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Perceptions of value:
the case of the Stellenbosch University Institutional Repository

29 March 2019

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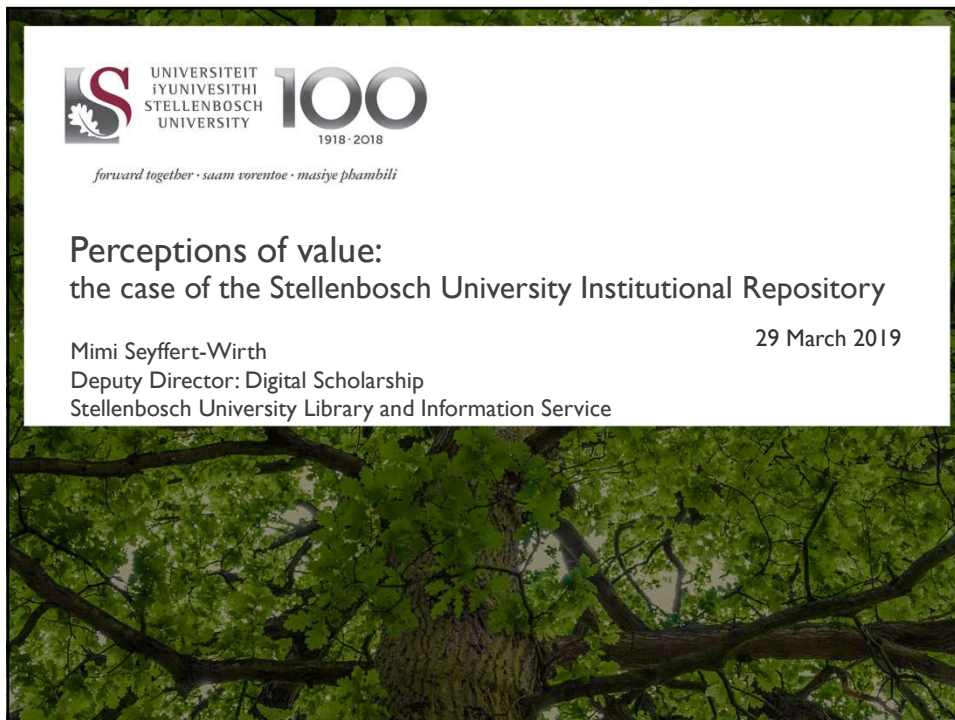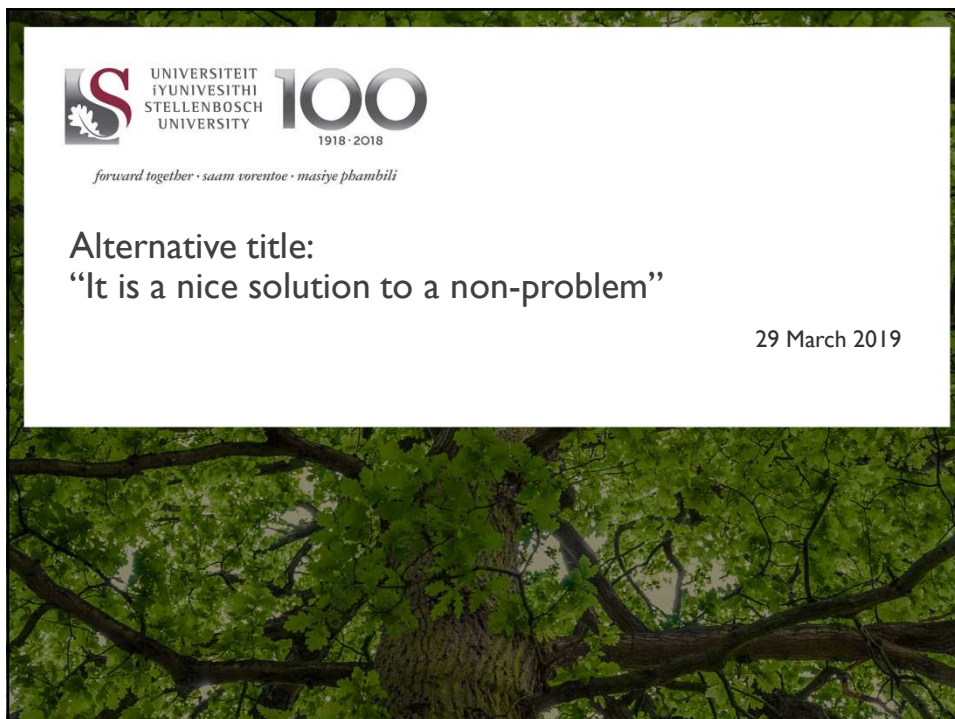

