

A campus wide ePosters management system: KAUST Library initiative to build Digital Infrastructure to promote Open Access and Digital Preservation

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King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), established in 2009 as an international research University in Saudi Arabia, has adopted the first Open Access mandate for scientific publications in the region and leads with a well-established research repository managed and promoted by the University Library. Having several scientific poster events annually at the campus, with hosting supported by the Library, printed posters have remained static, highly localized and short-lived. These characteristics are at odds with what is often the first formal communication of scientific research and, as such would be of great interest to other researchers. Addressing these limitations was a major motivator behind the trialing of an ePoster alternative at KAUST. This project was conceived, piloted and will be implemented and managed by the University Library, in collaboration with IT Services. In addition to digitally capturing research content for display and preservation, ePoster functionality changes the engagement dynamics whilst helping to bridge the gap between academia and professional practice. ePosters have been extensively embraced by international professional organizations, however, academic institutions remain bound to printed posters.

This project identified a short-list of possible companies that responded to criteria identified by KAUST as requirements for its campus wide ePoster management system. The evaluation process included student and researcher participation, as well as webinars and demonstrations and culminated with site visits to the company headquarters of the two finalists. The preferred supplier was then involved with several pilot conferences at KAUST to demonstrate their system's capabilities and, as importantly, to expose academic staff to ePosters in operational settings. Surveys were conducted of conference participants, academic staff, students and conference organizers to obtain feedback and reaction to this approach. Advantages were both obvious and embraced by respondents; they appreciated the functionality which included ongoing editing and/or updating of content by authors, the ability of organizers to monitor progress of submissions and control content display and statistics being available via a dashboard.

ePoster presentations engage the audience better; they are more interactive, dynamic and informative as a result of incorporating high resolution images and videos (with associated zoom capabilities) and audio. In addition, the elimination of print and poster mounting aligns with KAUST commitment to environmental stewardship and open access to scientific output through a direct upload of content to the Research Repository. Interest in ePosters is expanding; this has seen the Library involved in associated skills training and outreach.

Academia is notably behind this practitioner-driven trend. KAUST Library believes that, by rolling out an ePoster system to the University, it is the first campus in the world to offer this as a campus-wide solution, truly reflecting a digital smart campus vision of KAUST.

Type of abstract

Lightning Talk

Summary

King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, an international research University in Saudi Arabia, has adopted the first Open Access mandate for scientific publications regionally, using content provided via the University Library's research repository. Scientific posters were identified as an important resource whose capture was problematic, given their printed nature. Eposter systems address this limitation, are used by professional organizations internationally, and provide advantages over print. KAUST Library will implement its ePoster service as a campus wide initiative, following successful pilot projects and stakeholder feedback. This session will outline the approach taken and discuss the challenges encountered and addressed.

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