

PEER – Publishing and the Ecology of European Research

News release

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PEER Behavioural Research: Baseline report on authors and users vis-a-vis journals and repositories now available at <http://www.peerproject.eu/reports/>

The PEER Behavioural Research Team from Loughborough University (Department of Information Science & LISU) has completed its behavioural baseline report, which is based on an electronic survey of authors (and authors as users) with more than 3000 European researchers and a series of focus groups covering the Medical sciences; Social sciences, humanities & arts; Life sciences; and Physical sciences & mathematics.

The objectives of the Behavioural Research within PEER are to:

- Track trends and explain patterns of author and user behaviour in the context of so called Green Open Access.
- Understand the role repositories play for authors in the context of journal publishing.
- Understand the role repositories play for users in context of accessing journal articles.

The baseline report outlines findings from the first phase of the research and identifies the key themes to emerge. It also identifies priorities for further analysis and future work. Some interesting points to emerge from the first phase of research that may be of interest to a number of stakeholders in the scholarly communication system include:

- An individual's attitude towards open access repositories may change dependant on whether they are an author or a reader; readers being interested in the quality of the articles but authors also focused on the reputation of the repository itself
- Reaching the target audience is the overwhelming motivation for scholars to disseminate their research results and this strongly influences their choice of journal and/or repository
- Researchers in certain disciplines may lack confidence in making preprints available, and to some extent this is not only a matter of confidence in the quality of a text but also due to differences in work organisation across research cultures (e.g. strong internal peer review of manuscripts versus reliance on journals for peer review). Other factors are likely to include career stage and centrality of research to the parent discipline
- Value-added services, such as download statistics and alert services, would contribute to the perceived usefulness of repositories and could help them gain popularity in what is an increasingly competitive information landscape
- Readers often need to go through a variety of processes to access all the articles that they require and widespread open access may reduce the need for this time consuming practice.

The full report is available from <http://www.peerproject.eu/reports/>

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About PEER:

PEER is a pioneering collaboration between publishers, repositories and the research community, which aims to investigate the effects of the large-scale, systematic depositing of authors' final peer-reviewed manuscripts (so called Green Open Access) on user access, author visibility, journal viability and the broader European research environment. The project will run until 2011, during which time over 50,000 European stage-2 (accepted) manuscripts from over 240 journals will become available for archiving.

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PEER repositories: eSciDoc.PubMan.PEER, Max Planck Digital Library (MPDL), Max-Planck-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften e.V. (MPG); HAL, CNRS & Institut National de Recherche en Informatique et en Automatique (INRIA); Göttingen State and University Library (UGOE); Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania; University Library of Debrecen, Hungary, SSOAR (GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences)
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