

Ten Years of EIPub: An Analysis of its Major Trends

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Abstract

This paper presents partial results of a study that reflects on ten years of the annual International Conference on Electronic Publishing - EIPub. The rich content available in the proceedings of the nine previous conferences, plus the material available through 'pre-10th conference' provided the data from which a number of aspects were looked at. This includes data on authors, papers, countries, institutions, keynotes, themes, conference organisation, conference websites, conference organisers (the so-called EIPubers!) and so forth. The analysis was based on both qualitative and quantitative (mostly) approaches. Results were, therefore, obtained through a content analysis entirely based on the proceedings (1st to 9th EIPub) and Scix's database (10th EIPub), using Excel. Several questions have been asked on the quantitative data gathered, in order to provide a well-built picture of the conference. These questions relate to such issues as most productive authors, most actively participating countries, most influential areas of knowledge, most representative type of institutions (academic, governmental or entrepreneurial), most approached topics and so forth. In terms of qualitative data, the study looks at conference and session themes, the variety in the type of sessions, the environment within which topics presented are set in (academic, industrial, governmental, entrepreneurial) as well as its concerned focus, the field of knowledge from which keynotes and organising chairs have come from along with the focus of their speech, the influence of the host country in the number of local authors contributing to the conference at hand and the following ones, the major pattern of authorship (individual or collaborative), the composition of the Programme Committee in terms of country or continent represented (and perhaps the obvious greater presence of natives in it), field of knowledge, seniority and gender. Major conclusions will be presented at the conference. Partial results are provided.

Keywords: Scientific Knowledge Management; electronic publishing; EIPub conferences

1 Introduction

Electronic publishing constitutes one of the hottest topics discussed amongst researchers from a variety of disciplines since the seminal work by Harnad, in the 1980's, "The scholarly skywriting", when its potentialities started to challenge the well-established business model of commercial publishers. It was certainly in this context that the first EIPub thinkers initiated the conference. In fact, the International Conference on Electronic Publishing (EIPub) is the realisation of an idea that was brought into reality in 1997 by a group of librarians, including the most persistent EIPubers Peter Linde and John Smith. In its very beginning, EIPub only comprised the presentation of papers. In 1999, there were two panel debates whose speakers were invited to participate and received grants from the conference for that. Over the subsequent years, EIPub has gradually incorporated features of greater, well-established international conferences. Especially since 2003, a variety of sessions started to be part of the conference programme, annually organised in two tracks, namely general and technical. Those sessions comprise: special sessions focusing on a specific topic and sponsored by a specific organisation, workshops - mostly on technical aspects of electronic publishing -, posters and demonstrations. A gradual increasing variety of topics has also been defined in the Call for Papers of the conference, as constituents of the topic. Since then, EIPub has covered a number of interesting topics, presented by people from ca. 44 countries so far.

The main aim of this paper is, therefore, to cast light on the developments of EIPub over 10 years. Moreover, its major trends concerning the conduct of aspects looked at helped to build up an interesting picture of electronic publishing through the eyes of the conference authors.

2 Distribution of EIPub authors by country

The data on Table 1 show the breakdown of the number of authors by country. The data presented shows the most regularly attending countries and the overwhelming presence of the UK at the conference. It shall be explained by the fact that England is one of the countries that are most active in electronic publishing, as identified by the number of initiatives taking place in the UK as a whole and in England in particular.

It is also interesting to draw attention to the meaning of these data, in the sense that the number of authors is obviously a result of authorship. That is, co-authorship causes data to increase. Therefore, one should be aware that this is not related to the number of papers, but only to the number of authors. In several cases, most of the papers from a country have been submitted by more than one author.

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
UK	20	10	18	14	11	10	11	3	7	6	110
Portugal	.	.	3	.	2	11	27	20	13	14	90
Brazil	.	.	2	1	3	4	12	32	8	6	68
Spain	2	2	6	3	8	16	11	4	5	8	65
France	8	5	.	.	7	3	6	.	10	8	47
Sweden	.	2	4	5	3	10	2	4	14	1	45
Germany	.	.	3	4	8	1	3	2	8	15	44
USA	10	4	6	3	5	.	1	1	.	7	37
Netherlands	5	4	.	.	.	3	3	5	8	8	36
Finland	.	.	.	.	15	8	6	.	1	2	32
Italy	3	.	.	1	.	4	.	2	19	3	32
Belgium	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	5	18	5	31
Russia	4	4	1	6	.	4	.	8	.	3	30
Austria	.	.	.	.	2	2	5	4	7	3	23
Canada	1	2	.	3	2	.	3	4	6	1	22
Bulgaria	.	2	.	.	1	3	.	.	7	8	21
Czech Republic	.	1	.	.	.	2	2	3	2	4	14

Table 1: Number of authors by country

3 Most productive authors

The data on Table 2 shows the most productive authors of EIPub so far. It is important to notice that not all kinds of sessions have been taking into account, so the data for a few authors does not include their full participation in the conference. However, this does give an idea of the most productive experts on the topic of 'electronic publishing' who have been presenting papers at EIPub over the last 10 years.

