



knowledge without boundaries

EIFL-OA: Open Access

Removing barriers to knowledge sharing

Promotion of Open Access at the University of Belgrade

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Results of the EIFL-funded Open Access Project

“I will publish the results of my PhD related research in an OA repository so that everyone can benefit from it.”

Comment of a PhD student at the University of Belgrade in a questionnaire after one of the workshops where OA was presented and explained

INTRODUCTION

University of Belgrade is one of the largest universities in South Eastern Europe with 90.000 students and 7.000 staff members. The university is decentralised with 31 faculties, 11 institutes, central administration and the university library all being individually funded and managed.

The library information system of the university has one of the few functions that bind together loosely tied university institutions. The university library, being the central institution in this system, is able to reach all the libraries at universities and to provide a coherent, university-wide grassroots advocacy campaign. The library has recently set up an open access (OA) digital repository Archive of the University in Belgrade, PHAIDRA. Ms. Stela Filipi Matutinovic, PhD, the library director, has been a driving force behind most of the OA activities at University of Belgrade so far, positioning further the library as an important stakeholder in OA initiatives.

The importance of the OA Movement has not yet been very well understood in Serbia and also at the University of Belgrade. In 2011 the University of Belgrade signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in Sciences and Humanities expressing a general support of OA principles. But there was a need to raise awareness of faculty and students at different institutions and to encourage them to practice OA.

Because of this, the OA advocacy campaign's focus was on providing information on OA in general and on encouraging students and professors of the University of Belgrade to comply with the guidelines provided by central administration of the university that encourages usage and production of OA research outputs (in particular, the mandatory submission of electronic versions of all PhD theses (ETDs) completed in 2012 and onwards to the OA repository).

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- The advocacy campaign reached over 1000 stakeholders directly, through 30 workshops organised at faculties and institutes of the University of Belgrade. For most of the participants, this was the first time that they learned about OA and for many others key

questions were answered. In the workshop evaluations, participants expressed their positive reactions to the OA initiatives presented.

- An OA champions group was formed.
- There was an increased visibility of the library with regards to the OA movement due to the large number of attendees at library sponsored events.
- Print and electronic materials were widely distributed as follow up to the workshops in order to reinforce the interest and knowledge gained at the workshops. The materials were also distributed to a variety of other stakeholders unable to attend.
- The University library launched a new website that now provides easier discovery of OA resources via a new, federated search engine.
- ETDs started to be deposited in compliance with the guidelines provided by the central administration of the university (currently 50 ETDs and growing, most of them are OA).

STRATEGIES, TACTICS AND TOOLS

Students and faculty members of the University of Belgrade were the primary audience of the advocacy campaign.

The following strategies, tactics and tools were used during the advocacy campaign:

- **Workshops organised at various institutions of the university.** Each workshop was organised with the help and involvement of the librarian employed at the institution. Utilising his/her knowledge of the local environment helped in most cases to achieve participation of a good mix of stakeholders: students, professors, researchers, and institution's management. The workshops helped to raise awareness on general issues related to OA and presented strategies in which attendees could contribute to the creation and usage of OA research outputs. Each workshop was evaluated, which helped to make incremental improvements of each subsequent workshop.
- **Implementation and promotion of the new University library website,** www.ubsm.bg.ac.rs. The website provides access to OA materials and promotes their creation and usage. One of the main features of the new site is a federated search engine www.ubsm.bg.ac.rs/cirilica/brza/pretraga/ that enables quick and easy access to a variety of OA scientific resources.
- **Distribution of print and electronic promotional materials** related to general OA topics and specific local issues such as a new website of University library and PHAIDRA OA digital repository of University of Belgrade <https://phaidrabg.bg.ac.rs/>.
- **Events organised during the OA week 2012,** see below.

During the first phase of the advocacy campaign implementation it became clear that a network of more strongly tied OA activists at the University of Belgrade was required. Such a network is useful in implementing a long-term coherent OA policy and OA advocacy campaign. In order to achieve this long-term plan a close collaboration with major OA activists was launched.

OPEN ACCESS WEEK 2012 AT THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY OF BELGRADE

OA Week is a global, annual event held for the 6th time in 2012, 22-28 October. Its main goals are to promote awareness of the international OA movement and to provide an opportunity for the academic and research community to share knowledge and information about the benefits of

OA. The University Library organized a series of events and activities during this week with the goal of OA promotion.

