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Online Tools for Scholarly Communication in Library and Information Science

Dr. V. Senthur Velmurugan[1]

[1] Head and Librarian, Kongu Arts and Science College (Autonomous), Erode 638107, Tamilnadu, India
Correspondence: Dr. V. Senthur Velmurugan, Head and Librarian, Kongu Arts and Science College (Autonomous), Erode 638107, Tamilnadu, India.

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Abstract

The rapid growth in digital technologies significantly revolutionizes the dissemination of scholarly communication. Digital tools now facilitate the discovery, creation, management, dissemination, and evaluation of scholarly information. Such tools are found in Library and Information Science for the enhancement of research workflows, collaboration, and visibility of scholarly outputs. Major online tools to be looked at include academic search engines, reference management software, institutional repositories, academic social networking platforms, and tools measuring research impact. This study employed a descriptive research methodology based on secondary data with a literature review. Accordingly, key observations highlight that the roles of libraries and information professionals are considered paramount in providing guidance in research support, managing digital resources, and promoting open access practices. In this regard, the key findings propose that for effective scholarly communication to exist in this digital age, continuous training, strategic adoption of online tools, and awareness of ethical and quality standards become quite indispensable.

Keywords: scholarly communication, online tools, library and information science, open access, institutional repositories, research impact

1. Introduction

Scholarly communication comprises the creation, review, diffusion, and conservation of research findings. Conventional practices involved print journals, books, and conferences; however, the introduction of digital technologies has transformed these very approaches. Online tools now support rapid information access, collaboration between researchers, and increased visibility for the work itself.

Scholarly communication is a central part of professional practice in the field of information studies. Libraries and professionals in LIS not only provide access to information but also support the use of digital tools, open access resources, and platforms for the evaluation of research output. Indeed, today's researcher increasingly relies on academic search engines, institutional repositories, reference management tools, and altmetrics to manage, disseminate, and measure the impact of their work (Suber, 2012; Lynch, 2003; Tenopir et al., 2016).

2. Objectives of the Study

(1) Reflect on the development of scholarly communications and their definitions in a digital environment.

(2) Primary web-based tools used for LIS scientific communication.

(3) Categorize digital tools according to the role they play within the research process.

(4) Discussion: Examine the function of the library and the career professional regarding the usage of the tool.

(5) Analyze the role of online resources in the visibility, collaboration, and sharing of research findings.

(6) Emphasize the problems faced by adopters of online tools.

3. Scope of the Study

This research paper examines online tools for scholarly communication in the field of LIS for literature search, research management, collaborative authoring, dissemination of research, and research impact evaluation. This research is a secondary-source-based paper and does not contain any research or user studies. In terms of geography, the research is global in focus.

4. Research Methodology

The research methodology used in this study is descriptive and analytical in nature.

- **Data Collection:** The secondary source of the study will be journals, books, reports, and web-based materials on the topic of LIS and Scholarly Communication.
- **Data Analysis:** The tools were identified in accordance with their usage and point in the Scholarly Communication Life Cycle.
- **Interpretation:** The results were analyzed to recognize the use of an LIS professional and issues in adoption.

5. Classification of Online Tools for Scholarly Communication

5.1 Literature Discovery and Information Retrieval

Table 1.

Category	Tools	Functions	Purpose
Academic Search Engines	Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar	Literature search, citation tracking	1. Enabling scientists to search efficiently for scientific papers and for citations to facilitate the search for relevant literature.
Open Scholarly Databases	OpenAlex, BASE	Open metadata, full-text access	To enable free and comprehensive access to the metadata and full texts of research documents.
Subject Repositories	E-LIS	Discipline-specific research content	To tap and maintain research results and content specific to each discipline, mainly with relation to increasing accessibility and visibility of research work.

5.2 Reference Management and Research Organization

Table 2.

Tool	Type	Features	Purpose
Zotero	Open-source	Citation storage, tagging, sharing	For assisting in the organization and management of references by authors conducting studies for the purpose of citation.
Mendeley	Freemium	Reference management, collaboration	A platform for the management of citations, the annotation of PDFs, and collaboration with other individuals.
EndNote	Commercial	Advanced citation library management	To provide professional-grade citation and library management assistance for supporting research and manuscript preparation for publication.

5.3 Research Creation and Collaboration

Table 3.