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
Delgado, Jaime	1	.	.	1	2	3	2	.	1	1	11
Engelen, Jan	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	2	3	2	9
Baptista, Ana Alice	.	.	1	.	1	.	3	3	.	.	8
Paepen, Bert	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	2	2	1	7
Apps, Ann	.	.	1	1	1	1	.	.	1	1	6
Borbinha, José Luis	.	.	.	.	.	2	2	.	.	2	6
Calabretto, Sylvie	2	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	1	1	6
Costa, Sely M. S.	.	.	1	1	1	1	1	.	1	.	6
Krottmaier, Harald	.	.	.	.	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Pinon, Jean-Marie	2	1	.	.	1	1	.	.	.	1	6
Rumpler, Béatrice	.	2	.	.	.	1	1	.	1	1	6
Schranz, Markus W.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	2	2	1	6

Carr, Leslie	1.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	1.	.	5
Chan, Leslie	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	2.	.	5
Linde, Peter	.	1.	.	.	1	1	1.	.	1.	.	5
Macintyre, Ross	.	.	1	1	1	1.	.	.	1.	.	5
Almeida, José João	.	.	.	.	.	1	1.	.	.	2	4
Henriques, Pedro M. S.Rangel	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	1	1.	.	4
Hübler, Arved	.	.	.	1	1	1.	.	.	.	1	4
Lobin, Henning	.	.	1	1.	.	.	.	1.	.	1	4
Martens, Bob	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	1	1.	.	4
Ramalho, José Carlos	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	2.	.	.	4
Rowland, Fytton	.	.	1.	.	1.	.	1.	.	.	1	4
Simões, Alberto Manuel B.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1.	.	.	2	4

Table 2: Most productive authors in EIPub

4 Kind of authorship

A number of authors from different disciplines have drawn attention to the communication patterns of researchers. In this sense, researchers from the hard sciences usually show a pattern of multiple authorship. However, electronic communication has influenced researchers from the other two divisions of science, namely human and social sciences and arts and humanities, to show the same communication pattern. That is, to have co-authorship occurring with a significant rate in those areas also. This is what has been observed in terms of authorship in EIPub. Data on Table 3 shows the growing tendency of co-authorship in the conference works. It is relevant to draw attention to the figures in the table. The “total” line is related to the total number of authors each year. Likewise, 879 relates to the total number of authors over 10 years of EIPub. In case of 2003 and 2004, it was observed that the higher number of single authors as compared with 2001 and 2002 was influenced by special session speakers, who are all single authors.

Authorship	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
Number of papers	28	33	37	24	30	41	50	47	69	46	405
Number of papers by one author	15	18	25	12	7	10	18	19	26	9	159
Number of papers by two or more authors	13	15	12	12	23	31	32	28	43	37	246
Total number of authors	56	60	58	43	73	99	106	108	162	114	879

Table 3: Increase of co-authorship over the years

4 Breakdown of the number of works per year

Data presented in Fig. 1 shows the total number of works presented at EIPub each year. It is interesting to notice the increasing rate of works over the ten years of the conference. A clear decrease is observed in the year 2000. It occurred when the conference took place in Russia (Kaliningrad), when a number of authors could not obtain a visa to enter the country. The data show, however, that soon the conference audience started growing again. The significant difference between 2005 and previous years seems to be related to the conference organisers' policy to accept a greater number of works either as papers or posters and demonstrations, which were in greater number in Belgium. As figures of posters and demonstrations were not available for 2006, it is not possible to visualize any trend in this regard for now.

