

# Institutional repositories in Japanese national universities: historical and philosophical reflections

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This presentation outlines backgrounds and philosophy of collective efforts for nationwide implementation of institutional repositories in Japan, briefly describing government-funded, library-based preliminary attempts in the 1990s and underlying principles for the current collaborative developments in Japanese university libraries.

In the 1990s, Japanese government funded a few national university libraries to creation of "digital libraries," the sense of which was digital preservation of library resources. While most libraries focused on the image digitization of rare materials such as fine arts, historical documents and hand-drawn maps, the University of Tsukuba's digital library attempted to collect and make accessible born digital academic and professional papers published by affiliated research faculty in exactly the same form of what we would now call an "institutional repository," but failed to achieve its alleged goals due mainly to misplaced copyright arrangement, technological prematurity and, among other things, lack of philosophy that would support and drive library's and faculty's motives for creation of an institutional repository.

Current underlying policies apparently shared by Japanese university libraries are: that IRs help enhance the impact of its affiliated university's research by organizing, preserving, and disseminating its intellectual achievements; that IRs should be developed and maintained by university libraries in collaboration with a central portal system that automatically harvests metadata and navigates users to appropriate resources residing in each university's repository; and that libraries are aware of the need of strategic approach to faculty members in developing and maintaining IRs in favor of the importance of institutionally supported self-archiving. A government council's report published in 2002, which reviews the 1990s projects and proposes necessary measures of improvement of scholarly communication in

Japan, has been often quoted to support current efforts to convince faculty members and university administration.

A relatively large number of university libraries are currently working on constructing institutional repositories in close collaboration with the National Institute of Informatics (NII), which constructs an integrated and navigation-oriented metadata database system using OAI-PMH. Successful cases from Chiba University and Nagoya University will be described in detail with respect to advocacy as well as technical aspects. The NII's metadata database project will be reported in another presentation.