Open Access Resources in Social Sciences

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Abstract

Present Paper defines open access (OA). Explores and identifies the various open access resources available in the field of Social Science. Explains benefits of open access. Attempts to present the important open access resources such as Social Science Research Networks, directories of open access journals, directories of open access books, open access theses and dissertations and open education consortium, social science open access repositories. Describes brief information regarding access of these resources.

Keywords: Open Access Resources; Social Sciences; Librarians; Scholarly Literature.

Introduction

Journals are important source for dissemination of research findings. In the recent scenario prices of journals are rising exorbitantly day by day. Budget of libraries is either not rising or not being revised proportionately so as to cope with this price hike of journals. It is becoming difficult for the libraries to afford the rising costs of journals in order to maintain the ideal library collection for their users. This situation has led to the phenomenon called "Serial Crisis" where libraries cannot meet information needs of users up to their expectations with existing their library budget (Winter & Sandy, 2012). That's why libraries either keep on switching their budget from books or cancel the subscription to journals. To cope with this situation open access is now looked upon as an alternative way (Jacob, 2006).

Definitions of Open Access

Open access refers to full text accessibility of scholarly literature on internet. Most influential definitions for open access are: The Budapest Open Access Initiative (February 2002), Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing (June 2003), and Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge (October 2003). These initiatives are collectively referred to as BBB definitions (Suber, 2015).

The Budapest open access (2002) initiative states that "By open access to literature, we mean free availability on the public Internet, Permitting any user to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search or link to full text of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal or technical barriers other than those are inseparable from gaining access to the Internet itself".

The Bethesda Statement (2003) and the Berlin Declaration on open access in the same year given the definition to open access as below:

"The author(s) and copyright holder(s) grant(s) to all users a free, irrevocable, worldwide, perpetual right of access to, and a license to copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works, in any digital medium for any responsible purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship as well as the right to make small numbers of printed copies for their personal use" (Mukherjee, 2010).

According to Suber (2015) "Open access (OA) literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restriction".

In the light of above definitions it is evident that open access is online availability of scholarly literature without price and most of permission barrier. Researchers can explore, download, copy and use that literature for their study & research by properly acknowledging the sources.

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Why Librarians Should Care about Open Access

Crawford (2011) stated that the librarians should care about open access for below mentioned reasons.

- Libraries certainly cannot provide all the journals other reading material required by their users. Latest research output can be provided to the users by open access in their field of interest without acquiring print or e resources in libraries.

- open access can help the librarians to balance the reduced library budget caused by escalating journals price.

Benefits of Open Access

Advocate of scholarly communication SPARK has given the following benefits of open access.

- Researcher as a reader can access literature everywhere .

- Open access can maximize citations for an author's work.

- Authors can get immediate visibility to their research, hence its impact increases.

- Open access can enhance the visibility to university's and other institute's intellectual output.

- Libraries can increase access for their target audience.

- Teachers and students can get unrestricted access to academic literature.

Objectives

Main objectives of the study are:

- To investigate and identify open access resources available in the field of social science.

- To present the brief information regarding access of these resources.

Methodology

Present study tried to identify the open access resources in the field of social sciences. In order to identify the open access resources, search terms , open access resources in Social Sciences; open access books; open access journals; open courseware and open access theses and dissertations are used. Retrieved websites have been visited personally to see the full text availability of these resources.

Open Access Resources in Social Sciences

Social Science Research Network (SSRN)

Social Science Research Network (SSRN) is devoted to the rapid worldwide dissemination of social science research. The SSRN e- library consist of two parts: an abstract database containing abstracts on 6,68,600 scholarly working papers and forth coming papers and e-paper collection currently contains over 559600 full text documents. This net work is updated daily. (www.ssrn.com)

Social Science Open Access Repository (SSOAR)

 Social Science Open Access Repository (SSOAR) is   a steadily growing collection of full-text social-science documents which can be accessed free of charge. To search documents, either simple or advanced search facility can be used or users can click on browse and search function. It provides access to 36200 Social Science Documents. (http://www.ssoar.info)

Digital Commons Network

"The Digital Commons Network provides access to free, full-text scholarly articles from hundreds of universities and colleges worldwide. Curated by university librarians and their supporting institutions, the network includes a growing collection of peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, dissertations, working papers, conference proceedings, and other original scholarly work." It provides access to 3, 03,495 articles in the field of social sciences and behavioral sciences. (http://network.bepress.com/)

Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)

DOAJ is an online directory that provides access to high quality, open access, peer-reviewed journals. It provides access to 11618 journals and 2,290,898 articles in all the major subject disciplines and languages. Purpose of this directory is make available access to open access scholarly journals. In the field of social sciences it provides access to 1106 journals and 2, 41,866 articles. Article can be searched by title of article, author of the article, title of the journal and keywords also. Users can access full text article. (http://doaj.org/)

Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB)

The primary aim of DOAB is to increase discoverability of Open Access books. It provides

access to 4621 academic peer reviewed books from 151 publishers in English and other language on all the subjects. Books can be browsed alphabetically, by title of the book, by subject and by publisher.1096 books on Social Sciences can be accessed through this directory. (www.doabooks.org)

Online Book Page

The Online Books Page is an index of e-textbooks available on the internet. This source lists over 2 million free books on web .Users can browse the book by author, title and subject. By author they can search by first letter of author's name or for a particular name of the author Similarly title can be searched. It also provides access to archives of serials (magazine, journal, newspaper). Some archives of serials published in 18th century are also available on this site. Numbers of books on social sciences---- are available here.(onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu).

Open Education Consortium

Open education consortium is network of educational institutions, individuals and organizations.

 It provides access to freely available electronic publications of high quality college and university level educational material. These materials are organized as various courses These materials are organized as various courses. Mission of this network is to promote and support openness in education. Full text books in the field of social sciences are also available on this website. Anyone can search and access required educational material, scholarly literature at any time.(http://www.oeconsortium. org/)

Open Access Theses and Dissertations (OATD)

This website provides access to theses and dissertation published around the world. Metadata (information about the theses) comes from over 1100 colleges, universities, and research institutions. OATD currently indexes 3,178,293 theses and dissertations. Full text theses on all the social science disciplines can be accessed through this website. Approximately 3234 records were found when searched by the keywod Social Sciences. Theses can also be searched by various disciplines which come under the purview of social sciences. (https:// oatd.org/).

OpenDOAR

 openDOAR is a directory of academic open access

repositories. Repository is an online archives of intellectual output of an institute's academic community accessible to end users within or outside the institute. Aim of repository is dissemination of institution's research output which consists of , thesis and dissertation, course notes, video lectures , conference proceedings, articles in books and journals etc. Users can search repositories by using various options such as subject area, country, language, content type and repository type. 189 repositories on social sciences are available in this directory (http:// www.opendoar.org/index.html).

Conclusion

Study shows that the significant number of open access resources are available in the field of Social Sciences. These resources are very useful for students, teachers and research scholars.   Anyone can access open access resources as and when required. These are great boon for authors, readers and learners. Libraries should create awareness regarding these resources among the academic community.

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