ABSTRACT

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORIES (IRs): COMPARING ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING INITIATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TWO IR PROJECTS

by

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The development of institutional repositories (IRs) emerged as a new strategy that allows universities to apply systematic leverage to accelerate changes taking place in scholarship. This is made possible by technological developments in terms of digital publishing, open source standards and a significant drop in on-line storage costs. With the emergence of IRs, otherwise scattered information can be grouped within a single information system. IRs have been increasingly prevalent for about ten years now, and the extent of growth continues to increase.

The implementation and use of institutional repositories has been explored in several recent research studies. However, very little research has touched the impact of organizational factors such as institution characteristics and leadership influencing on initiation and implementation of IRs. To better understand the organizational and institutional impact influence the use of digital repositories in an academic environment, I examined two institutional repository projects for my dissertation in two countries: the U.S. and Taiwan. The focus of my inquiry was on how institutions’ organizational factors influence the initiation and implementation of
institutional repositories and knowledge building in the context of their academic work. In order to examine the complexity of this phenomenon, I conducted a comparative study through the qualitative research approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with librarians and administrative faculty. Document analysis was conducted on each case to determine which factors were related to the implementation of the institutional repository.

Results: The results suggest that a formal faculty leader in the initial stages of development of institutional repository project may assist in garnering faculty support related to the endeavor and that later administrative librarians may be required when the institution has developed sufficient faculty support. A thorough understanding of the organizational nature of the institution is required to navigate through the approval and leadership structures of the institution.

Conclusions: Organizational leadership interacts with institutional characteristics to effect change. These interactions describe a model of change that is comprehensive and within the institutional context.