

Open Access E-books in Social Science: A Case Study of Directory of Open Access Books

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the current trends of the open access e-books in the field of social sciences available through Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB). The data was collected online regarding the social science e-books in August 2016 from DOAB web site for analysis. In the study the e-books are divided author wise, license wise, language wise, year wise, and pagination wise for better understanding of the results. The results revealed that there is a significant growth of e-books on DOAB on social sciences over the years.

Keywords: DOAB; Open access; E-books; Open access e-books; Social science; Case study

1. INTRODUCTION

In the present knowledge society, open access (OA) has emerged as new trend in scholarly communication over the internet. Open access has not only reduced price and permission barrier but also helped in bridging the gap between information rich and information poor. In other words it is a great advantage for developing and under developed countries. Prior to the open access, research results used to get published in closed access format, as such used to have limited viewership with limited visibility and ultimately limited applicability. Open access has not only opened up new vistas of publishing and making the research output easily and freely accessible to common masses but has equally increased the applicability of research output¹. At the same time, it has helped the users to access information from different parts of the world just at a click of mouse. Open access is direct communication between the author and the reader, with a minimum of mediation and tools and a short value chain, while document supply introduces added value mediation into the value chain of scientific communication². The Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) is the major milestone in facilitating organized access to open access e-books.

IFLA states that Open access is the now known name for a concept, a movement and a business model whose goal is to provide free access and re-use of scientific knowledge in the form of research articles, monographs, data and related materials. Open access does this by shifting today's prevalent business models of after publication payment by subscribers to a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions

for access³. Open access publishing which has become a trend in social science, no doubt open access trend has significantly rejuvenated the status and scenario of information retrieval and dissemination across the world in the social sciences. Directory of Open Access Books is a popular website of delivering access to open access literature and provides the most comprehensive list of open access books covering all disciplines.

1.1 Open Access E- Books

The origin of e-books can be traced back to the Project Gutenberg started by Michael Hart in 1971⁴. An e-book, short form of electronic book, also known as a digital book, which can be viewed on a desktop computer or a portable device such as a laptop, or e-book reader. E-books now include both born-digital and made-digital books. An open access e-book is a book in electronic or digital form that is available on the public internet free of charge, which can be read on a computer, laptop, or e-book reader. These e-books are available in different web archives like digital repositories, institutional repositories, databases and digital libraries, and offer creative possibilities for expanding access to information as well as changing the learning behavior of users. Content can always be freely available (24/7) to worldwide readers⁵.

2. DIRECTORY OF OPEN ACCESS BOOKS

The Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) is a discovery service for peer reviewed books published under an open access license. DOAB provides a searchable index to the information about these books, with links to the full texts of the publications at the publisher's website or repository. The Directory of Open Access Books was officially launched on 1 July 2013. The books that have been listed in DOAB are downloaded 512 times per year on average, compared to 252 times per year for books which are not listed thus; books in

DOAB are downloaded more than twice as much⁶.

3. GROWTH OF DOAB

In 2015, 1311 new titles were added to the Directory of Open Access Books, and 53 new publishers. The total number of titles listed by the end of 2015 was 3776. The first quarter of 2016 saw an increase of 604 new titles, with eight new publishers joining DOAB.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Whitford⁷ in a general review provides a detailed note on Directory of Open Access Books. Like its establishment, history, growth, policy, availability of books, current trends, accessibility and its services. Stenson⁸ argues for the value of the directories, mainly focusing on DOAB and DOAJ. Snijder⁹ demonstrates the higher impact of open access monographs disseminated through DOAB at Amsterdam University Press (AUP). Researcher revealed that, for AUP, the DOAB platform is very useful tool for promoting Open Access books. Dhanavandan¹⁰ paper discusses a global analysis of open access books, which are available in the Directory of Open Access Books. The author found that, many of the libraries as well as publishers are contributing to the open access products like DOAB. Dhanavandan¹¹ in an analytical paper elicits the availability of open access books which are accessible in the Directory of Open Access Books. Mary¹² evaluates the importance of the directory of open access books. Further researcher concentrates on the e-books available for the education subject. Fayaz⁴ study aims to assess the current trends of the open access e-books in the field of science and technology available through DOAB. Study summarizes that, there is steady growth of open access e-books in Science & Technology.

5. OBJECTIVES

The primary purpose of the study is to analyse the current trends in the open access e-books on Social Science available through DOAB. The other objectives of the study are to analyse authorship pattern, year wise growth of e-books, Subject coverage, trends in pagination etc.

6. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The scope of the present study is limited within the database of Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) and the subject area is Social Sciences. Therefore the findings can't be generalized across disciplines and directories. In Social Science there are 10 subjects available such as Anthropology, Education, Ethnology, Gender Studies, Library and Information Science, Media and Communication, Psychology, Social Sciences (General), Sociology and Sport Science.

7. METHODOLOGY

The literature was reviewed on the open access movement in India as well as Abroad. Then, the topic was selected for the present study. Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) was selected as a source for data collection while Social Science was selected as the field of study. The DOAB was accessed during the month of August 2016 for collection of data on

Social Sciences. The statistical data acquired was put to excel worksheet for better analysis and understanding the desired objectives set for the study. The data were interpreted and analysed based on a set of parameters to get the precise picture of subject coverage, authorship pattern, year wise growth, linguistic analysis, and pagination distribution.

8. ANALYSIS

8.1 Subject Coverage

Total 1200 e-books are available on social sciences through DOAB covering 10 major subjects as shown in Table 1. Maximum e-books are available on Social Science (General) 332, followed by Sociology 268, Psychology 145, Education 140, Media and Communication 91, Anthropology 75, Ethnology 65, Gender Studies 49, Library and Information Science 20 and Sport Science 15.

