

Thesis publication via institutional repositories in Japan: a preliminary survey and case studies

Izumi Sugita, Yuko Murakami

Mie University Library, National Institute of Informatics

Abstract

This presentation will describe a preliminary survey on university library policies on theses and dissertations and case studies in Japan. The Japanese policy on higher education sets master's theses and doctoral dissertations down as a part of degree requirements. Doctoral dissertations are required to be published in print by the "degree law" in Japan. Two satisfaction methods are common: bounded copies of most dissertations are deposited to the National Diet Library, while some, mostly in humanities, are commercially published as books. Many university libraries hold doctoral dissertations as book material. Publication of master's theses, however, is not legally required, and it is usually difficult to access them. They are handled as mere documents to apply for master's degree at a university, and often counted as personal data. A few university libraries take them as book material, but in most cases offer them just for browsing. In fact, dissemination of theses and dissertations has been limited in spite of high demand: printed versions are usually not subject of loan, and duplication is allowed only with author's permission. Around 2005, when National Institute of Informatics shored up institutional repositories as a component of cyberscience infrastructure, university libraries in Japan began to deposit and disseminate dissertations in electronic form via institutional repositories, even though some do not provide them in paper. As a result, a dissertation in Nagoya University Repository was downloaded more than 800 times in the first 11 months after its deposit. Mie University made a further move to disseminate master's theses as educational outputs both in print and electronic form under permission of both authors and thesis advisors. The results suggest that electronic submission and dissemination of theses and dissertations are to be legally implemented, not merely for coping with limited shelf space, but for enhancement of scholarly communication. (299 words)