Tool	Function	Scholarly Use	Purpose
Authorea	Collaborative writing	Multi-author research papers	To facilitate the ability of multiple researchers to work on writing, editing, and organizing academic papers together.
Google Docs	Cloud collaboration	Real-time editing and commenting	To offer a cloud-based platform that enables joint editing and commenting, hence promoting an efficient collaboration process among researchers regardless of their location.

5.4 Publishing and Dissemination

Table 4.

Category	Examples	Role	Purpose
Institutional Repositories	DSpace, EPrints	Archiving, open access	To store, preserve, and provide long-term access to institutional research outputs at the highest level of visibility while supporting open access initiatives.
Open Access Journals	DOAJ-listed journals	Free scholarly publishing	To provide open access to peer-reviewed research and thereby further dissemination and fair access to knowledge.
Preprint Servers	arXiv, OSF Preprints	Early dissemination	To allow the rapid dissemination of research results before peer review for early feedback and exchange of information, thereby facilitating collaboration.

5.5 Academic Social Networking Tools

Table 5.

Platform	Use	Benefit	Purpose
ResearchGate	Sharing research	Collaboration, visibility	To provide a platform where researchers can share publications, connect with peers, and extend the reach and impact of their work.
Academia.edu	Networking	Profile management	To assist researchers in creating their academic profile, networking with other colleagues, and thereby showcasing their research outputs to a global audience.
ORCID	Researcher ID	Author identification	Provide unique identification of researchers, correctly attribute work by them, and allow linking of publications across platforms to aid in enhancing the credibility of research and its discoverability.

5.6 Research Impact and Evaluation

Table 6.

Tool	Measure	Scope	Purpose
Google Scholar Citations	Citation counts	Academic impact	In the context of citation acquisition for the relevant researcher for the different publications, respectively.
Altmetric	Online attention	Societal and online impact	Attend to the provision of an attention score for research output in relation to social media coverage, news coverage, and policy documents.
PlumX	Usage metrics	Multidimensional impact	It should also provide a more realistic depiction of the research impact by using citations, usage, capture, and mentions, and should include social media metrics that could prove conclusive in determining overall impact.

6. The Role of Libraries and Information Professionals

Libraries are key enablers of effective scholarly communication:

- Access and Discovery: The librarian facilitates databases, repository systems, and discovery systems (ACRL, 2020).
- Repository Management: Institutional repositories for archiving, preservation and open access (Lynch, 2003; Xia, 2010).
- Open-access advocacy: informing researchers about copyright, licensing, and best practices in open science (Suber, 2012).
- Research Support: The services shall support reference management, plagiarism, journal selection, and funder requirements (Tenopir et al., 2016).
- Impact Evaluation: Support the processes of maintaining ORCID and the analysis of citations as well as altmetrics evaluation (Priem et al., 2010).
- Capacity Building: Arranging training sessions for both research professionals and library professionals (Borgman, 2007).

7. Challenges and Limitations

1) "Digital divide:" This concept speaks to an imbalance in access to technology and internet connectivity (Borgman, 2007; Suber, 2012).
2) Limited Awareness: Digital illiteracy regarding the use of the tools of references and impact (ACRL, 2020).
3) Sustainability: The use of commercial services may create concerns about sustainability. For instance, when a person's (Borgman, 2007).
4) Quality Control: Predatory Journals and Low-Rated Open Access Publications (Xia, 2010).
5) Study Limitations: The study utilizes secondary sources, in that there are no survey interviews.

8. Conclusion and Suggestions

8.1 Conclusion

The web-based tools have changed the landscape of scholarly communication in the LIS sector by assisting with discovery, management, collaboration, dissemination, and evaluation of research. The libraries and the professionals in the LIS sector play a critical part in enabling the use of the tools, open access, and responsible performance of research. Strategic use of the web-based tools despite the challenges improves research visibility, collaboration, and the quality of scholarly communication (Borgman, 2007; Suber, 2012).

8.2 Suggestions

1) Enhance scholarly communication literacy skills in library training (ACRL, 2020).
2) Support open-access projects and repositories (Suber, 2012).
3) Ongoing capacity building for professionals working in the LIS field (Borgman, 2007).
4) Educate authors/researchers on the ethics of publication, copyrights, and predatory publishing (Xia, 2010).
5) Research impact measurement metrics should be integrated with library services (Priem et al., 2010).

The future study may include empirical

investigation, like conducting a survey.

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