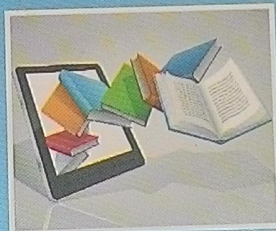
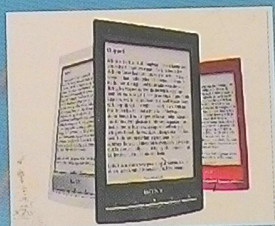


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Open Access Scholarly Publishing in Economics: An Analytical Survey

K.P. Singh

ABSTRACT

Open access movement is gaining momentum around the world and more and more publishing houses are coming forward in providing the peer reviewed scholarly literature in Economics. The study aim to investigate the open access scholarly literature in the field of Economics published worldwide. The study also focuses on the growth in various facets of open access literature in Economics such as chronological growth, continent and country wise distribution, frequency and language wise distribution and the role of major publishing houses in the movement of open access.

1. Introduction

The killing technology of the 21st century, *i.e.*, ICT has shrink the physical boundaries of the world and brought many revolutionary changes in the entire process of accessing and acquiring, storing and retrieving, downloading and distributing, and consolidation and communication information throughout the world. Moreover, increasing prices of research journals by the publishers has posed a major threat to libraries and information centers. To communicate the work published in the form of scholarly literature to the world-wide community of researchers and scientists, the Open Access (OA) Initiative emerged as an ultimate solution that promotes free access to scholarly publications over the Internet, removes the price and permission barriers and ensures the widest possible dissemination of research. Singh and Negi (2011) discussed the collective movements by the international organisations, decelerations, conventions and various key issues in the movement of OA journals worldwide.

1.1 *What is Directory of Open Access Journals?*

The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) was first conceived by the Nordic Conference on Scholarly Communication in Lund/Copenhagen (<http://www.lub.lu.se/ncsc> 2002) about the idea of creating a comprehensive directory of OA journals. It was felt that it would be a valuable service for the global research and education community. With the result, the directory came into the existence in the same year. The directory covers open access scientific and scholarly journals in different disciplines in all languages, having a quality-controlled system. It has nearly 8,000 journals.

1.2 What is Open Access?

Open access is simply the free online availability of digital data, figures, contents, scholarly journal articles, research results which authors/researchers publish without expectation of payment and is based on an ethical argument that research funded by the public should be available to the public on public domain as natural resources such as light, air, water, etc. The OA operates within the legal framework and own the original copyrights to for their work. Authors can transfer the rights to publishers to post the work on the web or else can retain the rights to post their work on the archives. The following points are worth to mention in the context of understanding about open access (Singh and Negi, 2011):

- OA is the ultimate convergence (new avatar) of an age old tradition and the new technology, to make impossible to possible an unprecedented public good;
- An old tradition—forwardness of authors and scholars to publish the fruits of their research in scholarly journals without payment, for the sake of wider use and application by the public freely on Internet (*i.e.* a public information footpath to all);
- For the public good and they make possible as far as possible for world-wide electronic distribution of the peer-reviewed journal literature and completely free and unrestricted access to it by all scientists, scholars, teachers, students, and other curious minds; and finally
- OA is a technology's answer to the scholarly journals crisis or popular as serial crisis, the world face today.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aims to identity the OA scholarly literature in Economics indexed in DOAJ. In addition to this, the specific objectives of the study include to know the (a) chronological growth and development, (b) the world wide distribution, and (c) Asian contributions; and to investigate (d) the languages and frequency wise distribution, (e) the contribution of different types of publishers, and (f) to compile a directory of OA scholarly literature in economics.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study covers the scholarly literature in the Economics published worldwide and indexed in OA system such as DOAJ in the entire domain of economics and their allied fields. Library is a growing organism which is truly applicable to DOAJ also. At present, about 8,500 peer-reviewed scholarly journals are accessible in OA mode through DOAJ. The study covers 173 peer-reviewed journals published by the various R&D organisations, academic bodies, commercial publishers and professional associations throughout the world. Further, the study also covers the literature being published in

other than English language such as Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Russia, Serbian and German.

1.5 Research Methodology

For the purpose of the present study, literature review on the various aspects of OA movement/initiative has been done from the major leading databases namely *Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA)*, *Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts (LISTA)*, *Emerald database* and print journals. After reviewing in the area of OA and scholarly publishing at the website of DOAJ, the required data needed for the study was collected. To know the actual position and other statistical data which is not available at DOAJ website, the website of the each journal was accessed and gaps were filled in. In the final stage the data is analyzed and interpreted with the help of MS-Excel based on a set of parameters to get the right picture to OA scholarly literature in the area of economics.