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Alternative title:
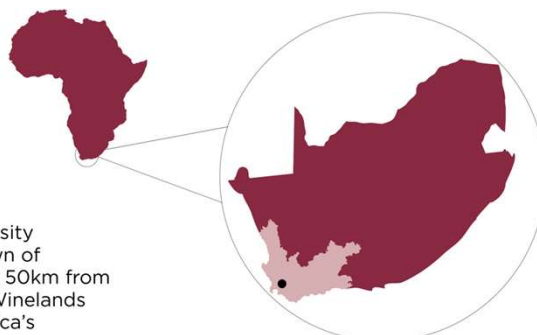"It is a nice solution to a non-problem"

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2. Research questions
3. Methodology
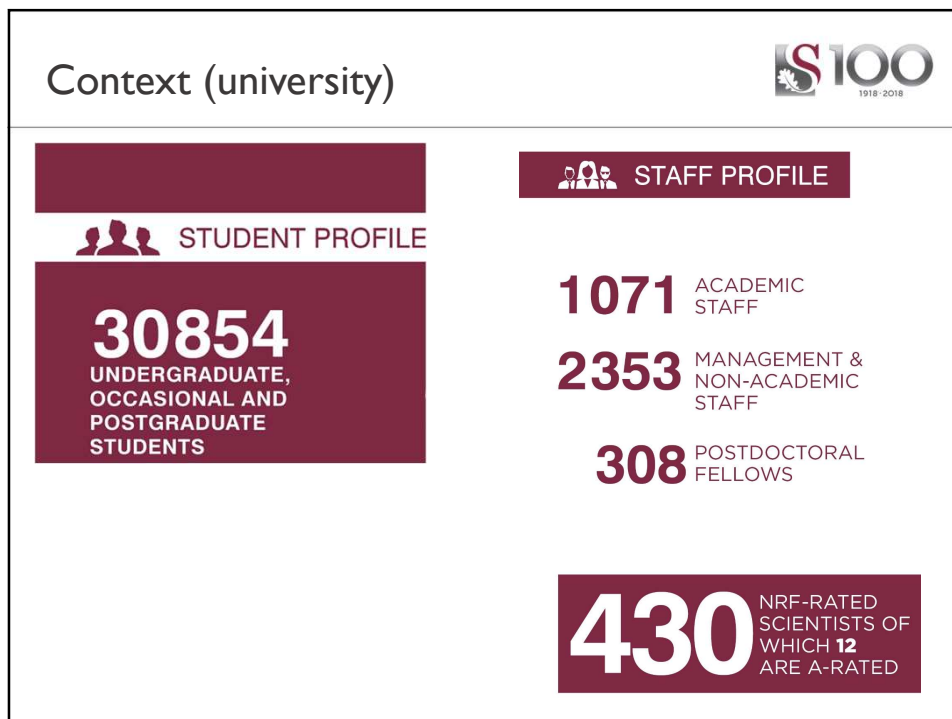4. Results and discussion of results
5. Recommendations

Context (university)

WHERE ARE WE?

Stellenbosch University is located in the town of Stellenbosch, about 50km from Cape Town, in the Winelands region of South Africa's Western Cape Province.

Context (university)

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STUDENT PROFILE

30854
UNDERGRADUATE,
OCCASIONAL AND
POSTGRADUATE
STUDENTS

STAFF PROFILE

1071 ACADEMIC STAFF

2353 MANAGEMENT & NON-ACADEMIC STAFF

308 POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

430 NRF-RATED SCIENTISTS OF WHICH **12** ARE A-RATED

Context (university)

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10
FACULTIES OFFERING
CERTIFICATES, DIPLOMAS
AND DEGREE PROGRAMMES

OUR FACULTIES
- AgriSciences
- Arts and Social Sciences
- Economic and Management Sciences
- Education
- Engineering
- Law
- Medicine and Health Sciences
- Military Science
- Science
- Theology

Context (library)

Stellenbosch University Library and Information Service
1 main library; 5 branch libraries

INSTUTIONAL REPOSITORY – SUNScholar

- Established 2008
- Scholarly initiative to increase global visibility of research output
- Preserve institutional research output
- Host theses, dissertations, research articles, conference papers, inaugural lectures
- 60 000 items
- 600 000 visits annually, 300 000 downloads

SELF-ARCHIVING POLICY

- Established 2014
- Institutional policy asking SU researchers to deposit copy of research output in IR
- Library is curator of the policy and responsible for the implementation thereof

Research questions and sub-questions

To what extent are researchers at Stellenbosch University aware of the **value and benefits** of the institutional repository and the university's self-archiving policy

