Open Access in Palestine
An Overview

LIBSENSE Virtual Workshop
Arab Region: Progress & Prospective

Rawia Awadallah
(Representing ROMOR team)
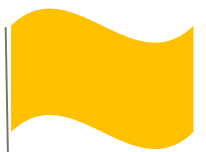rradi@iugaza.edu.ps
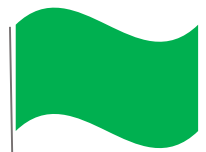
13 Oct. 2020

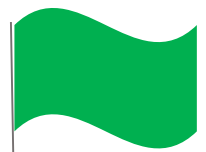National Open Access Initiatives in Palestine
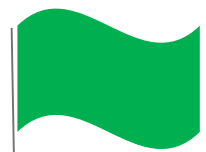
Key
- In Progress
- Complete
- Waiting

E-Government: Project
Open gov. data
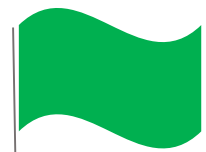Estonia, PS Gov.
Birzeit Univ.
2009 – till now

First national open access awareness raising workshop for Palestinian univs.
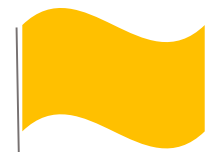EIFL
2009

Open Access in Palestine: Project
Series of raising awareness workshops
EIFL and PALICO
2015

OpenMed: Project
Raise awareness & facilitate adoption of OER
E+ project: PS, Jo, Mo, Eg
2015-2018

ROMOR: Project
Raise awareness & facilitate adoption of OAIR
E+ project: PS univs, EIFL, EU univs
2017-2019

PALIB: Project
National Library & Research Platform
E+ project: PS univs, EU univs
2019-2022
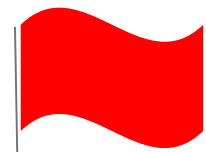
ROAD: Project
A Network for Organizing Collaborative Research Management
E+ project: PS univs, MOHE, EIFL, EU univ
2021-2024

ROMOR aims to improve the management, visibility, and accessibility of scientific research outputs in Palestinian HEIs

Challenges of OA publishing in Palestine

- lack of OA awareness
- lack of institutional encouragement to OA (not recognized in assessment for academic promotion)
- general fear of intellectual theft /copyright infringement
- lack of policies and/or mandates for OA publishing or self-archiving
- skepticism about quality/impact
- Arabic language content

ROMOR Main Results (2017-2019)

- **Four searchable and accessible OAIR** of a full-text theses, and academic publications in the partner universities

- **Research Data Management Policies** that are compatible with FAIR and OA needs

- **Vocational and academic training/training material** on OA, IR development and data stewardship for both managerial and academic staff

- **Raised awareness** of other non-partner universities who have competed to have higher ranking in the web metrics ranking of world universities

The way to success

- Business modeling and preparation of OAIR deployment plans
- Setting up OAIRs: challenges, and lessons learned
- Research data management policy development
- Lessons learned from ROMOR
- National/regional roadmap

ROMOR Training and Learning Resources

BMC

Key Partners

- Information Technology Department
- Library
- Eifl

Key Activities

* MetaData / Cataloging
- Training
- Problem solving
- Maintenance procedures (backup, restore, etc)
- Upgrade / Migrations

Key Resources

- Librarians
  - Metadata
  - Training
  - Digitalization
- IT Staff
- Servers & Storage & Backup
- Equipment like Scanner, computers
- Software

Value Proposition

- Promote the ranking of staff members
- Increase the visibility for research, researchers and university.
- Preserve university publications
- Heritage Preservation
- Assist University Administration in Decision Making regarding scientific research

Customer Relationships

- Workshops
- Phone
- Office Visits
- Social Media
- Tutorials
- Manuals

Channels

- Social Media
- Website
- Brochures
- Emails
- Academic Portal
- Policy from University

Customer Segments

- Researchers
- Students
- Public Community(world wide)
- Institutes
- University Administration
- Palestinian Community

Cost Structures

- Staff: Management, Librarians, IT
- Hardware:
  - Server, Storage, Backup (Redundant site)
  - Scanner
- Softwares

Revenue Streams

- Funding Projects / Agencies
- University

BMC: Recommendations

- Create an inventory of your current infrastructure (i.e., hardware, technical solutions, policies, etc.)