2. Review of Literature

Sangeeta and Sonbham (2008) feels that OA initiative emerged as a revolutionary movement that promotes free access to scholarly publications over the Internet, removes the price and permission barriers and ensures the widest possible dissemination of research. OA exists where there is free, immediate and unrestricted availability of digital content. While Kingsley (2009) argues that the traditional scholarly journal system is outdated and in need of re-organization and that the new Internet technologies provide opportunities for change. Ylotis (2005) finds that OA archives and OA journals as steps forward towards the democratization of information and knowledge by removing access restrictions. McCulloch (2006) also argues similar to Ylotis that the OA initiative is dramatically transforming the process of scholarly communication, bringing great benefits to academic world. Haider (2007) argues that OA as a way to connect the developing world to the system of science, by providing access to scientific literature published in the developed world. Arunachalam (2008) stresses the need for OA mandate by various research organizations in India for their own research output and for projects funded by them, Keisham and Sophiarani (2008) pointed out that OA initiative emerged as a revolutionary movement that promotes free access to scholarly publications over the Internet, removes the price and permission barriers and ensures the widest possible dissemination of research. Singh and Negi (2011) investigated the contribution of Indian premier research organization such as CSIR, DRDO, ICAR, ICMR, INSA, etc. in publishing and making available scholarly information and made available in OA mode. The study analyzed and presented the data in many dimensions such as OA journals according to subject wise, institutions wise, and others dimensions such as language, frequency, mode, formats and coverage.

3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data from the DOAJ has been thoroughly analyzed using the MS-Excel and discussed in the following sections. The following tables give the overall picture of OA scholarly publishing literature in economics. As per the DOAJ, 173 OA journals are being published in the field of economics worldwide. Table 1 shows the top 10 leading countries in the contributing to the field of economics. It is found that Romania is on the top rank with 25 journals, followed by United State of America and Spain having 17 journals each, Brazil having 15 journals, Mexico and Canada having 7 journals each, UK, Italy and Colombia having 6 journals each respectively. Therefore, the study indicates that more than 64% literature is being contributed/ published by these ten countries representing the entire Western World.

Table 1: Top 10 Countries Contributions to Economics in DOAJ

<i>Country</i>	<i>Journals</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Romania	25	22.52	1
USA	17	15.31	2
Spain	17	15.31	3
Brazil	15	13.51	3
Mexico	7	6.30	4
Canada	7	6.30	4
UK	6	5.40	5
Italy	6	5.40	5
Colombia	6	5.40	5
Germany	5	4.50	6
Total	111	100.00	

Table 2: Asia's Contribution to OA Journals in Economics

<i>Country</i>	<i>Journals</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Pakistan	04	57.14	1
India	01	14.28	2
China	01	14.28	2
Indonesia	01	14.28	2
Total	07		

The Asian countries have contributed the least to OA journals in economics, *i.e.*, only 7 journals. Table 2 shows that Pakistan occupies the top position with 4 OA journals constituting 57.14% of the total contribution. Unfortunately world's large populated

countries like India and China have only one journal each to their account. Therefore, these countries should come forward and improve its contribution to OA journals in economics.

Table 3: Year-wise Growth of OA Journals in Economics Indexed in DOAJ

<i>Year</i>	<i>Journals</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Cumulative Total</i>
2003	04	2.31	04
2004	06	3.46	10
2005	10	5.78	20
2006	17	9.82	37
2007	16	9.24	53
2008	13	7.51	66
2009	16	9.24	82
2010	40	23.12	122
2011	08	7.74	170
2012*	03	1.73	173

* Up to March 2012.

The Table 3 reveals chronological growth of OA scholarly publishing in economics. Since the inception of DOAJ in 2003, during the last ten years (2003–2012 up to March), 173 journals were indexed to DOAJ in OA category. Further, the study also found that during the year 2012, the highest number of journals (40 journals, 23.12%) have been added to DOAJ, followed 17 Journals in 2006, 16 Journals in 2007.

Table 4: Frequency of Distribution of OA Journals

<i>Issues/Year</i>	<i>Journals</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1 issue (annual)	11	7.69	4
2 issues (biannual)	69	48.25	1
3 issues	18	12.58	3
4 issues (quarterly)	34	23.77	2
5 issues	02	1.39	7
6 issues (bimonthly)	03	2.09	6
12 issues (monthly)	06	4.19	5
Total	143		

Note: Due to some technical problems 30 journals were not accessed over Internet, therefore, the interpretation is based on the 143 journals that are accessed at the time of conducting this study.

