

Organic Eprints – Helping research results go to work

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Key words: Open Access, publications, dissemination, archive, repository,

Abstract

Research results regarding organic food and farming from Europe have become easily accessible – and so can results from the rest of the world. The Open Access archive Organic Eprints (www.orgprints.org) has developed since the start in 2002 so that it now includes more than 14,000 items, has 27,000 registered users and more than 200,000 visits per month. The archive is open for all to use and registered users can deposit their research publications from refereed journals as well as non-refereed sources. Organisations, research facilities, research programmes and projects are also presented in the archive. Organic Eprints is the largest database in the world with publications about Organic Agriculture & Food Systems research. It can be utilized for entering papers for conferences as seen for the Organic World Congress 2014 and 2008.

Introduction

Organic Eprints is an Open Access digital archive with publications about research in organic agriculture and food systems. The publications are entered by the authors, who have carried out the research or participated in dissemination information about it. The authors aim for more users – other researchers, stakeholders, end-users, politicians *etc.* – to get easier access to their publications in order to disseminate the knowledge created from the research. In turn, this can help the farmers knowing more about their farming systems, advisers to be able to give better advice to farmers, teachers to supply better and more updated teaching, politicians to make better and more informed decisions – and other researchers to be informed about current research that might supplement theirs.

Background

The archive is a repository for all types of deposits concerning research in organic food and farming: journal articles that have been peer-reviewed, books or chapters from books, popular articles from farmers magazines or newspapers, papers, posters or presentations from conferences, reports, theses, teaching resources such as power-point presentations, web products. In addition descriptions of organisations, research facilities, research programmes and projects can be deposited. Once deposited, any item is referred to as an eprint.

The aim is that users can find information about research in organic food and farming. To aid the user in the search process, there is both the possibility to browse by subject area (or other browse views) and to search via a powerful search tool with many refinements. Additionally, registered users have the possibility to subscribe to an email alert system to receive emails on new entries in the subject area they are interested in.

National editors from 25 countries check the bibliographic information of the documents that users enter into Organic Eprints, before they allow them to enter into the live archive. In that way, it is ensured that there are only entries related to organic agriculture and food systems – including agro-ecological systems – and that the information is correct. The national editors do not review the entries – the quality of the eprints is the responsibility of the user depositing it. In addition, national editors promote the use of Organic Eprints and act as the helpdesk for the users in their country.

Open Access is free-of-charge internet access to research papers, including peer-reviewed journal articles. There are mainly two open access strategies: either to publish articles in an open access journal (golden road) or to publish articles in a paid-access journal and then self-archive in an open access eprints archive (green road). Open Access journals are often only available on the internet, and not in a printed version, but they are peer-reviewed just like printed journals. In the Directory of Open Access Journals (<http://www.doaj.org/>) there were in September 2013 more than 200 journals in the subject area Agriculture and Food Sciences, including some about or with focus on Organic Agriculture. Some printed, well-established journals also allow Open Access if the author of the article pays a fee, e.g. Organic Agriculture, the official journal of the International Society of Organic Agriculture Research (ISOFAR).

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Open Access repositories, like Organic Eprints, receive digital duplicates of published articles by depositing by the authors (self-archiving). The repository makes the articles publicly available. In order to address the copyright issues, Organic Eprints allows the author to restrict access to the paper either to the registered users or to only the author and archive administrators. In this way, users interested in the paper can still see the abstract and bibliographic data and send an email to the authors to receive a reprint. This is done very easily, since the system has a "Request-a-copy"-button, so that the interested user can send a request for a copy without even knowing the email address of the author. If the author agrees to let the user get a copy, it is automatically sent to the user.

Results

By September 2013, there were 3614 eprints from Germany, 3212 from Denmark and 2149 from Switzerland. In addition, there were more than 5500 eprints from other countries. The main part of these originated from other European countries (table 1), especially the countries of the European CORE Organic ERA-NET, but there were also entries from all other continents, with Brazil and Australia being especially well represented countries. Also the nationality of the over 27,000 registered users is mainly European (table 1). Many more than those, that are registered users benefit from the archive, which throughout 2013 had an average of more than 6600 daily visits.

Organic Eprints contains more than 14,000 items as of September 2013 (fig. 1). It is the largest – and maybe only – archive with publications about organic agriculture and food systems research. On OpenDOAR (<http://www.opendoar.org>), there are 107 repositories which are about agriculture, food and veterinary issues, however, many of those only has agriculture as one of many subjects. When looking only at those archives that focus on agriculture, food and veterinary subjects, and maybe one or two further subjects which are related, e.g. ecology and environment, there are only 5 that have more items than Organic Eprints: FAOBIB from FAO, UN; WaY from Wageningen University, the Netherlands; NALDR from USDA, USA; Infoteca-e from EMBRAPA, Brazil and ProDINRA from INRA, France. So Organic Eprints is the 6th largest agricultural archive in the world. In a world-wide ranking of 1650 repositories about all subjects based on size of the archive and number of documents attached (Aguillo et al., 2010), Organic Eprints is number 45 (<http://repositories.webometrics.info/en/world>).

