

# SUNJournals gives international exposure to local journals

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“The low profile of African researchers can be attributed to their lack of access to international research. Therefore it is important for us to play a leading role in fast tracking open access to give our researchers the opportunity to share knowledge with the rest of the world.”



Dr Francois Very (Assistant Editor: Scientia Militaria); Mr Oswell Khondowe (Editor: *Zambian Journal of Physiotherapy*); Dr Gerrit Brand (Editor: *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif*); Me Ellen Tise (Senior Director: Library and Information Service); Mr Gabriël Bothma (Editor: *Global Media Journal African Edition*); Mrs Eve Gray (Centre for Educational Technology, University of Cape Town); Dr Willem Botha (Manager: Lexikos); Dr Kate Huddleston (Editor: SPIL and SPILPlus); Prof Johan Thom (Editor: *Akroterion*) and Prof Christa van der Walt (Editor: *Per Linguam*).

These were the words of Prof Arnold van Zyl, Vice Rector: Research at SU, at the Library and Information Services' second Open Access Seminar – to show support for [International Open Access Week](#) (24 – 28 October 2011) aimed at promoting open access – that was held on Monday afternoon.

An initiative through which the SU has recently become one of the first universities in South Africa to offer a comprehensive service to host and publish open access journals online, SUNJournals, was launched at this occasion.

A total of 11 titles – of which more than half are accredited by the Department of Higher Education and Training – already make use of this service. The journals are published with the Open Journal Systems (OJS) open source software and offers free access via the internet.

Prof Van Zyl added that SUNJournals is proof of the library's commitment to the sharing of knowledge and information and “leaves a clear scientific footprint in Africa”. “We have adopted open access and are well aware of the challenges it presents, but I am convinced of the significant benefits it poses to both the author and the institution.”

“The provision of an open access journal service (SUNJournals) and the mere format change it entails give local journals international exposure,” said Ms Ellen Tise, Senior Director of SU’s Library and Information Service.

“Within two weeks of using SUNJournals it has led to requests for collaboration with higher learning institutions as far as Sweden,” Ms Tise added.

In 2010, SU joined several leading universities and research institutions in committing to openly sharing its research output by signing the [Berlin Declaration](#) on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities. The goal of this international convention is to make research freely and widely available.

### **International experts**

Two international researchers and experts in the field of open access, Prof Stevan Harnad, Canada Research Chair in Cognitive Sciences, Université du Québec à Montréal and from the School of Electronics and Computer Science at the University of Southampton, and Ms Eve Gray, Honourary Research Fellow, Centre for Educational Technology at the University of Cape Town discussed various aspects of open access at the event.

In his presentation Prof Harnad urged SU and other universities to encourage faculties to archive their research articles as soon as possible on their repositories as a way to promote green open access. Green open access is when authors publish in any journal and then self-archive a version of the article for free public use in their institutional repository. Gold open access is when authors publish in an open access journal that provides immediate OA to all of its articles on the publisher’s website.

“Universities must find ways of promoting green open access – gold open access will follow as people use and cite open access sources more often,” he added.

Dr Gray said an open access article becomes a hub of information sharing as readers can leave comments and debate findings, whereas an article in a traditional journal is a final, static product.