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For Paul Tam,

Welcome Speech

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests, allow me to extend to you a warm welcome to our conference, “Promoting Scholarly Communication in the 21st Century: The Role of Institutional Repositories in the Open Access Movement”. With such a lengthy title, it may be difficult to understand what we will hear over the coming two days.

From my perspective, as the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research at this University, The University of Hong Kong, the issues to be presented at this conference are those that can make our research at HKU, and at our sister institutions in Hong Kong, more visible to would-be readers. Two of the goals of HKU’s stated mission are,

- To advance knowledge through research and scholarly activity
- To disseminate knowledge to benefit and serve Hong Kong, China and the international community.

In this regard, institutional repositories and open access can make our HKU research more discoverable, more useful, and more highly cited in Hong Kong, mainland China, and throughout the international community.

I would like to take a moment here to describe some of the milestones in research here at HKU. (from, <http://www.hku.hk/about/profile.html> -- maybe have a powerpoint slide showing these numbers?) My colleagues from other universities must please excuse me now as I sing the praises of my Alma Mater.

- ✚ In 2006-07, we had 215 winning proposals with the UGC’s Research Grants Council.
- ✚ Since 1995, ten of our scholars have been inducted as academicians into the Chinese Academy of Sciences.
- ✚ The HK RGC Annual Report showed 5,046 peer-reviewed refereed publications in 2004-05 from HKU, or 4.0 publications per academic & research staff member.
- ✚ The ISI Web of Science showed 2,712 publications in 2005 from HKU.
- ✚ 59 HKU Academic staff have been ranked by the ISI Essential Science Indicators (June 2006) among the world’s top 1% of scientists, based on the number of citations recorded for their publications.
- ✚ The article in Scopus today with the most citations of any Hong Kong institution shows that it has been cited 1,032 times.
 - Lai, C.L. et al., “A one-year trial of lamivudine for chronic hepatitis B”

New England Journal of Medicine 1998 339 (2), pp.61-68.

- Prof. CL Lai is a top researcher in the HKU Department of Medicine.

We are proud of these accomplishments in HKU research, and we are sure that our sister institutions are equally proud of their own research accomplishments. However, while these accomplishments are impressive, they would matter very little if no one could discover this research, and then use it to solve real-world problems, cure infirmities, or use it as a base for new research. To paraphrase the words of St. Matthew, we do not want to hide our light under a bushel. We want to unlock this treasure, and share it with the world.

We disseminate this research in several ways. We rely upon publishers to publish this information and then other university libraries to buy subscriptions and make it available to their scholars. Every year we create and publish a printed book and web page called, "Research & Scholarship" showing citations to all the research of HKU. We know that many of our faculties, departments, and individual scholars maintain web pages and place upon them citations to their research output.

However, the best proven way to disseminate this research is to place the full-text openly on the web, so that search engines such as Google can index it and serve it up to would-be readers. One evidence of success in this regard are the theses at HKU. In 2001 we began to require new postgraduate students to deposit electronic full-text theses with our Libraries. In 2006 the Libraries completed scanning older theses, so that approximately 13,000 HKU theses are online in open access. In 2005/2006 there were 6,300 checkouts of printed theses. During the same year there were 108,200 downloads of online open access HKU theses. The most popular thesis, was the PhD research thesis, "The rise and decline of Cantopop: a study of Hong Kong popular music" by Dr. James Wong, one of Hong Kong's famous Cantopop singers who recently passed away.

Other studies show that the difference in citation rates can increase up to 250% for articles freely available on the webⁱ, compared to those accessible with paid subscription only. In support of this, more than 90% of publishers now offer some type of program to support articles in open access. Some allow open access after a period of embargo. Some allow options for authors or their fund sources to purchase open access. Others allow previous versions, before final editing, to be posted to the web in open access.

In this regard I hope that the distinguished speakers at this conference and our audience of academics, administrators and publishers can come to an agreement on how best to promote the scholarly research and communication that is created in Hong Kong.

ⁱ Harnad, S. (2005) "Australia Is not maximising the return on its research investment." In Steele, Prof Colin, Eds. Proceedings National Scholarly Communications Forum 2005, Sydney, Australia. See - <http://www.ecs.soton.ac.uk/~harnad/Temp/research-australia.doc>.