

EKT ePublishing: An Innovative Service to Support Open Access Scholarly Publishing in Greece

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Abstract. The poster presents EKT's ePublishing platform, an innovative service to support open access publishing in Greece, which enables the research community of the country to transition from a print-only mode of work to online working environments and enhance the visibility and impact of their research outputs. Emerging within an ecosystem with no prior experience or open access oriented culture, it enables the cultural shift towards open and collaborative scientific practices and the open science/open access paradigm. Focusing on the Open Book Press, EKT through its participation at the HIRMEOS project is expected to enhance the technical capacities and services of the platform that enable identification, authentication and interoperability as well as tools that enrich information and entity extraction.

Keywords. Electronic publishing, electronic books, open access, Greece

1. Introduction

The paper presents the electronic publishing platform of the National Documentation Centre (EKT) in Greece. The National Documentation Centre (EKT) – part of the National Hellenic Research Foundation (NHRF) – supports research and technology by providing infrastructure and services for the use and dissemination of Greek scientific and cultural content, while placing emphasis on open availability and the reuse of content [1]. EKT has developed an ePublishing platform, an innovative service to support open access publishing in Greece. The platform enables the research community of the country to transition from a print-only mode of work to online working environments and enhance the visibility and impact of their research outputs.

The paper focuses on the development of EKT ePublishing platform, its impact on the Greek research community and the challenges faced in the adoption of this experiment. The paper will then place particular focus on the foreseen improvements of the book platform (Open Book Press) undertaken in the context of the European funded project HIRMEOS.

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2. EKT ePublishing: The History and Challenges in Developing the Service

The ePublishing platform is based on EKT's successful collaboration with non-profit research organisations and scientific societies focusing primarily on – but not limited to – the Social Sciences and Humanities. EKT ePublishing platform was launched in 2007 with the transition of three print journals in the humanities to an online and print format [2]. The development of the service was co-financed by Greek and European funds under the “Digital Convergence” operational program and currently hosts three distinct platforms (for journals, books and conference proceedings) providing services to 27 publishers and hosting close to 7.000 articles, 600 conference papers and 6 monographs.

EKT ePublishing platforms use open source software that support in full the digital editorial process (OJS for the ejournals and eProceedings platform and OMP for the Open Book Press which hosts monographs). EKT provides a wide range of services to publishers including among others web hosting, online management of the publishing process, OJS training, technical support, helpdesk service, consulting services in producing guidelines and policies aligned with current international developments, and usage statistics. In addition, it provides persistent identifiers and indexing services, which significantly increase online availability and visibility of high quality Greek content and enhance the impact of research published in Greece. Visitors have direct and full open access to downloadable peer-reviewed content available in multiple formats (html, pdf, epub) through the different platforms with the use of advanced search tools and retrievable metadata information. This is achieved through a single-access point giving full access to online content, and allowing navigation by scientific discipline, metadata information. Those wishing to submit their manuscript to a selected journal can do so by using the electronic submission process [3].

EKT ePublishing was developed within an ecosystem with no prior experience or open access oriented culture. Despite the existence of necessary infrastructure (mainly repositories) there is still low awareness on the benefits associated with the transition to an open access environment and low engagement on the part of key stakeholders [4]. Furthermore, the findings of a previous study showing the relatively low uptake of complete online management of the editorial process by some journals hosted in the platform seem to be still valid [5]. Nevertheless, EKT ePublishing plays a key role in enabling the cultural shift towards open and collaborative scientific practices and the open science/ open access paradigm. A further challenge relates to the long-term financial sustainability of the project. EKT's participation in a number of EU-funded projects allows the smooth operation of the platform and the implementation of a series of technical improvements.

3. The eBooks Platform

The Open Book Press is one of the three epublishing platforms dedicated to the support of electronic monographs [6]. The importance of a platform dedicated to monographs is justified by the fact that monographs are still an essential part of the scholarly communication in the social sciences and humanities. The platform was launched in 2015 and currently hosts 6 monographs. EKT through its participation at HIRMEOS, a Horizon 2020 project, will enhance the technical capacities and services of the platform that enable identification, authentication and interoperability as well as tools that enrich

information and entity extraction. These improvements are expected to render technologies and content interoperable and allow the platform to be embedded into the European Open Science Cloud.

4. Conclusions

EKT ePublishing has become a unique service for the Greek research and academic community in alignment with EKT's strategy of providing horizontal infrastructure and services to stakeholders in Greece. EKT's participation in European projects and networks allows it align the services provided with international standards. Future plans focus on expanding collaborations and strengthening the technical capacities of the service. In relation to the ebooks platform ensuring a steady source of financing is a key issue.

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