Overview

Monday, October 22, was dedicated to OA achievements and challenges of the University Library in Belgrade: digital repository of Belgrade University "PHAIDRA", a guide through online resources "LibGuides", Library's new website and integrated search of OA resources, and tools "Yahoo Pipes" and "Walden's Paths".

Tuesday, October 23, was the day of awarding honorary titles for OA champions – "Archont¹ of OA at the University of Belgrade" – to researchers and librarians for their remarkable potential and professional capacity in OA promotion now and in the future. Winners for 2012/13 were:

- Professor Mladen Čudanov (Faculty of Organizational Sciences),
- Professor Miloš Bajčetić (School of Medicine),
- Vladimir Marković (Department for studies and scientific and educational activities),
- Jelena Jaćimović (librarian, Faculty of Dental Medicine) and
- Ana Ivković (librarian, Institute of Oncology and Radiology of Serbia).

Thursday, October 25, was dedicated to European and worldwide OA resources:

- The keynote speaker, Aubéry Escande from The European Library (TEL), presented TEL OA collections and the Europeana portal. Nikola Pavlovic presented integrated search of TEL within the new website of University Library in Belgrade.
- Biljana Kosanovic from the National Library of Serbia and [Serbian Library Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition \(KOBSON\)/Konzorcijum biblioteka Srbije za objedinjenu nabavku](#) (EIFL partner in Serbia) talked about the visibility of Serbia in European and world resources of scientific information.
- Bogoljub Mazić (University Library) introduced a digital repository PHAIDRA.
- Adam Sofronijevic (University Library) presented the new phenomenon of massive open online courses (MOOC).
- Mirjana Popovic from the World Bank talked about World Bank's OA Policy related to statistical databases and publications.
- Nevenka Antic from Creative Commons Serbia talked about open digital Creative Commons standardization and scientific interaction.
- Vedran Vucic from GNU Linux Center Serbia presented technical standardisation for publishing OA content.

Wednesday, October 24 and Friday, October 26, were targeted at librarians, faculty and students who had the opportunity to learn more about OA and educational workshops that are held on regular basis throughout the year at the University Library.

It was the first time when the University Library celebrated OA Week. As a result of the excellent response of both speakers and the audience, we plan to participate in OA Week 2013.

¹ (Gr. ἄρχων, pl. ἄρχοντες) is a Greek word that means "ruler" or "lord," frequently used as the title of a specific public office. The term was also used throughout Greek history in a more general sense, ranging from "club leader" to "master of the tables" (source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thesmothete>)

SUCCESS STORIES

- During OA week 2012 a series of events were organised at the University library. There was very good attendance at all the events (as compared to other events organised by the library). This provides additional proof for the effective OA promotional work among stakeholders during the months before OA week 2012. Also, there was a very good response from all invited speakers; almost all of them agreed to participate and voiced their support for the OA initiatives.
- New partnerships with researchers, research administrators and librarians – OA champions on campus – who collaborated closely during this project was very successful. Five people were awarded honorary titles “Archont of Open Access at the University of Belgrade” for year 2012/2013. They were carefully selected on basis of their potential to collaborate with the University library in promotion of OA activities during this period and become permanent members of the network in the future. By selecting two professors, two librarians and an administration staff member almost all stakeholder groups are represented, thereby adding to the variety of possibilities for collaboration. One of the honorary title recipients’, Prof. Cudanov of Faculty of Organisational Sciences, is active not only in OA but also in Open Educational Resources movement. He will be the first in South East Europe to implement massive open online courses (MOOC) in the University of Belgrade.

LESSONS LEARNED

- In order to get the most out of an advocacy campaign one needs to adapt it to the environment. If the environment is a decentralised university as it was the case for our campaign, a need for collaboration with stakeholders at central institution – central university administration and local institution – faculties and institutes arises. One needs to find allies at each of these institutions that will collaborate in implementing OA activities. This collaboration may be a loose one, which is useful in promotional activities, but it can also be a closer one, which is needed to implement a long-term coherent strategies and policies. It is important to scale the number of close collaborators to realistic resources available for these activities; otherwise a potential ally may turn into a disappointed bystander.
- It will be much easier and more efficient to organise future promotional activities because of the experience gained and contacts made during this campaign.

THE FUTURE

The advocacy campaign created a solid basis for future promotional and other OA activities at the University of Belgrade. The new website and accompanying federated search engine are important and necessary infrastructural improvements that will make it easier for users to find OA materials. The network of OA partners and supporters that was created in this project will grow in the future and will allow more efficient and varied OA activities at the University of Belgrade.

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