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ePublications@SCU and postgraduates@SCU

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ePublications@SCU is an electronic repository administered by Southern Cross University Library. Its goal is to capture and preserve the intellectual output of Southern Cross University authors and researchers, and to increase visibility and impact through open access to researchers around the world. For further information please contact epubs@scu.edu.au.

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ePublications@SCU - <http://epubs.scu.edu.au> - is the name of Southern Cross University's institutional repository. Its goal is to capture and preserve the intellectual output of SCU authors and researchers. It also increases the visibility and impact of SCU research by providing open access to SCU research outputs via the internet. ePublications@SCU is administered by the Library which has been developing this electronic repository as a service to the SCU research community since 2007.

In 2008 it became mandatory for all postgraduate research students to submit an electronic version of their final Higher Degree by Research (HDR) thesis prior to graduation, as well as the required print copies. Many other Australian universities have adopted a similar policy. At SCU the electronic version is supplied to the Division of Research along with a Thesis Deposit and Verification Form and this information is subsequently passed on to the Library. The electronic version is uploaded to the repository by Library staff and ePublications@SCU is thereby able to showcase the work of all SCU postgraduate research students. The repository now has over 140 theses and includes PhDs, Masters by Research and DBAs. As well as their thesis, HDR students may also have other publications listed in the repository. This can happen if they are also a staff member at SCU as well as being a postgraduate student, or, if they have co-authored with other researchers employed by the University.

There are a number of advantages to having research outputs included in the repository. As all content in the repository is discoverable via internet search engines, a major benefit is the greater "findability" and dissemination of all research outputs. Content is also accessible via a global network of services such as Australian Research Online (ARO) - <http://research.nla.gov.au/> and Google Scholar. These two factors can potentially lead to increased citation of research outputs and/or future opportunities for collaboration. In addition, every publication record added to the repository will also have a unique and permanent web address which postgraduates can conveniently add to their CV. If Library staff add a current email address to the repository record for each publication, then the system will automatically send a monthly email indicating how many times the item has been downloaded. If postgraduate students are SCU staff members as well they can also have a Personal Researcher Page created for them by Library staff. This page includes a photograph, a brief biography and a list of their publications. This Personal Researcher Page also has a permanent web address which can be added to CVs, directories, email signatures and business cards.

The Thesis Deposit and Verification form submitted prior to graduation requires that each HDR student indicate whether or not they wish to make their work openly available on the internet. There may be a number of reasons why a student might not want this to happen and students can make a request to the Division of Research for an embargo to be placed on their thesis. This is generally done for a period of up to 2 years. The Thesis Deposit and Verification form also requires students to complete some copyright-related information, particularly if the thesis includes copyrighted material from other sources (e.g. photographs, charts, journal articles). Postgraduate students always retain the copyright of their own thesis and this information is clearly displayed on each thesis repository record. Further information about copyright and theses is available at <http://www.scu.edu.au/copyright/index.php/56>.

It is interesting to note that postgraduate theses are some of the most highly downloaded papers in the repository. Out of the current top 10 downloaded papers, six are SCU theses and one is a thesis completed by a staff member at another institution. Authors are often pleasantly surprised when they receive their monthly downloads email because it indicates a level of interest in their research that they had not anticipated. Prior to theses being available electronically much valuable research undertaken by postgraduate students would have sat in hard copy on library shelves and seldom been accessed. The ability to upload electronic versions of postgraduate research theses to the repository has therefore greatly increased the visibility of important research being done by SCU postgraduate research students.

For several years theses records have been harvested from ePublications@SCU so that they would also be accessible in the Australasian Digital Theses (ADT) program database. Like SCU, most other Australian Universities have been members of the ADT Program and thereby provided internet access to digitised versions of their postgraduate research. Towards the end of 2010 the ADT Program is being phased out. In its place the Council of Australian University Libraries (CAUL) will be providing an information page which links to a search in Trove, the new public search interface for the National Library of Australia. Content from Australian University and government research repositories and several other Australian research collections (including theses) is harvested by Australian Research Online - and ARO itself feeds into Trove. This service will increase the visibility of Australian research throughout the world and make it possible to more easily display and view all Australian-produced digital theses.

Having their thesis and other publications in the ePublications@SCU repository is a great opportunity for SCU postgraduates to share their research with the world and thereby showcase the breadth of research being undertaken by all postgraduate research students at SCU. For further information please contact epubs@scu.edu.au

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