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Open Access in Portugal: A Brief Survey

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Open Access in Portugal (OA) has been previously examined by multiple authors (Guarardo & Borges 2011,^[1] and Rodrigues and Rodrigues 2012),^[2] however this article provides a cursory survey of major Portuguese open access resources that are currently available to users. The article only looks at Portuguese OA resources and does not take into consideration a large number of Brazilian and/or resources from Lusophone Africa, such as LusOpenEdition or Scielo.^[3] Also, please note that this article is written from a Humanities and Social Sciences perspective.

One of the major engines for the development of Open Access in Portugal is *Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia* (FCT). As a governmental agency in Portugal, this is one of the major funding agents for the dissemination of scientific information to its audience. The agency, among its other mandates, funds OA projects throughout universities in Portugal. The importance of OA in Portugal is documented by the website as follows, “FCT believes that the results of scientific research should be widely disseminated and freely available.”^[4]



Figure 1: The landing page of the FCT in English.

The FCT in 2014 sponsored research of more than 22,000 individual researchers that were part of 319 Research and Development Institutions in Portugal. There were a total of 293 research and

development units along with the 26 affiliated laboratories.^[5] One of the benefits of centrally funding OA initiatives has translated into the creation of a centralized OA repository in Portugal.

[Repositório Científico de Acesso Aberto de Portugal](#) (RCAAP):

The self-description of this site is as follows, “RCAAP portal aims to collect aggregate and index Open Access scientific contents from Portuguese institutional repositories. RCAAP constitutes a single entry point for searching, discovery and recall of thousands of scientific and scholarly publications, namely journal articles, conference papers, thesis and dissertations, distributed by several Portuguese repositories. A list of the repositories aggregated in the portal is available in the [Directory](#).”

RCAAP portal is one of the main components from the project [Repositório Científico de Acesso Aberto de Portugal](#). RCAAP project is an initiative from [UMIC Knowledge Society Agency](#), developed by [FCCN Fundação para a Computação Científica Nacional](#), with the technical and scientific support of [Minho University](#).^[6]



Figure 2: The Search Interface of RCAAP.

At the time of writing this article, RCAAP had 1,307,814 documents indexed from 96 resources. Additionally, RCAAP provides full-text access to the Doctoral and Master’s theses that are produced in Portuguese universities.



Figure 3: Doctoral and Master's Thesis in the RCAAP.

The RCAAP website acts as a meta-search engine with a faceted search for the linked academic repositories in Portugal. For example, if one looks in Figure 3 above for the title, “O fado e a questão da identidade,” one sees that the dissertation is “locked” until 2019. Wherever there is an open access symbol next to the dissertation or thesis, one can access it. Thus, OA here can be construed to be selective open access.



Figure 4: The interface of the [Repositório Aberto](https://repositorio.aberto.uaip.pt/)

In the RCAAP, one does not see the use of Creative Commons licensing as is often used in the North American context. However, the hosting institution- Universidade Aberta- that hosts the theses prominently displays the Creative Commons licensing used for the items that are deposited in the repository.

Besides the above-mentioned two important nodes in Portuguese OA infrastructure that allow for meta-searches, one should also take into consideration that not all of the OA digital sources in Portugal are interlinked to the RCAAP. For example, there are two other important OA repositories in the Portuguese context that represent a treasure trove of information for both researchers in the Humanities and Social Sciences. These are e-repositories at the Portuguese National Library and Hemeroteca Municipal de Lisboa.

The [National Digital Library of Portugal](http://www.bnppsp.gov.pt/index/geral/PT/index.html) (*Biblioteca nacional de Portugal*) is a major repository of the digitized print materials that are made available based on the OA principle. The National Digital Library of Portugal was established in 2002 with a goal of making Portuguese print items available to the rest of the world. The items that are part of the collections in the digital library are searchable through the Europeana Digital Library's catalog.



Figure 5: National Digital Library of Portugal's webpage.

This digital library currently hosts about 25,000 individual items and contains both copyrighted and public domain materials. Thus, some of the images and items are made available only on computers on-

site, through the internal network.^[7] The digital library has six sections as follows: books, periodicals, digital images, maps, music scores and personal archives of the estates of the notables (*espólios*).

One of the advantages of using this site is that it allows for downloads of public domain materials at no charge.



Figure 6: The National Digital Library of Portugal's landing page for scanned journals and newspapers.

As an example, you can see below a screenshot of the newspaper that was published by Portuguese migrants to England. It was entitled, “Correio dos portugueses emigrados”.



Figure 7: Correio dos portugueses emigrados.

The other important OA resource that I mentioned earlier is *Hemeroteca Municipal de Lisboa* or the Digital Library of the Municipality of Lisbon (HML). Lisbon's public libraries have established this digital library that hosts several important titles and digitized newspapers. The HML is building a digital library of out-of-print Portuguese newspapers and magazines that are in the public domain. The site provides access via the Internet to several local historical periodical titles in HTML and PDF formats. The site also provides its users historical background and bibliographic references to the titles that it indexes.