- What is the **documented value** of a **self-archiving policy** or mandate for building an institutional repository?
- What are the **documented benefits** of preserving and making research output available in **institutional repositories**?
- What is the **level of awareness** that Stellenbosch University researchers have of the university's **self-archiving policy** and its **institutional repository**?
- What is the general **attitude** towards the university's **self-archiving policy** and depositing research output in an **institutional repository?**
- What **value** do Stellenbosch University researchers see in **self-archiving?**
- What **correlation** is there between Stellenbosch University researchers' perceived and the **documented** benefits of using the repository?
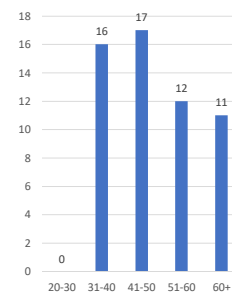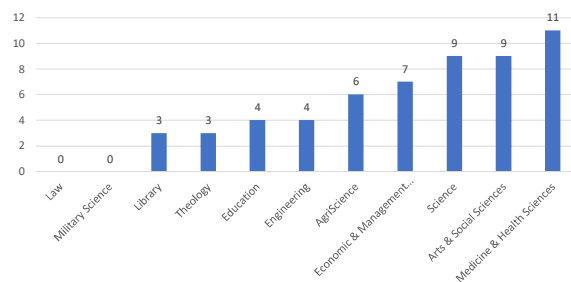
Methodology

- Qualitative research approach
- Case study as methodology
- Data collection tool: Questionnaire (open-ended and closed questions)
- Content analysis
- Purposive sampling
- Target population: Stellenbosch University researchers
- Sample population: NRF C-rated and Y-rated researchers

- Questionnaires sent to 308 respondents (including 5 for pilot study)

Results

- 56 completed responses received
- Rich data – almost all respondents completed open-ended questions
- Data imported from SUNSurveys to Excel (already anonymized)
- Representation of response:

Results

Results informed by the literature:

- What is the **documented value** of a **self-archiving policy** or mandate for building an institutional repository?
    - Valuable in terms of building institutional repositories and increasing participation in and use of institutional repositories
    - Generally promote and encourage green open access
- What are the **documented benefits** of preserving and making research output available in **institutional repositories**?
    - Benefits widely recognised,
    - Benefits society, individual researchers and institutions well documented
        - Changing scholarly communication practices for the better
        - Providing increased access to institutional research output (including theses and dissertations)
        - Providing increased access to individual research output, leading to increased impact
        - Centrally archiving research output
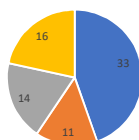

Results

- What is the level of **awareness** that SU researchers have of the university's **self-archiving policy** and its **institutional repository**?

6 out 56 reported not being aware of IR
(High awareness; contrast to findings in literature)
How did they become aware of the repository?

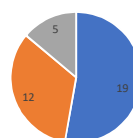26 out of 56 not being aware of policy

How did they become aware of the policy?

- Communication / information provided by the Library and Information Service
- From colleagues
- Bi-annual graduation process
- Communication from your department / faculty

- Communication / information provided by the Library and Information Service
- Communication from your department / faculty
- From colleagues

Results

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- Compliance with self-archiving policy

- 13 out of the 56 respondents (approximately 23%) reported that they have complied with the policy
- Awareness of the self-archiving policy does not necessarily translate into buy-in or compliance
- Low faculty participation in self-archiving is a prevalent issue (according to the literature)

- No significant variance in terms of a preferred option for depositing
- Indicate that all three options provided by the library are being utilised
- No variance in self-archiving behaviour according to age or discipline

Results

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- What is the general **attitude** towards the university's **self-archiving policy** and depositing research output in an institutional repository?

- 39 (approximately 70%) replied that they would consider deposit
- 6 would not
- 11 uncertain
    - Points to relatively positive attitude towards self-archiving
    - Literature reports that researchers are not necessarily against the concept of self-archiving, but struggle with other issues such as uncertainty regarding deposit

Results

- What is the general **attitude** towards the university's **self-archiving policy** and depositing research output in an institutional repository?

Comment theme	Frequency of theme
Willingness to comply with policy	16
Sharing research output and increased availability and visibility	8
Was not aware of policy, but willing to comply	7
Central archiving of research output	4
General comments regarding benefits for the individual	4
Significance of the policy	3
General comments regarding benefits for the institution	2

Examples of positive comments:

"It makes sense ... why do research and not make it available in more than one way?"

"I think that it is beneficial for the individual, department and university that research outputs be centrally collected and made available"

"I was not aware of this, but now I am and I will participate"

"If the process is explained and the benefits made clear I should have no opposition to doing it".

Results

- What is the general **attitude** towards the university's **self-archiving policy** and depositing research output in an institutional repository?