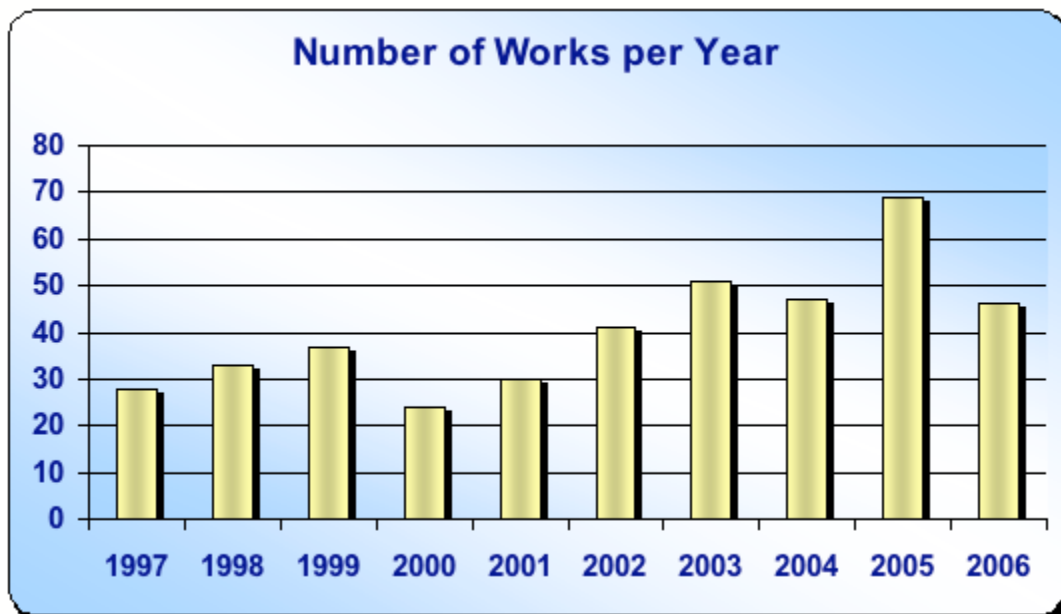


Figure 1: Breakdown of the total number of works per year

6 The contribution of the field of knowledge

The distribution of disciplines as contributors to the developments of electronic publishing according to the works presented at EIPub show a huge presence of both information and library science and computer science. These disciplines were identified from the various university departments and, in fewer cases, the private or governmental institution to which authors belong. Because of the dispersion of data, since they were derived from the way departments have been named by the conference authors, it was decided not to present a table or figure. Nevertheless, the data clearly showed that both computer science as well as information and library science are major areas that have been concerned with electronic publishing.

7 Qualitative approach to data collected

In this session, data on subject, environment and theme most approached at EIPub conferences over the past 10 years, in terms of their greater figures, are discussed. The main aim is to enrich the picture provided by the quantitative data.

7.1 Subjects mostly approached

For the identification of the subjects approached in the conference papers, keywords have been assigned to all kinds of works available in the proceedings. The analysis of about 1200 keywords rises points that are worthwhile to highlight. One interesting example is related to the most frequent subjects, which are “USERS”, “WEB” and “XML”. This clearly reveals the major preoccupations of EIPub authors concerning both the net as a tool and an environment, as well as the users of the information available through them. There is also a number of works that approach the theme “METADATA” and this seems to represent authors' concern with the definition of organisation patterns to electronic content.

7.2 Environment mostly approached

Although industrial, commercial and governmental environments have been the focus of a number of papers presented at EIPub over the last 10 years, the works analysed concentrate, in general, on the discussion of electronic publications within the academic environment. It is no surprise, therefore, that the kind of publication discussed is the scholarly journal, as journals constitute the major dissemination vehicles of scholarly work. Although this is actually true for the hard sciences, journals also play an important role in other disciplines. It could not be different in a digital environment.

7.3 Most approached themes

Open access is definitely on the spot, though in contrast with a significant number of works that discuss issues related to copyright and intellectual property rights. Although it may sound as a controversy, these themes relate very closely, therefore it does make sense to focus on both. Particularly over the last three years, open access and institutional repositories have been on the agenda of EIPub authors. This reflects the hot world-wide debate, pointing to the definition of the future agenda.

A number of works concerned with information retrieval, digital libraries and semantic web (comprising ontology, topic maps, thesaurus and classification) can also be identified. It is noted, however, that the majority of works focus more on technological than on human aspects (i.e., impacts on the scholarly community, including authors, publishers and users) of the electronic publishing issue.

8 Conclusions

Although this text does not present the whole picture that can be obtained from the data collected, it does present a fairly well-built picture of EIPub over the last 10 years. The presentation during the conference is intended to be more complete. However, it is possible to draw some conclusions. First, some authors have persistently presented their work at EIPub, which shows their commitment to the topic and allows the building of a scholarly community in the topic. Second, themes like Open Access, XML, Metadata, and Institutional Repositories have dominated the discussions over the last three or four years, and will certainly continue to do so for the time being. The clear preoccupation with users may be related to the strong presence of experts from information and library science, which, along with computer science, are the major areas with expertise in electronic publishing so far. Third, co-authorship definitely constitutes the communication pattern of authors who work on electronic publishing. This is a growing tendency, perhaps reflecting the influence of the topic itself on the information behaviour of the research community working on it. Fourth, as a specialised conference, the number of papers presented does not seem to grow beyond around 50. This is actually possible because of the parallel tracks model adopted, namely general and technical.

Finally, it has to be said that a number of other issues such as the conference web site, the conference dinner, conference sponsors and so forth are to be discussed in the special closing session in which this paper is to be presented. All of them will definitely cast an interesting light on the understanding of the topic and its developments.