
ETD and promotion of PhD students' research at the University of Reunion Island, French overseas university (Indian Ocean)

Valérie Mesgouez*^{†1,2}

¹Université de La Réunion. Bibliothèques universitaires (SCD) (SCD de l'Université de La Réunion) – Université de La Réunion, service commun de la documentation, 15 av. René Cassin CS 92003 97744 Saint-Denis 9, Réunion

²Academic library : ETD project coordinator ; Manager of the library collection “ Indian Ocean, Theses and Dissertations “ – Réunion

Abstract

The University of Reunion Island is quite a young university. Formerly referred to as a University Centre (Centre universitaire), it became a full university in 1982 and issued its first PhD in 1988. Thirty years later, the sole French university in the Indian Ocean area has become a multidisciplinary university, hosting 13000 students over several campuses. Between 40 and 50 theses get completed there each year.

Issues about promotion and wide dissemination of PhD students research are even more acute for a university located 10 000 km away from mainland France. The Reunionese academic library became involved from the very first attempts at electronic management of theses by exploring different solutions and workflows such as Cyberthèses Project. The ABES (French bibliographic agency for higher education) then played a great part and provided a valuable contribution by offering academic libraries tools and support on archiving and dissemination. At the beginning of 2010, the decision was made to step away from printed PhD theses and turn to ETD.

This process followed several stages. After six years, it's interesting to look back on achievements and difficulties, to assess the way it operates today, to investigate needs and improvements in order to strengthen this technological development dedicated to PhD students and visibility of their research, to keep determined in our contribution to enhance students and researchers skills in the management of their data.

It is also necessary to assess the results of the previous project on digitizing and bringing online prior to 2010 printed material. Both projects aim at providing a complete online collection of PhD theses (and master's degree dissertations)

Moreover, the dissemination of electronic theses is only one aspect of the diffusion of and access to publicly funded research results: the University of Reunion Island and its academic library have been investigating ways of promoting dissemination and access to scholarly research produced by their own researchers. They have decided to adopt a proactive policy on

*Speaker

[†]Corresponding author: valerie.mesgouez@univ-reunion.fr

students training, referencing, depositing and opening access to scientific papers which will be more thoroughly examined in this paper.

As shown by figures available on the open platform TEL, online theses are much more consulted than printed ones. The library takes part in the influence of Reunionese research, which includes specific fields as Creole studies , history and geography of Reunion island and other islands or states located in the Indian Ocean, earth sciences and volcanism, coral reefs, plant and marine biodiversity, ... Through these efforts to promote research, the academic library can play its full role, that is supporting the university community and providing expert advice in order to enhance the international exposure of PhD students and researchers.

On the author:

Valérie Mesgouez, conservateur des bibliothèques, currently works at the academic library of the University of Reunion Island as the head of the Science library, one of the three main academic libraries in this University. As the theses coordinator, she is in charge of coordinating actions initiated by the library in order to manage theses and dissertations. She formerly managed the Indian Ocean library, part of the Arts and Humanities library, and supported conservation and cooperation programs. Her first position was to deal with issues regarding national book prices and with the French policy for libraries and independant bookshops and retailers, within the French Ministry for Culture.

Keywords: University of Reunion Island, European Outermost regions, French overseas department, Indian Ocean studies, ETD workflow, Students training, Printed Theses Digitization, PhD students research, Research outputs deposit, Open access, Digital identity