- Aim to keep number of potential value propositions to a minimum

- Try to make sure that those who will provide the resource for carrying out activities (i.e., who pays for these) can see a value in doing this such as making internal reporting easier or more efficient

- Do not underestimate the importance of good communication channels and establishing relationships with end users (customers)

- Consider how best to leverage key partnerships – both within your own institution but also with other universities to deliver value

Implementation Roadmap

Objective	Actions	Roles & Responsibilities (specify lead and contributors)	Deadline for completing action	Milestones
Identify working team	- Identifying stake holders(Academic vice president, Deanship of scientific research, Library, Computer Center, E-Learning Center, Multimedia and Educational resources center). - Meet with the different stakeholders from different university	Nael (Lead) ROMOR Team (Nael, Basim, Samer, Mutamed, Arafat)	31/12/2017	
Identify Repository Content	Identify types of data (text, A/V) contents to be deposited.	Nael (Lead) ROMOR Team, Scientific Research Dean, Academic Vice President, Library	15 March 2018	
Developing repository policies	- Write repository policy - Submit to EU partners for review - Refine and Submit Scientific research Committee for Approval - Submit to University senate for Approval	Academic vice President (Lead) Dean of Scientific Research Library ROMOR Team	31 March 2018	**Milestone (Institutional RDM Policy)**
Installing and configuring repository software	- Prepare Repository Hardware - Review exiting software solutions and identify relevant software based on institutional needs and capacity. - Install the repository software - Configure the repository software	Nael (Lead) + Fadi + Thaer + Mohammad (CC)	15 May 2018	**Milestone (PTUK IR)**
Populating the repository	- E- Library staff will start populating the Repository with old data. - Meet with Academic stakeholders to explain the potential benefits, their responsibilities and contributions.	Nael (Lead) + Diana (E-Library)	31 May 2018	**Milestone (Populated IR)**
Meta Data Descriptions	- Adopt Metadata standards	ROMOR Team + Scientific Research + Library	continuous	

Implementation Roadmap: Recommendations

- Scope pilot implementation before rolling out wider implementation across entire institution
- Provide specific deadline for each activity and include relevant milestones
- Be realistic about time frames associated with each activity
- Be clear about who is involved in carrying out each activity (e.g., IT, Library, Research Office) and where possible, include named staff
- Define metrics relating to each of roadmap activities (i.e., provide targets for content uploads; number of users).

Setting up OAIR

- Setting up DSpace (+, -)
- Define and set up metadata catalogues
- Customization of user interface to address Arabic language needs
- Populating repository through batch import
- Fix and Complete Missing Metadata
- Integrate OAIR with RDM process and other university systems
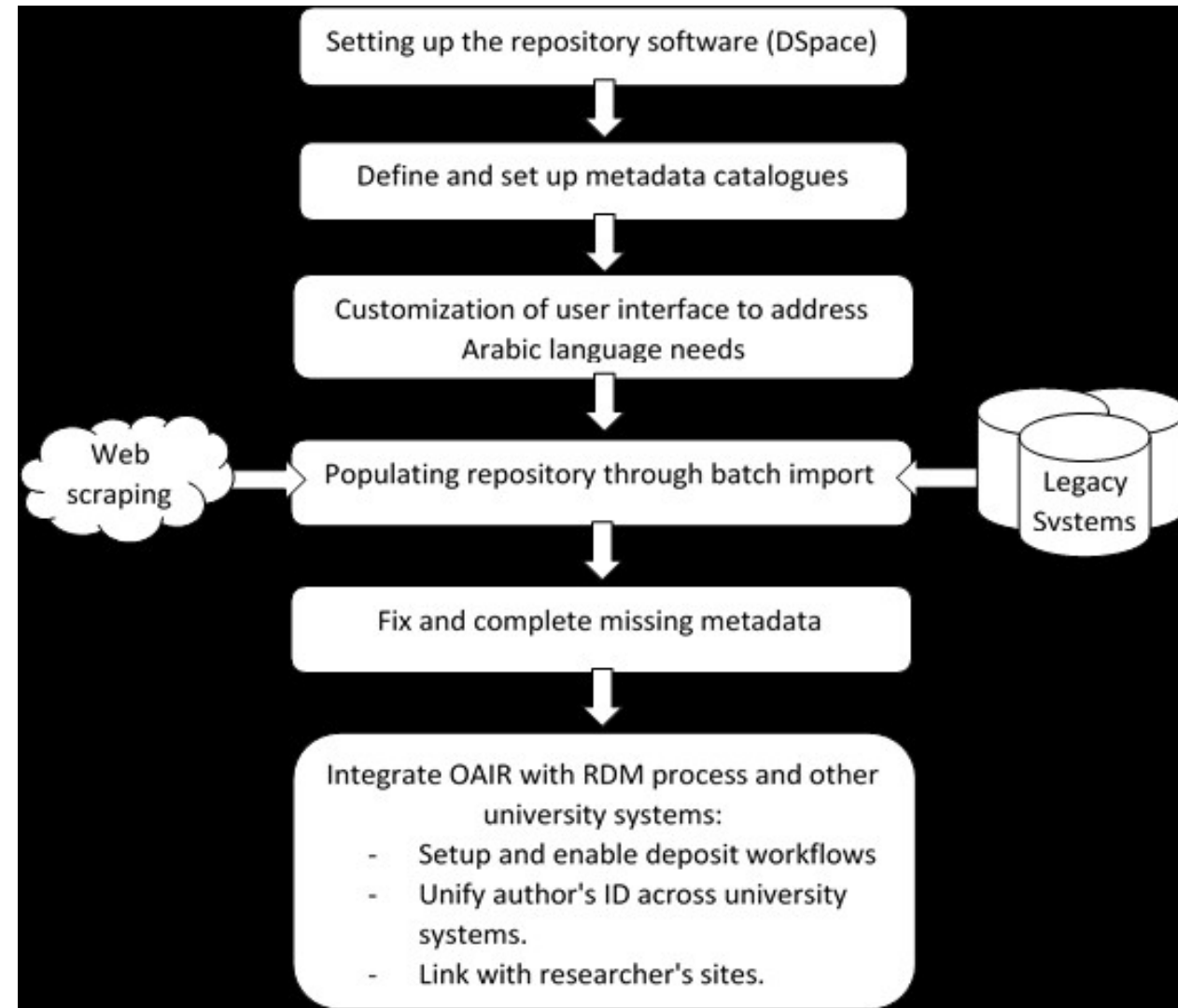
Setting up OAIRs: Challenges

