including those published by Sage, Elsevier and Wolters Kluwer. The paper received 157 acceptances and 98 rejections. Some 60% did not undergo peer review and of those that did 70% accepted the paper (Bohannon 2013, Shaw 2013). In an attempt to expose the rise of predatory open access journals a librarian at University of Colorado has established Beall's List a list of predatory journals. Using a criteria check list to test the ethical and editorial standards of the journal this list provides a useful starting point to evaluate a new journal (Beall 2013)

This paper seeks to identify the level of knowledge among the academic community in Australia involved in property related research with respect to online publication and relate this to earlier research which links online publication to personal branding tools (Warren, 2013a)

## **METHODOLOGY**

Having established that online publishing and auto-archiving is a growing trend in the dissemination of academic research an online survey was developed for distribution utilising Qaltrics Software. The survey was distributed to all faculty members identified as contributing to the teaching and research programs at Australian Universities in the Field of Research Code 150403 Real Estate and Valuation Services (ARC 2013). The survey was distributed between December and March 2013 and a response rate of 62.5% was achieved.

The questionnaire was designed to gauge the extent to which faculty are aware of or utilising the various green and gold publication vehicles available to them.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The survey initially sought to understand the level of awareness among academics of the most common tools, other than traditional journals, used for the dissemination of research output. Then in a second question the frequency with which the participants used those tools was assessed.

Participants were asked if their individual universities maintained an online or e publication repository. The majority of respondents 73.5% stated that a digital repository was maintained. In the supplementary question however, only 43% use the facility with just 20.6% actively maintaining their account. It follows that some 35% never use the system if one exists within their institution.

The extent of use by academics of the digital repository shows that just 38% access the tool 1 to 3 times per year. Of those that regularly use the digital repository just 11.8% indicated that they access it more than 6 times per year.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

There is an international growing interest in online publication and the use of open access journals and other open access auto-archiving services to assist in the dissemination of research papers. This paper has revealed that academics working in the real estate field within Australia are not actively embracing the use of auto-archiving facilities. It also follows from this that these academics are not able to leverage these online publishing opportunities to increase the impact of their research. In a related paper investigating research impact factors among Australian academics it was found that few property researchers are actively seeking to enhance their personal brand or level of international impact through their research publications (Warren, 2013b).

The results of this survey of all leading academics within the field in Australia is constrained by the small number of participants but with a 62.5% response rate from the entire cohort of researchers the results do provide a clear picture of how researchers are disseminating their research findings. It is evident that while some approaches such as university based e-publication repositories have achieved a sound level of recognition the take active use of these is still less than

might be expected and represents a missed opportunity to increase international impact of the research findings by reaching a wider audience.

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