

“ASK THE LIBRARIAN” about ... DIGITAL THESES

Pātai: (Question)

I've heard we have to submit a digital copy of our thesis. What are the advantages and issues around doing this? How much Māori and indigenous research is available in digital format?

Librarian Jennifer Hobson replies:

This is indeed a timely question. There are a number of issues for scholars to consider as the publication of theses in digital format follows global trends of 'open' access to scholarly research. Most universities in New Zealand now collect their top scholars' research in digital format, and with the authors' permission make this available online in digital repositories or archives (also called institutional or research repositories).

This is significant for Māori and indigenous research as it facilitates the rapid interconnection of ideas while also addressing concerns around the appropriate use, reuse and preservation of research. An increasing amount of research that is culturally significant, unique, or was previously unpublished is now becoming easier to find and gaining more international exposure.

Since 2007, completing PhD students at the University of Auckland for instance, have to submit a digital copy of their thesis to the University's repository known as ResearchSpace (<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz>). Scholars can also submit other research materials such as conference papers and journal articles (as publishers often give permission for works to be re-published in another place).

What are the advantages for authors?

Many authors worry about their work being freely available on the Internet. However, contrary to the popular belief that this increases the risk of plagiarism, it can also help to guard against plagiarism as research becomes easier to locate and verify.

Publishing the results of research or 'getting it out there', is a key part of the academic research process. By depositing works into your institution's digital repository you are provided with a stable, secure channel for near-instantaneous worldwide dissemination of research.

Your research will gain exposure and be cited more frequently as it will be found by Google, Google Scholar and other major search engines, often within a couple of days of being made available. This will increase your international research profile. Not only will your research be more accessible to your peers and nationally, it will have truly global reach ... and you won't have to worry about maintaining your own personal or departmental website of published work.

The security and preservation of your work is also guaranteed as the institution undertakes to keep digital file formats up to date. Digital files also allow a new print copy to be made if the original deteriorates. The URL or link provided to your work will be durable and permanent as Handle URLs are used (the institution's domain name is not in the URL so it will always remain the same even if the name of the website changes).

While authors submit their own content initially, an administrator will ensure the work complies with copyright legislation adding consents and copyright statements. The work is also catalogued and the metadata is checked before it is published online.

Copyright for digital materials

Many scholars have concerns about copyright when making material available online, so a range of measures give authors protection against unlawful use of their work, including:

1. Making it clear that the author retains copyright over the work.
2. Using a cover sheet for each document that spells out the terms and conditions of use.
3. Creating a field in the database record that conveys rights information.
4. Making available information on copyright in the submission instructions and guidelines e.g. on the PhD Collection homepage:

<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/handle/2292/2>

Information about copyright is provided to authors to clarify confusing issues such as 3rd party copyright (when written permission is required from the copyright owner of any diagram, chart, graphic or image that has been used in your work).

Authors can choose the level of access to their work. The most common option is no restriction on public access; however when a work contains information that falls into a grey area the abstract, front pages and table of contents can be made viewable only and the rest of the thesis may be available by individual request.

Māori and Indigenous content in ResearchSpace

- ResearchSpace (University of Auckland) allows keyword searching in the full text of documents. A simple search for the keyword 'Māori' currently finds 360 titles over a diverse range of subjects and disciplines. Click here to see the titles:
<http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/simple-search?query=maori&submit=Go>
- Use Advanced Search to find your keywords in particular fields (e.g. subject, title, abstract, sponsor or discipline) or limit your search to particular collections such as the Masters Theses, PhD Theses or various faculty collections
- The Library's **Oceania Collection** currently highlights titles relating to New Zealand and the Pacific > go to: <http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz> > Communities & Collections > University of Auckland Library > Oceania Collection
- Here is an example of a PhD thesis with unrestricted access:
Whitinui, P. (2008). *The indigenous factor: Exploring kapa haka as a culturally responsive learning environment in mainstream secondary schools.*
<http://hdl.handle.net/2292/2377>

- Here is an example of a PhD thesis with restricted access:
Petrie, H. (2004). *For a season quite the rage?": Ships and flourmills in the Maōri economy 1840-1860s*. <http://hdl.handle.net/2292/2284>

Institutional repositories in New Zealand**

- A summary of the repositories held by New Zealand universities and tertiary institutes is given in the following table. You can search them individually from their homepages or search them all at the same time on the Kiwi Research Information Service (KRIS) website at <http://nzresearch.org.nz>;

Manukau Institute of Technology	http://www.coda.ac.nz/mit/
NorthTec	http://www.coda.ac.nz/northtec/
Unitec New Zealand	http://www.coda.ac.nz/unitec/
Universal College of Learning	http://www.coda.ac.nz/ucol/
Whitireia Community Polytechnic	http://www.coda.ac.nz/whitireia/
Auckland University of Technology	http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/
Lincoln University	http://researcharchive.lincoln.ac.nz/dspace/
Massey University	http://muir.massey.ac.nz/
The University of Auckland	http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/
University of Canterbury	http://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/
University of Waikato	http://waikato.researchgateway.ac.nz/
Victoria University of Wellington	http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/
University of Otago	http://eprints.otago.ac.nz/
Waikato Institute of Technology	http://researcharchive.wintec.ac.nz/
Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology	http://repository.cpit.ac.nz/
Open Polytechnic of New Zealand	http://repository.openpolytechnic.ac.nz/

**Links to Auckland's ResearchSpace and to KRIS are in the Journal's Resources section

Acknowledgements

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Hayes, L. (2008). *Research Repository Case Study: The University of Auckland Library, New Zealand*. Paper presented at the Third International Conference on Open Repositories, April 1st - 4th, 2008 University of Southampton UK. Repository Managers Case Study. <http://hdl.handle.net/2292/2557>

Hayes, L., & Newton-Wade, V. (2008). *Giving research global reach: ResearchSpace@Auckland*. Poster presented at 29th IATUL Conference 2008 <http://hdl.handle.net/2292/2504>

Write to Jenny at jm.hobson@auckland.ac.nz

Learning Services Librarian, University of Auckland Library