

## Partnering with libraries to help institutional repositories thrive

James Pringle  
Vice President of Product Development  
Thomson Scientific

*Open access (OA) publishing is growing in importance, and, in parallel, the role of institutional repositories (IRs) has come to the forefront of discussion within the library community. The two are intertwined but not synonymous, and different motivations are driving the growth of each. The Thomson Scientific role in promoting institutional repositories' growth was highlighted recently in three workshops held in London, Boston, and Sydney.*

The Thomson Scientific mission is to help researchers find scholarly information of significance and relevance to their work, and from an early date we mapped out a strategy to support our customers in these emerging areas. Our approach to OA publishing reflects our traditional role in selecting and evaluating content: we have made sure we index, analyze, and link to relevant OA journals, and report on our activities in various industry forums and on our Web site.

### IR's: A new way of organizing research

Our approach to IRs has been different. Repositories represent new ways of organizing research and are taking shape in a variety of experimental forms. They vary in the types of content, the purposes of their creators, and their relationship to researchers. Increasingly, publishers are allowing researchers to archive their own content, and IRs can play a role in aiding researchers in this endeavor.

We estimate that publishers now allow over half of all scholarly articles to be archived by their authors, based on average articles published in the journals of the 2003 *Journal Citation Report*<sup>®</sup> and publishers listed as Project Romeo [www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php](http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php) (see fig. 1).

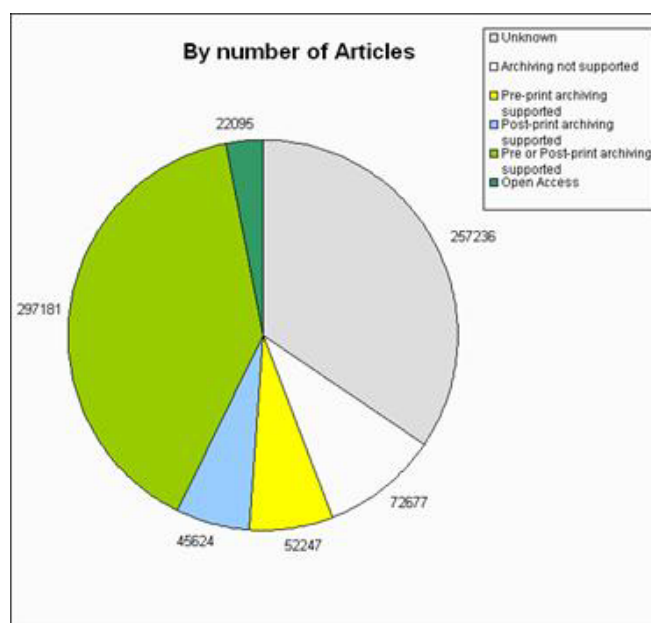


Figure 1: Number of scholarly articles archived

## Learning how IRs can serve the needs of the library community

But far less than half of all scholarly articles are actually posted to IRs today, often because of lack of awareness and incentive for researchers to do so. Overcoming this barrier is a critical need for IR developers. As one administrator remarked in a planning session: "The key issue is turning now on the willingness of faculty to automatically put stuff into their repository."

To understand the needs of the library community and researchers in this new world, we partnered closely with our customers. Seven institutions joined with us in a *Web Citation Index* pilot project to explore the proper relationship between *ISI Web of Knowledge*<sup>SM</sup>, *Web of Science*<sup>®</sup>, and the world of IRs. A collaboration with NEC on the basis of its CiteSeer<sup>TM</sup> environment provided the technology partnership to support this new undertaking.

The participating institutions are:

- Australian National University
- California Institute of Technology
- Cornell University
- Monash University
- NASA Langley
- Max Planck Society
- University of Rochester

The project has run for the past 10 months, and will continue as we move toward release of the full-scale environment for use by researchers over the next several months.

Partnering with these institutions helped us refine our understanding in many ways. We've been able to have the kind of candid conversations that could shape the definition of the core values that we bring to this environment, by focusing on the goals these institutions want to achieve.

## Giving IRs a more permanent role

As this pilot participant noted, all IRs serve an archival function, and this gives them a more permanent role than mere self-archiving of documents to a personal page. The goals of particular institutions that create IRs can vary. Showcasing a

***"A lot of people put stuff up on their own servers, self-publishing, but there's no institutional guarantee that those things are going to exist for any time period and that people are citing those things."***

*- Pilot study participant*

university's intellectual output is an important goal in the academic IRs, while in government repositories the overriding goal is disseminating information to the public.

### ***Web Citation Index: Encouraging IRs growth and usage***

At a Thomson Scientific workshop during ALA Midwinter in January 2005, Jean Poland of Cornell University and Katie Clark of the University of Rochester outlined the state of IR development at their institutions, and the potential role of the *Web Citation Index* in encouraging the growth of IRs. Ms. Clark emphasized the challenge of gaining faculty buy-in, noting that for researchers: "it is all about me and my research", and faculties need to be shown how the IR can help their everyday activities. Ms. Poland pointed out that citation-based tools such as the *Web Citation Index* can have a positive influence on user awareness and reputation of IRs. This influence must be accompanied by good relationships with IR developers and administrators though, and we thank the participating institutions for teaching us how to achieve these.

Another pilot participant described it this way: "There are more or less separate worlds of communication at the moment...the journals covered by the traditional databases, and then this whole world which is free on the Internet somewhere. By pulling these two together and trying to integrate, at least on the level of cross citations, it helps to bring these two worlds together."

That's the goal we have set for ourselves in the *Web Citation Index*. As we move forward, our project administrators may contact those at your institution who are responsible for your IRs. We look forward to working with you to help make your content more visible as well.