Table 1. Subject wise coverage of e-books

Subject categories	No. of E-Books	% of E-Books
Anthropology	75	6.25
Education	140	11.66
Ethnology	65	5.41
Gender studies	49	4.08
Library and information sci.	20	1.66
Media and communication	91	7.58
Psychology	145	12.08
Social sciences (general)	332	27.66
Sociology	268	22.33
Sport science	15	1.25
Total	1200	100

8.2 Licenses

Out of 1200 social sciences e-books available on DOAB 1083 e-books licensed under the Creative Commons (CC) whereas only 117 e-books available under other comparable institutional licenses.

8.3 Authorship Pattern

The data presented in Table 2 reveals that, the maximum numbers of e-books on DOAB are contributed by single authors i.e. 656 (54.66%), followed by Two authors 292 (24.33%), Three authors 140 (11.66%) and more than Three authors 76 (6.33%). On the other hand 36 (3%) e-books are edited. It shows that, e-books are predominantly (97%) authored rather than edited.

8.4 Year wise Growth

The data presented in Table 3 shows that, the majority of e-books are published during the period of 2011-2016 (August) 751 (62.57%). The significant growth can also be noticed during 2001-2010 a total of 428 (35.66%) published. A very small number of e-books are also published before 2000 i.e. 21 (1.71%). It can be observed that, most of the e-books are recently published. (Table 3).

Table 2. Authorship pattern

Authors	No. of E-Books	% of E-Books
Single	656	54.66
Two	292	24.33
Three	140	11.66
More than Three	76	6.33
Edited Books	36	03
Total	1200	100

Table 3. Year wise growth of E-books

Yearly Growth	No. E-Books	% of E- Books
≥2000	21	1.75
2001-2010	428	35.66
2011	105	8.75
2012	126	10.5
2013	103	8.58
2014	118	9.83
2015	186	15.5
2016 (August)	113	9.41
Total	1200	100

8.5 Linguistic Analysis

The e-books available through DOAB on Social Sciences are published in 12 different languages. The highest numbers of e-books are published in English 702 (58.5%) followed by German 167 (13.91%), Portuguese 108 (9%), Dutch 41 (3.41%), Italian 21 (1.75%), Spanish 15 (1.25%) and French 15 (1.25%). The languages of 116 (9.66%) e-books were not found. A very small number of e-books were also published in languages like Lithuanian, Check, Finnish, Swedish and Russian. (Table 4).

Table 4. Language wise analysis of E-books

Languages	No. E-Books	% of E-Books
English	702	58.5
German	167	13.91
Italian	21	1.75
Spanish	15	1.25
Portuguese	108	9
Dutch	41	3.41
French	15	1.25
Check	5	0.41
Swedish	1	0.08
Russian	3	0.25
Lithuanian	4	0.33
Finnish	2	0.16
No language found	116	9.66
Total	1200	100

8.6 Pagination Trends

The pagination of e-books shows that, 50.75% of e-books have 200-400 pages, 26.03% have 1- 200 pages and 8.83% e-books has 401-600 pages whereas 12.25 % don't depict the total number of pages. It shows that, e-books are available on DOAB are properly structured and well documented e-books. (Table 5)

Table 5. Pagination wise distribution of E-books

Pagination	No. of E-Books	% of E-Books
1-200	313	26.03
201-400	609	50.75
401-600	106	8.83
601-800	19	1.58
801-1000	3	0.25
More than 1000	3	0.25
No Pages Found	147	12.25
Total	1200	100

9. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Looking into the results it is evident from the study that, the collection of e-books on social sciences is rapidly growing on DOAB. These e-books cover major subjects like anthropology, education, ethnology, gender studies, library and information science, media and communication, psychology, social sciences (general) Sociology and Sport Science in these subjects majority of E-books that is 332 (27.66%) are available on social science (general) whereas only 15 (1.25%) are available on sports science. Out of 1200 E-books, 1083 e-books are available under Creative Commons and 117 are available on other comparable institutional licenses. The licenses are very important to increase usage of these e-books as they are available under the banner of 'free to read and free to share' for all non-commercial purposes. The e-books are published by well known publishers like springer and other academic publishers and institutions; hence quality of e-books cannot be doubted. The maximum number i. e. 656 (54.66%) E-books on DOAB are contributed by single authors followed by 292 (24.33%) are contributed by two authors. Whereas only 36 (3%) of the E-books are Edited. The Social Science e-books are published in different languages, majority in English i.e. 702 (58.5%) followed by German, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Spanish and French respectively. It shows that e-books on DOAB can reach wider population across the world because these are the major languages in the world. The majority of these e-books have been published in recent years from 2011-16 (62.57%), which show that these e-books contain the fresh thought and information. The pagination analysis shows that, e-books are of various sizes, though the majority of E-books i.e. 609 (50.72%) have 201- 400 pages. This shows that, e-books available through DOAB are well structured and well documented.

10. CONCLUSIONS

Open access, in libraries emerging, which has helped to bridge the gap in resource sharing, making it accessible in a far

better way, limiting the expenses and above all standardizing which helps different systems to share their resources. The present study shows the growth of open access e-books in the social sciences. The open access is the huge step taken to promote knowledge based society. But still lot need to be done explore the full potential. Many more directories need to be created like DOAB. There is also need to be taken care of issues like copyright violation, plagiarism, preservation of documents and technological problems. What is more important here is that, to provide an easy accessibility and increase in the number of e-books on DOAB in the field of social sciences.

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