Figure 8: The landing page of Lisbon's Digital Library.

Besides providing access to the digitized newspaper titles, the site also displays projects such as the WWI Collection and the ephemera collections of the Lisbon libraries.



Figure 9: Index of titles of digitized newspapers.

hemerotecadigital.cm-lisboa.pt/Periodicos/AcademiaPortuguesa/AcadPortL.htm

Academia portuguesa : semanário de literatura, informação e defesa da Academia
Academia Portuguesa, ed. com: Santos, Abel dos, 1888-?, dir.

Existências: A. 1, n.º 9 (15 Jan. 1933)-a. 1, n.º 10 (1 Fev. 1933)
A. 1, n.º 12 (15 Fev. 1933)-a. 1, n.º 15 (9 Abr. 1933)
A. 1, n.º 17 (15 Maio 1933)-a. 2, n.º 24 (1 Nov. 1933)

registro bibliográfico

Academia Portuguesa
[1933]

 N.º 9 15 Janeiro HTML PDF	 N.º 10 1 Fevereiro HTML PDF	 N.º 12 15 Fevereiro HTML PDF	 N.º 13 27 Fevereiro HTML PDF
 N.º 14 15 Março HTML PDF	 N.º 15 1 Abril HTML PDF	 N.º 17 15 Maio HTML PDF	 N.º 18 24 Maio HTML PDF
 N.º 19 10 Junho HTML PDF	 N.º 20 15 Outubro HTML PDF	 N.º 21 1 Novembro HTML PDF	



Figure 10: Digitized issues of Academia Portuguesa.

Lastly, one notable Portuguese initiative of academic nature that deserves additional attention is the OA project at the University of Minho. It is entitled, [RepositóriUM](#) and it was first launched in 2002. The repository serves as an important milestone in the development of the Portuguese OA movement for a couple of reasons. First, the repository provides an example to other academic institutions of a blueprint for the creation of their own individual repositories. Secondly, this repository provides detailed statistics about usage in a very transparent way as depicted in Figure 11 below.



Figure 11: Statistics of the Repository of the UM.

The page further provides information about users from different countries who access the UM.

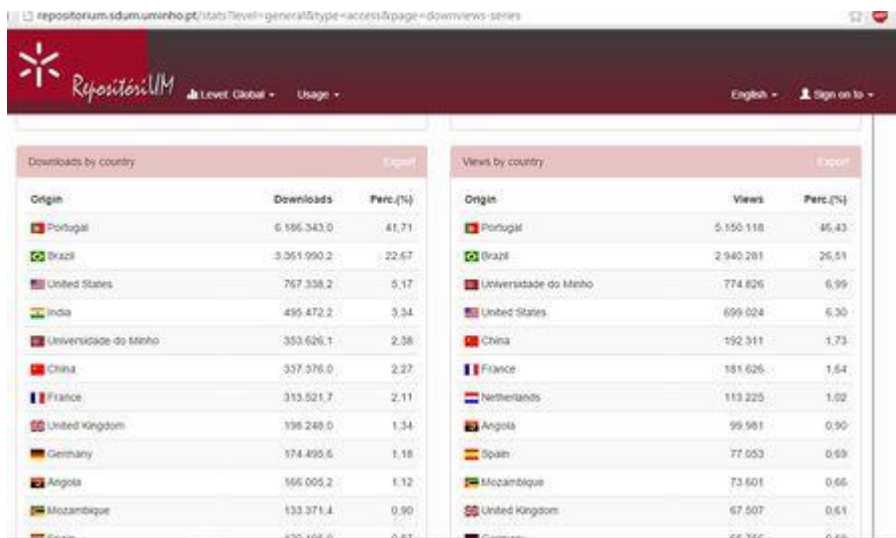


Figure 12: The distribution of downloads by country.

The repository’s self-description can be translated as follows, “The UM aims to bring together in one place all the scientific university publications, contributing to increase the impact of research carried out in the institution, increasing its visibility and working in it as well as ensuring the preservation of

intellectual memory of the Minho University.”^[8] Currently, the repository hosts UM’s research in various formats. For example, as of 17 January 2016, the repository provided access to 1,741 doctoral theses, 23 datasets, 12,542 articles and other formats.^[9]

As the reader can see from this brief survey, OA in Portugal is a robust alternative to the licensed proprietary sources for which institutions and/or users have to pay various fees. While the licensed resources will continue to exist in Portuguese and European contexts, the Open Access alternative where the end-user is typically relieved of the access fee will continue to compete for market share. In this sense, the Portuguese example reinforces OA as a viable alternative.

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