It is evident from Table 4 that 69 journals (48.25%) are being published half-yearly, followed by 34 journals quarterly (23.77%), 18 journals (12.58%) 3 issues per year,

and so on. Only 3 bimonthly journals are being published. Table 5 shows the journals published in various languages. It can be viewed that the most of the economics journals are being published in English Language, i.e. 78 journals (76.47%) followed by 13 journals in Spanish (12.74%), 6 journals in Portuguese (5.88%), one journal in Dutch, Italian, Russia, Serbian and Germany (0.98%) languages respectively. At the initial stage of Internet, almost all the literature was only available and accessed in English language. Today a large amount of literature is also available in other languages and the same can be read and downloaded in English by using advanced translation applications/services which are available freely on Internet.

Table 5: Language-Wise Distribution of OA Journals

<i>Language</i>	<i>Journals</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Rank</i>
English	78	76.47	1
Spanish	13	12.74	2
Portuguese	06	5.88	3
Dutch	01	0.98	4
Italian	01	0.98	4
Russia	01	0.98	4
Serbian	01	0.98	4
Germany	01	0.98	4
Total	102		

It is shown in Table 6 that out of the 173 OA journals in economics, 102 (58.95%) titles are being published in monolingual followed by 57 (32.94%) titles in two languages, 11 in three languages, and two journals in five languages and one title in four languages. Thus, the study found that multilingual publishing of the content is no problem on Internet and the trend of multilingual publishing is increasing.

Table 6: Distribution OA Journals According to Language (Bilingual)

<i>Language</i>	<i>Journals</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Rank</i>
One Language	102	58.95	1
Two Languages	57	32.94	2
Three Languages	11	6.35	3
Five Languages	02	1.15	4
Four Languages	01	0.57	5
Total	173		

Table 7 provides information about the availability of downloading options available in OA scholarly journals in economics. It is viewed from the Table 7 that 146 journals (97.33%) are available in PDF followed by 2 journals (1.33%) in HTML and PGY/HTML, respectively. Twenty-three journals could not be accessed at the time of conducting this study; therefore, the above figures are based on 150 journals only.

Table 7: Downloading Formats of OA Journals

<i>Format</i>	<i>Journals</i>	<i>%</i>
PDF	146	97.33
HTML	02	1.33
PDF/HTML	02	1.33
Total	150	

Publishers are the most important channels of communicating and dissemination of scholarly information worldwide. The Table 8 gives information on the types of publishes involved in contributing to the OA initiative/movement. It is found from the study that academic publishers are contributing 83 journals, followed by professional associations (31), commercial publishers (27) R&D publishers (12) and others contributing 12 journals. The nature of other 12 is that these are being published in the name of the journal as publisher.

Table 8: Publisher-wise Distributions of OA Journals

<i>Publishers</i>	<i>Journals</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Academic publishers	83	47.97	1
Professional associations	31	17.91	2
Commercial publishers	27	15.60	3
R&D publishers	20	11.56	4
Others	12	6.93	5

4. Findings of the Study

On the basis of the data collected from the DOAJ on the OA scholarly literature in economics the following inferences has been drawn:

- There are 111 scholarly OA journals contributed by top 10 countries of the world in the field of economics. Romania tops the list with rank 1 followed by USA.
- Only 7 journals are contributed from the Asian region; Pakistan tops the list and India has only one OA journal in the field.

- A total of 173 journals (up to March 2012) in the field of economics have been indexed worldwide. The highest number (40 journals) were indexed in the year of 2012.
- From the frequency point of view 69 journals are being published biannually.
- Seventy-three journals are published in English language. However, a sizable number of journals are also published in Spanish, German, Portuguese and Dutch.

5. Conclusion

In the changing context of the traditional commercial publishing system, due to their policies, limitations etc. have become less effective. On the other hand the new system of scholarly communication, *i.e.*, OA system is gaining momentum due to the collaboration of international scholars/associations in overcoming the problem of escalation of prices of journals and dwindling budgets. OA movement is much more popularized in developed countries like USA, UK etc. but the countries like Romania also contributing a lot in the field of economics. When we look into the overall contribution to OA in economics, we find very little contribution from the Asian countries like, India, China, Russia, Japan, Korea, etc. It is worth to mention that India contributing 312 journals to OA movement especially in the field of science and technology. Therefore, all government sponsored publishers should seriously come forward to provide scholarly information in OA to the world communities for the progress of research and academic endeavours.

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