

Defining a Persistent Identifier (PID) Strategy for Africa

Friday, 29 April 2022 09:20 (15 minutes)

Sharing and disseminating research, especially African research, is crucial for building global knowledge commons. Through access to African scholarly content, participation occurs, which will build a publishing landscape that is relevant. This regional research productivity affords growth and development in African society, yet this is one component of the scholarly communication ecosystem. Open infrastructure is another component, as well as Persistent identifiers (PIDs) —long-lasting references to digital objects of various types —which contribute to ensuring cohesion in discoverability. In order for Africa to have sustainable publishing and data sharing practices and move as a continent together in the same direction toward increasing scholarly outputs, adopting PIDs is essential.

The lack of visibility of African research outputs and scholarly publications is a well-known problem with various contributing factors. One area that is overlooked in this challenge is the need to have a Persistent Identifier (PID) strategy for Africa and implementing this strategy will help the visibility and increase Open Science in the continent.

Having a PID strategy ensures that African institutions and their researchers not only facilitate the showcasing of local scholarship but also improve findability and discovery thereof. PIDs contribute specifically to identifying outputs, irrespective of the possibility of location changes. Furthermore, PIDs provide a spotlight to all contributions in collaborations, whether it's fieldwork or authors.

This paper and presentation will articulate the effort by LIBSENSE to contextualise the African challenges being faced in the adoption of PID among the various stakeholders and describe the strategy document that institutions and national stakeholders can reference in delivering a viable PID implementation for scholarly and research outputs.

It may be beneficial for the publishing and data sharing ecosystem components to be provided and supported by the Regional Research and Educational Networks (RRENs) or National Research and Education Networks (NRENs). This will ensure that an Africa-wide strategy can be orchestrated to level the playing fields of unevenness in resources on the continent. The cost of implementing a PID strategy needs to be considered as current financial models for consortia may still prove to be prohibitive for some African countries.

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Session Classification: Infrastructure

Track Classification: Science communication infrastructure - tools, platforms and services | Infrastructure de communication scientifique - outils, plateformes et services.