- **Content localization:** rendering (English and Arabic)

- **Variation of author's names:** author's username (university email) as identifier: most researchers do not have ORCID

- **Missing metadata:** volunteers to fill, machine-learning solutions

- **Populating the repositories:** batch and import

- **Technophobia:** approached personally (volunteer students) and using word-of mouth method, deposit on their behalf until feel confident

Four OAIRs

iugspace.iugaza.edu.ps

fada.birzeit.edu

dspace.qou.edu

scholar.ptuk.edu.ps

Advocacy Events

- Launching ceremonies
- Traing activties for librarians and research support staff
- Traing activties for researchers/academic staff, and students
- Training materials, dissemination workshops, help videos, RDM policies, brochures, booklets, and terms of interest

RDM Policies Development

- Starting form model policies (training workshops, discussions, and feedback from EU partners)

- Several meetings conducted between ROMOR team and working groups, and stockholders in order to discuss the drafted policies (in Arabic)

- Policies are approved by universities councils and now put into practice

  o Researchers must submit their research outputs to apply for academic promotions

  o Annual assessment of staff members is performed based on researchers submissions to the repositories

- Number of submissions significantly increased after implementing the policies

Policy Development: Recommendations

- Get senior management buy-in from outset when developing or revising policies in relation to the OAIR

- Consult with all relevant stakeholders (e.g., operational units that may need to support services to enable compliance with the policy)

- Consider who will be responsible for monitoring compliance with policy and how this will be carried out

- Aim to produce concise policies written in plain native language

- Consider workflows and institutional infrastructures (hard and soft) that will be required and/or impacted by the policy

- Test policy out before seeking ratification (involve researchers as well as operational units)

Impact of ROMOR (Increased Visibility)

IUGSpace- Analysis results from 20 Mar- 20 Aug 2019

Average per month	Metric
6032	**Total visits**
17,150	**Page views**
15,147	**Unique page views**
2278	**Total searches**
3944	**Downloads**
3229	**Unique downloads**

Number of visits	Referrer
13,074	Search engines
8,432	Websites
317	Social networks
8,335	Direct entry

More non-partner institutional repositories after ROMOR!

Palestinian Territories		7,391
Egypt		3,308
Saudi Arabia		1,994
Algeria		1,691
Jordan		1,631
Iraq		1,543
United States		1,528
Syria		697
Malaysia		578
Libya		571
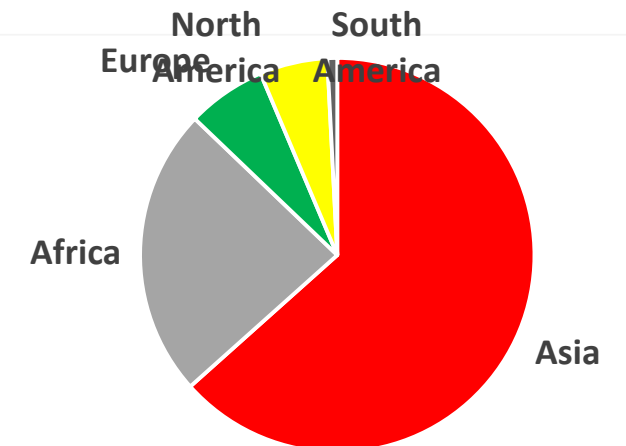
Lessons Learned from ROMOR

- Lack of communication between MoHE and Palestinian universities
- Fragmented environment of OAIRs: costs duplicated, unable to take advantage of collective data about content and users
- Local universities face challenges in developing their OAIRs:
  - skilled personnel (administrative, technical support and security)
  - finance (co-finance 90%, own-investment 10%)
  - power supply
  - adopting internal policies (compliance, OA publishing, copyright issues, quality control)
- Cooperation between MoHE and local universities is essential

Next Step: ROAD Project (2021- 2024)

Enables sharing infrastructures collaboratively across individual institutions to promote the research output of partner institutions as a whole, including agreements on metadata standards, services, and policies

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