

Technische Informationsbibliothek (TIB) publishes results of survey

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Information procurement and publishing behaviour in science and technology // Researchers would like more advisory services on Open Access, research data and the handling of non-textual material

HANNOVER, 25 September 2017 – How do researchers in the natural sciences and engineering find out about the latest developments and trends in their discipline? Which library services would they like to support them during the work process? How do they publish their research results? These were just some of the questions asked by the Technische Informationsbibliothek (TIB) – German National Library of Science and Technology in an online survey on information procurement and publishing behaviour in the natural sciences and engineering (<https://tib.eu/tibsurveyinformationprocurementandpublishingbehaviour>). The survey was completed by more than 1,400 researchers.

“The results of the survey help us at TIB, and hopefully other information infrastructure facilities too, to better understand the user groups’ needs and requirements and to align future developments to these needs even more closely,” stated Professor Dr. Sören Auer, Director of TIB. “As the Information Centre for Science and Technology, our ambition is to support researchers at all stages of their work by providing both ‘analogue’ and digital services,” Auer continued. Such services include TIB’s AV-Portal for scientific videos from the areas of science and technology, the interdisciplinary data repository RADAR for the digital preservation of research data, SlideWiki for the collaborative creation and sharing of presentations as well as DataCite and TIB’s DOI Service for the referencing of research data.

“Some of our assumptions have been confirmed by the survey: research data has now become a central element of scientific output; Open Access can help generate greater visibility, but requires that publication media have a similarly high reputation; in addition to traditional publications, other modalities such as software, knowledge graphs, 3D models, videos and data are gaining in importance,” Auer explained.

Selected results from the survey – an overview

Information procurement and specialist information search

According to the information procurement part of the TIB survey, the respondents use traditional methods such as scientific publications most frequently, followed by personal contact with other experts and visits to specialist events. When searching for specialist information, the majority of the researchers use Google (81 per cent), Wikipedia (68 per cent) and Google Scholar (60 per cent). Library portals are used regularly by half of the respondents, who consider direct access to data and documents to be one of the strengths of such portals. Specialist articles, including articles in Open Access journals, are the form of publication used most frequently among the researchers. Images and graphics account for a moderate proportion (60%), followed by research data (for example, measured data, material samples, simulation data and structural formulae) and non-commercial publications – so-called grey literature, which includes publications such as conference proceedings and congress and research reports that cannot be obtained from bookshops.

Production of scientific contributions and material

In addition to producing traditional publications, researchers also create other types of material, such as data, spreadsheets, electronic text documents, graphics, films and databases. The respondents stated that they produce articles in journals, including Open Access journals, most frequently in the course of their research activities. 60 per cent stated that the material they produce is also published as non-commercial publications (for example, conference proceedings).

In addition to such textual material, 44 per cent of the respondents also produce non-textual material such as images, graphics and 3D models in the research process. 10% now also produce audiovisual material, such as recordings of experiments.

Publication of scientific contributions and material

Two-thirds of the scholars now publish their work in Open Access journals, the main reasons they stated being free accessibility, greater visibility and citation probability. There is a clear disparity between the production and the publication of non-textual material: although the majority of the researchers produce non-textual material, only a small percentage of them publish such material. For example, only 20 per cent of the respondents publish their research data or scientific software. Audiovisual material created in the research process is published by only one in ten of the researchers. 73 per cent of the respondents publish their material with a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), which facilitates the persistent citation and linking of digital publications on the internet. Most of the publications with a DOI are scientific articles. In contrast, DOIs are allocated much less frequently in the case of research data, images and graphics, grey literature, audiovisual media, 3D models and software. According to TIB's survey, more than half of the researchers are unaware of the fact that DOIs can also be allocated for other digital publications.

Researchers wish to receive support

Another finding of the survey is that the researchers wish to receive support in various areas: for example, almost one third of the respondents signalled the need for advice on Open Access and text repositories. 25 per cent of the respondents would use advisory services on research data, for example concerning the publishing and citation of data. In the area of audiovisual media, researchers would make use of advisory services with regard to search processes, as well as issues relating to citability, licensing and publication.

More information about the results of the survey

You can find a detailed summary of the study on the TIB website – “The information procurement and publishing behaviour of researchers in the natural sciences and engineering”:

<https://tib.eu/tibsurveyinformationprocurementandpublishingbehaviour>

The questionnaire used in the survey and an anonymised section of the raw data are available at <https://doi.org/10.22000/54>.

About TIB

The Technische Informationsbibliothek (TIB) – German National Library of Science and Technology in Hannover is the Leibniz Information Centre for Science and Technology and University Library. As the German national library for all areas of engineering, as well as architecture, chemistry, information technology, mathematics and physics, it provides in its specialist fields national and international researchers and industry practitioners and – as a University Library – students, researchers and teaching staff from all faculties of Leibniz Universität Hannover as well as interested local citizens with literature and information in both printed and electronic form. As the world's largest specialised library in its subject areas, TIB has outstanding collections of fundamental and highly specialised literature on science and technology. In order to optimise the services it offers, TIB conducts applied research and development. TIB is a public-law foundation of the Federal State of Lower Saxony. It is a member of the Leibniz Association.

Weitere Informationen:

- <https://www.tib.eu/en> – More information about the Technische Informationsbibliothek (TIB) – German National Library of Science and Technology

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