

E-info discovery and management for institutes in the South

UKSG eNews 364

05 Feb 2016

Marc Goovaerts, Hasselt University

[VLIR-UOS](#) is the organisation of the Flemish University Board that supports partnerships between universities and university colleges in Flanders (Belgium) and southern countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia looking for innovative responses to global and local challenges. The main goal is to strengthen higher education in these countries in the southern hemisphere by setting up long term cooperation projects with universities and networks of universities. VLIR-UOS also organises long and short term training on infrastructure development for the partner universities. The workshop 'E-info discovery & management for institutes in the South' is part of the VLIR-UOS training strategy. In parallel with the information discovery workshop, Leuven University College organised the VLIR-UOS workshop 'Training Information Literacy with Southern Partners'.

Goals and programme of the workshop

When it comes to making higher education more research oriented, access to scientific information is one of the main challenges, especially in some countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Such access can be very expensive and difficult to organise. When resources are available through programmes like PERI of INASP, Research4Life or EIFL, institutes often don't have insight into the available resources and how to subscribe to them, let alone how to make access easy and effective.

In modern western libraries there are several solutions, eg link resolvers that help to find the full text of a document found in the catalogue, a database or a search engine (eg SFX by Ex Libris, 360 Link by ProQuest, and LinkSource by EBSCO). Other solutions are the (very expensive) comprehensive discovery systems, offered by the major library system providers (eg Primo by Ex Libris or Summon by ProQuest). Some open source software is being developed, eg VUFind, Blacklight, the LibreCat tools at UGent. Can they deliver the same services as the commercial products? How can websites like Mendeley, Zotero, CiteULike or ResearchGate with their social platforms be used to access, manage and share resources on the institutional level?

There is a lot of experience in Flemish academic libraries with these different solutions and a great need in some southern countries to learn about it. In December 2014 the project brought together experts from Flanders, and project experts and information managers from institutes in countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia at a ten day workshop in Antwerp.

The information managers invited for the workshop needed to have expertise, or at least relevant experience in the domain. In that way the workshop was different from a classic training. The

workshop was attended by representatives of universities in Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia, Cuba, Suriname, Bangladesh, India, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Flemish experts and representatives of the following international organisations, WHO-HINARI, EIFL and ITOCA, participated as well.

The presentations and discussions during the workshop gave insight into a very diverse landscape of information management. The challenges to accessing research information are different from country to country. Access to UN programmes such as Research4Life are limited to low and middle income countries defined by a basket of four indicators including World Bank GNI per capita. The diversity of access to scientific publications coupled with differences in needs has resulted in a range of solutions for accessing scientific information locally and on the internet.

Discussions continue

The workshop was continued on the website '[E-Info Discovery Tools](#)', where the participants of the workshop discuss the output of the workshop further. The follow up workshop '[Modern Information Management for Research and Education Oriented Libraries \(With Open Source Tools\)](#)' was organised at the All India Shri Shivaji Memorial Society's College of Engineering in Pune, India from 23 to 27 November 2015. A book with the title *E-Discovery Tools and Applications in Modern Libraries*, editors Sangeeta N Dhamdhare, Librarian, Modern College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Ganesh-Khind and Egbert De Smet, will be published in 2016 by IGI Global.



This UKSG Editorial is taken from the industry newsletter *UKSG eNews*, published every two weeks exclusively for UKSG members. The newsletter provides up-to-the-minute news of current issues and developments within the global knowledge community.

To enjoy *UKSG eNews* and other member benefits [become a UKSG member](#). To submit an editorial suggestion for *UKSG eNews*, contact the editors: seneditor@uksg.org.