**Ensuring access to theses in the Arab speaking world – University of Jordan initiatives**

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# Key words: Digitization, digital collection preservation, University of Jordan, academic libraries, theses

Theme: the primacy of global access to information for learning and scholarship.

Aims: The paper examines some of the digitization projects at the library of the University of Jordan. As the library acts as the deposit centre for theses from the Arab world universities an effective management policy for deposit, management and access is required. The paper illustrates some of the existing workflows and considers the challenges and possible improvements.

Background: In the UK, the EThOS project was part of an early Digital Repositories programme of JISC (2005-2007) that also include Repository Bridge (automated linkage of national and institutional repositories. University libraries in developing countries are promoting electronic thesis collections, e.g. in Africa (MaBaro and Otiode, 2014; Ezema and Ogwu, 2013). In 2005, the Indian National Theses Database (INTED) was created to allow mandatory online submission of metadata sets of a PhD thesis (Khaparde and Ambedkar, 2014).

Methods: Interviews with library staff in the Archives and Microfilm department provided details about the methods used for the collection and management of print and electronic theses in the University of Jordan. A business process modelling technique (Riva) (Ould, 2005) using role activity diagrams illustrated some of the existing workflows, the challenges and possible improvements.

Findings: Some Arab universities do not send theses on regular basis; some do not collaborate at all, others are experiencing difficult political conditions that affect their collaboration with the University of Jordan. Workflows vary according to the format of the thesis, and for older theses that arrive in print format only, the work involves cutting the bound thesis, digitization, cataloguing and classification. The number of digitized print theses has reached 77,885 titles, out of total of 84,043, but it is a slow process. All newly submitted theses from Jordanian universities come in print and on a CD, but other external institutions may use different methods (mail, or direct uploading to the webpage provided by the University of Jordan). Access is relatively limited. Students at the University of Jordan can access and use print theses in the reading hall but they cannot borrow them. The online theses repository provides full text and all academic staff, students and researchers can access these from any workstation within the university campus, but only staff may access the theses databases (read only) outside the network. Resourcing for digitization is limited, and the digitization itself is currently outsourced although other processes are done inhouse.

Conclusions: The current online uploading of theses (as in EThOS) updated in 2017 would save time and make the cataloguing and classification of the theses easier. A full preservation policy is also required.