ETDs REPOSITORY: AN OVERVIEW OF INITIATIVES IN INDIA

Savita

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Savita

Bhai Gurdas Library, Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar

ABSTRACT

The theses and dissertations submitted by students to a particular university in print form were the property of that university and were not easily accessible or visible to others. But Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) repositories are addressing this problem by making institutional knowledge available online and thereby increasing its visibility and use. Electronic version of traditional thesis and dissertation explaining research of students is capable of distribution through telecommunication networks to global users. ETD initiatives at the University levels were with the initiatives of INFLIBNET when it has created a database of theses in the form of bibliography records covering all subjects of all universities. Shodhganga is being executed by INFLIBNET as a national repository centre of theses and dissertation of India.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is the generation of new ideas and constituting new theories and results which are acquired after research. Thesis and Dissertation which contain research and scholarship of student doing PhD and Master Degree in a University and higher academic institution are of primary importance to libraries. They are known to be the rich and unique source of information. Hence universities play a major role in generation and dissemination of knowledge by conducting research work and producing PhD theses and Dissertation for various courses as a unique genre of information sources. Thesis work contains valuable content, including focused literature reviews and details on research, which are not generally made available elsewhere. Electronic Thesis and Dissertations (ETD) are the attempts to digitize these theses and dissertation and to put them either online or offline for access of research community.

ETDS

Graduate School UNC Charlotte has given a very comprehensive definition of ETDs as-"…ETD is an electronic vision of your theses or dissertation. In general, it is the same product as a paper thesis or dissertation, simply in electronic form. ETDs are made available to anyone that browses the World Wide Web. An Electronics theses and Dissertation according to Seth (2004) can be "(1) those that use little or no electronic enhancement and are effectively, print texts stored electronically (2) those that incorporate links to material on the World Wide Web (3) those that are full-blown innovative hypermedia documents including text integrated with sound, movies or simulations". While Barua defines it as the "electronic version of traditional thesis and dissertation explaining research and scholarship of students and which is capable of distribution through telecommunication networks to a global users"

The Online Dictionary for Library & Information Science (ODLIS) defines Electronic Theses and Dissertation (ETD) as "The Master's theses and Ph.D. dissertations submitted in digital form rather than in print on paper, as opposed to those submitted in hard copy and subsequently converted to machine-readable format.

Park, *et al.* (2007) perform a study on ETDs status in 26 Korean university libraries and found the National Library leading the development of a system. Similar survey was conducted by Salmi (2008) in university libraries of the Arab Gulf States. They concludes that the Gulf states have infrastructure for ETD programs beside technical, organizational, and legal obstacles. California libraries modified ETD models according to the institutional requirements, along with considering human and technological resource distribution [Yiotis (2008)]. Status of ETDs in Nigerian university libraries was assessed by Alhaji (2007), they found that beside automated services in those universities, lack of funds, facilities, and skilled staff and failure of the electrical supply are the major challenges for theses digitization.

Corresponding author: **Savita**
Assistant Librarian, Bhai Gurdas Library, Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar

Types of ETD

ETDs which are basically the electronic version of the theses are having two types:

- Born Digital, that is a student created digital document converted to the suitable format e.g. Portable Document Format (PDF).
- Electronic document created by the University Scanning a student's printed thesis or dissertation. The most suitable form of submission of ETDs as text based adobe PDF files.

Benefits of ETDs

Benefits of electronic submission and archiving of theses and dissertations include

- The results of research presented in theses and dissertations are more accessible to scholars all over the world via the World Wide Web.
- The message of a theses or dissertation may be better conveyed electronically than in a paper document. Advanced software programs can be introduced by like allowing color diagrams and images, hyperlinks, audios, animations, videos, spreadsheets, databases etc. into an electronic document.
- ETDs provide a solution to space requirements. As the collection of theses and dissertation grown libraries will find difficult to get space to shelve them but ETDs space will not be any concern.
- The researcher can save on printing and copying costs through electronic publishing and information exchange.
- The greatest advantage of ETDs are avoiding duplication in research work, ensuring quick retrieval of information promoting resource sharing and providing a permanent solution to the problem of space.

Limitations of ETD's

ETDs repositories have the problem regarding copyright.

