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Open access

This entry was posted in [Library posts](#) on April 2, 2013 by Michael Maua.

openaccess

Open Access (OA) is a worldwide movement that promotes free online access to scientific and scholarly content to any interested party without copyright or price restrictions. OA has brought enormous changes in academic publishing landscape as it gives an alternative to closed, subscription based access to scholarly work.

Researchers can embrace OA by publishing their work in OA Journals or archiving copies of their publications in Institutional Repositories (IRs). These two measures will ensure worldwide access to scholarly literature hence remove the isolation of researchers, raise visibility of research output, and boost citations and impact. It will also foster collaborative research which in this case it's better resourced, broader based, and often inter-disciplinary.

In Kenya for example the OA movement is steadily gaining momentum with several initiatives already in place. At the government level, there is Kenya Open data and Kenya Law reports. These two OA databases allow core legal and government data to be accessible in digital format for researchers, policymakers and the public. Pwani University have also embraced OA by establishing an Institutional Repository which is an online archive of research publications produced by PU researchers.

The establishment of Pwani University College OA Institutional Repository reiterates Pwani University College commitment to the OA movement. PUC IR can be accessed by clicking <http://elibrary.pu.ac.ke/ir/>. This service is maintained by the library and its major objective is to increase visibility of Pwani University's research output. The IR was implemented in July 2012 using Dspace software. The IR collects, preserves, and disseminates intellectual output produced by staff members and students of Pwani University College. Publications stored in the IR include published journal articles, book chapters, papers presented in conferences, theses and dissertations. In addition, the IR keeps a record of ongoing and completed research projects at PUC and provides access to various university publications including speeches and public lectures. Items from the various departments are already available in the IR and the work of populating the IR is ongoing. To begin with, the IR provides access to abstracts only. Full text research articles, Electronic Thesis, and Dissertation (ETDs) shall be available as soon as the policies governing the IR operations are in place. PUC Past examination papers are stored in a separate OA database called the Exam Bank, which is available on this link: <http://elibrary.pu.ac.ke/exambank/>

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