Comment theme	Frequency of theme
Uncertainty regarding and / or unawareness of deposit process	15
Administrative burden	7
Not convinced that self-archiving adds to the visibility of research outputs	7
Time constraints	5
Concerns regarding copyright issues	3

Examples of negative comments / comments pointing to lack of understanding:
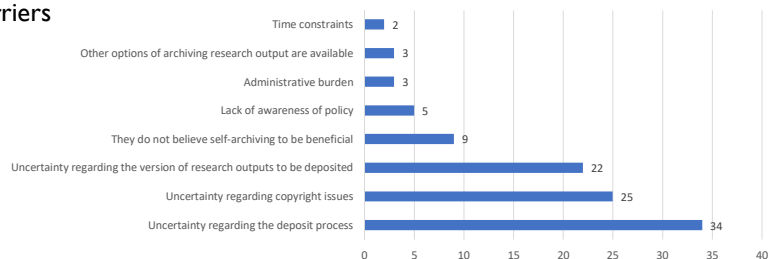
- "I am not sure what the reasons or the benefits are, and how much effort it requires"
- "It adds an extra administrative process in an already busy schedule"
- "At the moment it just seems like another administrative chore that I'd rather delay, because there are other more urgent tasks demanding my attention"
- "I have my research output on Research Gate. Therefore not that much gain in visibility by also having it on Sun Scholar"
- "Already subscribed to international archiving services which have wider reach".
- "Is it simply duplicating Scopus [?]"
- "Did not realise before of the need to self-archive copies of research output other than student theses"

Results

- What is the general **attitude** towards the university's **self-archiving policy** and depositing research output in an institutional repository?
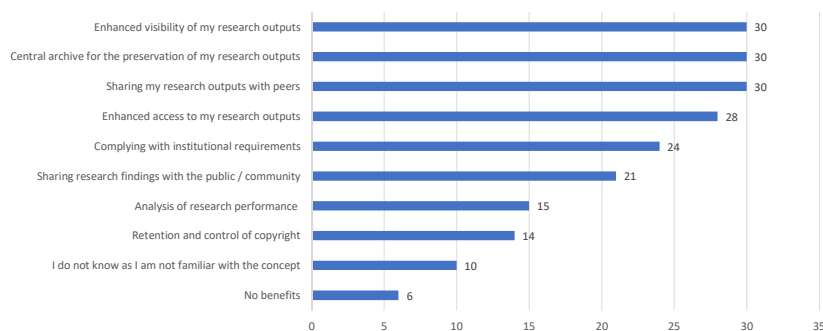
Barriers

Barrier	Value
Time constraints	2
Other options of archiving research output are available	3
Administrative burden	3
Lack of awareness of policy	5
They do not believe self-archiving to be beneficial	9
Uncertainty regarding the version of research outputs to be deposited	22
Uncertainty regarding copyright issues	25
Uncertainty regarding the deposit process	34

What can library do?

Comment theme	Frequency of theme
Increase awareness of self-archiving by communication and providing information	15
Library should assist with the process	9
Explain the process better	8
Simplify the process and / or align with existing processes	7
Explain and showcase benefits and impact	6
Provide training	5
Provide incentives for researchers to comply	3
Library has done enough	2

Results

- What **value** do Stellenbosch University researchers see in **self-archiving**?

Value	Count
Enhanced visibility of my research outputs	30
Central archive for the preservation of my research outputs	30
Sharing my research outputs with peers	30
Enhanced access to my research outputs	28
Complying with institutional requirements	24
Sharing research findings with the public / community	21
Analysis of research performance	15
Retention and control of copyright	14
I do not know as I am not familiar with the concept	10
No benefits	6

- Individual benefits come out tops
- "greater good" benefits mentioned less

Results

- What **correlation** is there between Stellenbosch University researchers' perceived and the documented benefits of using the **repository**?

- Clear correlation between perceived and documented benefits
- Benefits mostly relate to the aspects of accessibility and visibility of research outputs

Recommendations

-Communication from the LIS seems to be effective

-Recommended that LIS implement a clear marketing and communication strategy regarding the self-archiving policy

-Could include the following (based on feedback received):

- Information sessions at departmental level
- Information sessions at faculty level
- Personal communication between the library and the individual researchers
- Monthly reminders in terms of compliance with the policy
- Twice yearly sessions dedicated to self-archiving

Recommendations

-Capitalise on reported positive attitude

-LIS could review its current processes of deposit and offer expert guidance to researchers in terms of self-archiving.

-Strategies recommended:

- Align the deposit process with existing administrative processes, for example the annual research output survey at the institution where researchers have to submit details of their research output for reporting and subsidy purposes
- Review the current deposit process and attempt to develop a simpler process and provide clear guidance and training to researchers in view of the process
- Showcase the benefits of self-archiving by for example offering a value added research performance analysis service to researchers, illustrating access to their output in the repository

Concluding remarks

"It is a nice solution to a non-problem"

- IRs for librarians, or IRs for users
- Access – researchers are spoilt!