Organic Eprints can be used for entering papers for conferences. This was done for the Organic World Congress in 2008 and again in 2014. As a result, 412 papers from the OWC 2008 can now be found in Organic Eprints. It was not used for the OWC 2011, and only 18 papers from that conference can be found there. It is used every odd year for the Scientific Conference on Organic Agriculture for the German-speaking countries, resulting in more than 200 papers from each conference. In this way, papers which may otherwise be difficult to find are available to many users.

Organic Eprints is based on the open-source software Eprints (<http://www.eprints.org/software/>), which is continually updated. In addition to these updates, Organic Eprints is developed according to user input and ideas from the Organic Eprints team of national editors. Recent changes are:

AGROVOC (<http://aims.fao.org/standards/agrovoc/about>) keywords – a controlled vocabulary covering all areas of interest to FAO, including food, nutrition, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, environment *etc.* Each word may have a translation into up to 22 languages. This means that although Organic Eprints has a user interface in English and German, users that are not so familiar with these languages can find keywords in their own language in AGROVOC, e.g. organic agriculture can be found in many languages at http://aims.fao.org/aos/agrovoc/c_15911. Users can then find the English term and use that to search in Organic Eprints. It is at present possible to enter AGRVOC keywords in English, German and Spanish, but we plan to expand this to more languages gradually as users show an interest for this.

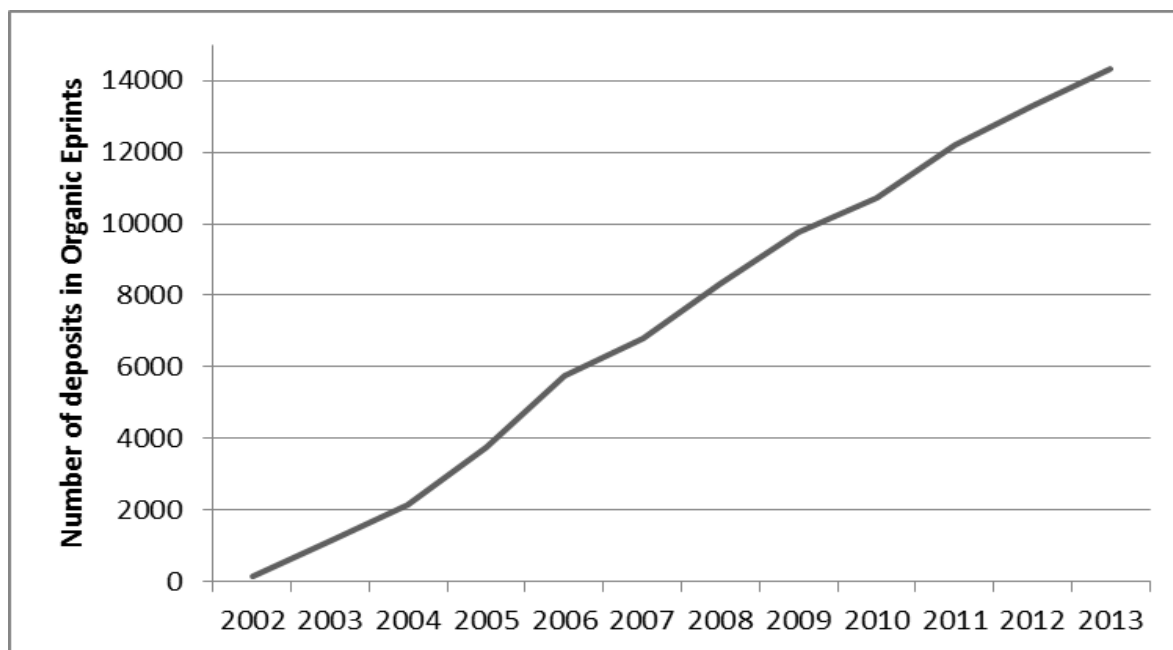


Figure 1. Number of deposits in Organic Eprints over time

Table 1: Number of eprints and registered users compared to continent of origin. Note that the sum does not add up to the totals mentioned in the text, as some eprints are not connected to a country and less than half of the users have given information about their country

Continent	Number of eprints	Number of registered users
Africa	27	242
Asia, Near & Middle East	123	1068
Europe	12392	5186
North America	61	782
Oceania	94	195
South and Central America	263	360

In order to expand the number of Spanish speaking users, we have in collaboration with IFOAM Latin America and others developed a screenshot users manual in Spanish, which can be found here: <http://www.icrofs.org/Pages/Publications/orgprints.html>

Discussion

Organic Eprints is the largest repository on organic agriculture and food systems – and possibly the only. By depositing documents in Organic Eprints, authors make their work more visible and users get access to more papers. The use of Organic Eprints should be encouraged all over the world, and this could in part be done by recruiting national editors from countries in continents, where Organic Eprints is not so well established.

Acknowledgments

Organic Eprints is co-funded by the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries and the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (Switzerland) and supported through CORE Organic II and CORE Organic Plus.

References

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