Panel Discussion: Role of Universities in encouraging better research and deeper knowledge base through open access

Speaker:
Chaired by: Sudhir Krishnaswamy and Panelists: Sunil Abraham, Lawrence Liang & Rajesh Kasturirangan

Date / Time:
January 18, 2012 - 3:30pm

Venue:
Room 307, Third Floor, Pixel B, APU

Abstract:
Open access (OA) refers to unrestricted access via the Internet to articles published in scholarly journals, and also increasingly to book chapters or monographs. Open Access can be 'Gratis OA' which is no-cost online access or 'Libre OA' which is no-cost online access with some additional usage rights. Open Content is a similar idea but includes right to modify the work.

Various, though similar, definitions of open access exist like the *Budapest Open Access Initiative,* the *Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities,* the *Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing*, and the *Washington DC Principles for Free Access to Science.*

The Open Access idea can also be extended to the learning objects and resources provided in e-learning. Open Access might promote open knowledge which has the potential to deliver far-reaching societal benefits. Azim Premji University is dedicated to facilitating an equitable society. It has been working towards turning knowledge into action for many to improve quality of education and development. It integrates academic research with ground level interventions to build 'models' and inform policy design. What role does open access play in encouraging such academic practice further and in aiding development? What role can a university, with the vision facilitate social change, play in encouraging open access?

A Note on the Speaker:

About the Chair:

Sudhir Krishnaswamy

Sudhir was a Professor of Law at the West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata India where he taught Constitutional Law and Jurisprudence. He studied law at the National Law School of India University, Bangalore (BA LLB 1998) and the University of

Oxford (BCL 2000 and DPhil 2008). Before NUJS he taught at the National Law School of India University, Bangalore and Pembroke College, University of Oxford. He has engaged with the Government at various levels including the Prime Minister's Committee on Infrastructure and the Kasturirangan Committee on Bangalore's Governance. He has published widely in various academic and non-academic journals and newspapers. His book titled 'Democracy and Constitutionalism in India' was published by OUP in 2009. His research interests include constitutional law, administrative law, intellectual property law and reform of the legal system, legal profession and legal education in India.
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About the Panelists:
Sunil Abraham
Sunil Abraham is the Executive Director of the Centre for Internet and Society. He founded Mahiti in 1998 which aims to reduce the cost and complexity of Information and Communication Technology for the Voluntary Sector by using Free Software. He was elected an Ashoka fellow in 1999 to 'explore the democratic potential of the Internet' and was also granted a Sarai FLOSS fellowship in 2003. Email: sunil@cis-india.org

Lawrence Liang
Lawrence, a graduate form National Law School subsequently pursued his Masters degree in Warwick, England on a Chevening Scholarship. His key areas of interest are law, technology and culture, the politics of copyright and he has been working closely with Sarai, New Delhi on a joint research project Intellectual Property and the Knowledge/Culture Commons. A keen follower of the open source movement in software, Lawrence has been working on ways of translating the open source ideas into the cultural domain. Email: lawrence@altlawforum.org

Rajesh Kasturirangan
Rajesh is a faculty member at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) in Bangalore where he heads the cognition programme. He is also member of the Mind and Society Initiative, Azim Premji University. He has a Ph.D. in Cognitive Science from Massachusetts Institute of Technology as well as a Ph.D. in Mathematics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research is a combination of mathematical modeling, philosophy (both Indian and western) and cognitive science.

The open scholarship movement was given an immense filip in the mid nineties- at least in the mathematics and physics - with the inaugural of the Los Alamos Arxiv. At the same time, we have seen how closed scholarship and proprietary data have led to exorbitant journal prices and have hurt research in less privileged institutions and countries. I believe that access to information and knowledge should be a fundamental right; open systems are key to implementing that right. Email: rkasturi@gmail.com