- Fear of Plagiarism
- Unwillingness of faculty and research for submission of their material

ETD Initiatives at National Levels

ETD initiatives emerged in the 1980's after the development of electronic publishing on the internet and the technological platforms and software that support it. The Action Plan of the National Task Force on Information Technology and Software Development made it mandatory for all Indian universities to host their theses and dissertations on a designated website. This policy provided a framework for creating a digital library of ETDs. The efforts of developing ETDs were started with the recommendations of INDEST. IIT Bombay and IIT Kanpur are the two institution who have already implemented ETDs at their respective institution.ETD initiatives at the University levels were with the initiatives of INFLIBNET when it has

created a database of theses in the form of bibliography records covering all subjects of all universities.
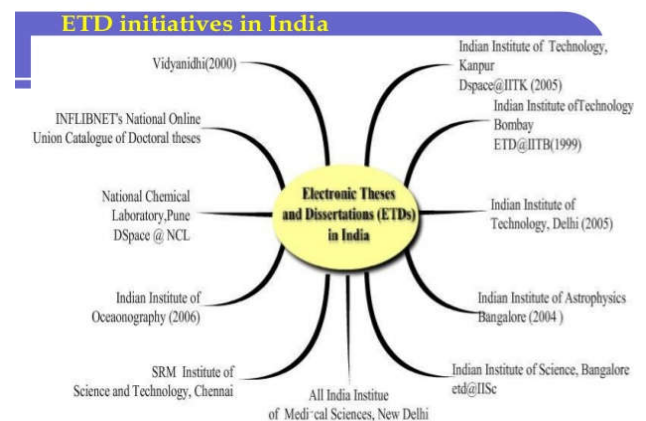

Fig 1 ETD Initiatives in India

University of Mysore in collaboration with NISSAT and Ford Foundation has also initiated a project called Vidyanithi to host individual full-text thesis form various universities who are willing to become a member of this project. This is a national level repository covering a number of universities and deemed university. National Social Science Documentation Center (NASSDOC) which is a constituent of Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) is working as a national repository of Doctoral theses in the area of social science.

University Grants Commission saw a need for a national repository, which made submission of e-theses mandatory, in 2009 and assigned the task of creating the repository to INFLIBNET. UGC drafted a national policy framework entitled "UGC (Submission of Metadata and full text of Doctoral Theses in Electronic format) Regulations 2005".This regulation has proposed two sets of planned action:

- INTED: Indian National Theses Database is an online centralized bibliographic database, where online submission of metadata sets of a PhD thesis is made mandatory when the researcher finally submit his/her phD thesis to the research cell of a university. The INTED will be freely accessible worldwide and will have simple and advanced search interfaces.
- Submission of PhD theses in Electronic form: The researcher will submit his/her PhD thesis in an appropriate format, along side hard copies of his/her thesis.

Now UGC has given one more regulation in context to "Minimum Standards and Procedure for award of M.Phil/PhD" under clause 19, the regulation provides guidelines for creation for depository with UGC. After announcement of the degree, the university shall submit a softcopy of the thesis, for hosting the same in INFLIBNET, accessible to all institution/ universities.

Shodhganga is being executed by INFLIBNET as a national repository centre of theses and dissertation of our country. The word 'shodh' originates from Sanskrit and means research and discovery. Ganga is the name of the largest and holiest river in

India. This project was intended to provide online accessibility to Indian theses to ensure that they are easy to access and to create a place for them to be archived. It was also developed as a tool to improve the standard and quality of research in India. Its aim is to help prevent duplication of research and to increase the visibility of Indian theses. It provides simple search and advanced search options to access theses. Universities can join the Shodhganga by signing an MOU with the INFLIBNET centre. This MOU spell out the responsibilities of universities and INFLIBNET centre related to Shodhganga.

Shodhganga uses Dspace software, as its decentralized nature provides a platform for research students to deposit their PhD theses and make them available to the entire scholarly community. The Shodhganga repositey has the ability to capture, index, store, disseminate and preserve ETDs submitted by researchers. Shodhganga's content is organized by community, universities exist at the community level and schools, departments, labs and research centers at the sub-community levels.

INFLIBNET recommends that ETD repositories in member universities use OAI-PMH Compliant software, which D Space supports. INFLIBNET has also established a central server to harvest the metadata from all ETD repository located in universities with an aim to provide unified access to theses through its harvesting server. The repository permits the submitter to create metadata for his/her thesis, before ETD publication, inflibnet staff verifies the metadata for its completeness and correctness.

Shodhganga obtains content in two ways: either by entering into an agreement with a university to obtain any digital theses that have already been archived there: or supervisor, or a representative of the university under the university's mandate can submit a digital thesis directly to Shodhganga with permission from INFLIBNET. Shodhganga currently holds 38153 from 209 universities.

CONCLUSION

ETD repositories are becoming a major resource for information on all subjects. The theses and dissertations submitted by students to a particular university in print form were the property of that university and were not easily accessible or visible to others. But ETD repositories are addressing this problem by making institutional knowledge available online and thereby increasing its visibility and use. India is beginning to embrace the idea of digitizing, archiving and making its theses and dissertations available online. There are many examples of individual institution digitizing their theses. The work of INFLIBNET with regards to Indian ETD repositories is an important step towards bibliographical control and full text access to the knowledge and insight contained in numerous theses throughout the country.

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