COPIM • Academic Libraries and Open Access Books in Europe: a Landscape Study

Croatia

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Key findings

- **Academic libraries in Croatia have relatively little autonomy and their collection development strategies depend on the institutional and state budget**
- **The open access movement has a long history in Croatia, with lots of initiatives brewing in the library community**
- **There is no official national OA policy; some institutions have their own OA/Open Science policies**
- **There are no OA book-specific funds in Croatia**
- **There are several library/scholar-led OA book publishing initiatives in Croatia**
- **Libraries rely on aggregators for OA books coverage**

General library system for e-content and OA publications

Croatia, with its 9 public and 2 private universities, 11 public and 4 private polytechnics, 3 public and 22 private colleges, and 25 public research institutes, has approximately 95 academic and research libraries (*Upisnik knjižnica Upisnik knjižnica u Republici Hrvatskoj*, n.d.). Croatian higher education and research institutions are funded via institutional funding from the Ministry of Science and Education, via project funding by the National Science Foundation, and via own-income sources. Croatian academic and research libraries' services and collections are partly funded by the institutional budget, and partly directly by the state budget.

Since the Croatian academic and research community is rather small, libraries' digital collections are acquired mostly by consortial agreements at the national level and funded directly by the state budget (additionally, in the past four years, a significant proportion of funds was obtained from the European Social Fund). The license agreements with major publishers are negotiated and signed by the National Academic Consortium led by the National and University Library.

Several institutions and their libraries subscribe to (or purchase) additional e-resources for their users, with their own institutional budgets (e.g. University of Zagreb and the University of Rijeka). There are no dedicated financial lines for OA content, either at the national or institutional level.

Within this rather centralised system, there is little freedom for individual libraries when it comes to shaping their collections or investing in innovative projects, as they rely on ministerial policies and budget restrictions. The National and University Library in Zagreb, the oldest library in Croatia, acts as the central academic library for the country.

Library community and open access

It is hard to talk about an actual academic library system in Croatia, as it is more of a sum of dispersed initiatives, shaped by more active institutions, groups and individuals carrying on the OA and OS projects at the national, regional or local level. Librarians are generally in favour of open access, and, in many institutions, they are the main promoters of OA. This bottom-up approach, especially when it comes to the open access movement, has resulted in two important projects that currently act as the main systems for Croatian scientific e-content.

The oldest OA infrastructure in Croatia is the Croatian Scientific Bibliography **CROSBI**, launched in 1997, which aims to collect information on all scholarly outputs of the Croatian researchers. Beside prevalent publication types like journal articles, books, and conference proceedings papers, CROSBI also stores theses, software, pre-prints and other types of research output. Metadata on more than 600,000 research outputs have been stored in CROSBI, many of them with full-text available in OA, since CROSBI serves as a national repository too.

The key component of the Croatian infrastructure for e-content is **DABAR** (Digital Academic Archives and Repositories). DABAR is a collaborative project uniting numerous Croatian academic institutions and researchers. It is strongly connected with both the University of Zadar and the Ruder Boskovic Institute. DABAR “provides technological solutions that facilitate maintenance of higher education and science institutions' digital assets” and its current database consists mainly of Master's and undergraduate theses (*What Is DABAR? | Digital Academic Archives and Repositories*, n.d.). Within DABAR, 10 groups work on different aspects of the infrastructure, such as, for example, the interoperability with other repositories, questions of preservation and user functionalities.

HRCAK, on the other hand, is the national portal for Croatian scientific journals offering open access to their content. HRCAK offers tools for print journals to switch to digital form and services for editors that help boost their journals' visibility. Currently, HRCAK does not cover books.

OA book policies

As of 2013 the Law on Science and Higher Education mandates deposition of undergraduate, graduate and doctoral theses in open access; however, Croatia does not have a national OA policy (*Zakon o Znanstvenoj Djelatnosti i Visokom Obrazovanju - Zakon.Hr*, n.d.). Although open access is mentioned as part of the development strategies of the Ministry of Education, released in 2014, no official plan for the OA implementation has been released (*Strategy for Education, Science and Technology*, 2017).

As a bottom-up initiative, the **Croatian Open Access Declaration** was published and signed by Croatian researchers and librarians, calling for a sustainable national infrastructure that would be able to ensure open access to Croatian scientific publications (*Declaration - Open Access - Otvoreni*

Pristup Znanstvenim Informacijama, n.d.). In 2015, the Croatian Rectors' Conference formulated a document in favour of the introduction of a national OA policy (*Vrednovanje Znanstveno-Istraživačkog Rada i Promicanje Otvorenog Pristupa Znanstvenim Informacijama i Istraživačkim Podacima*, 2015).

There are currently two Croatian institutions with registered OA policies in the ROAR map: the Ruder Boskovic Institute (which specifically mentions books), and the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing.

OA book funding

No specific OA book funds exist in Croatia. Open access publications can be funded as part of larger research projects. The National Science Foundation (NSF) is the main funder of research in Croatia. Through its programmes, OA publications can be funded, but the overall dissemination and cooperation funds are capped at 20,000 EUR (which hardly enables financing BPCs on a national level). As a funder, the NSF does not mandate OA, and the NSF is not a signatory of Plan S.

Beside support for OA journals at Croatian academic and research institutions (only a limited number of journals is eligible for government subsidies, and an even smaller number fulfills evaluation criteria), there are no dedicated OA publishing schemes. However, the longstanding tradition of state subsidies for scientific publishing, with separate lines for journals and books, has a key role in the scholarly publishing landscape in Croatia. For journals, OA is the requirement that needs to be fulfilled in order to be eligible for subsidies, but for books it is not (both print and e-books are subsidised).

Library/scholar-led OA book publishing

Library or scholar-led OA book publishing initiatives have begun to spread in Croatia. However, there are only a few academic institutions with such practices in place. One example is the University of Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Library, with its **FF Open Press** platform (*FF Open Press - Izdanja Filozofskog Fakulteta u Zagrebu u Otvorenom Pristupu*, n.d.), where the books published by the institution's press are made openly available. At the University of Zadar, there is an open access publishing platform **MorePress** (*MorePress*, n.d.) for journals and books. There are also some very small scholar-led projects with open-access books in humanities; for example, publications of the Croatian Ethnological Society (*O HED Biblioteci - Hrvatsko Etnološko Društvo*, n.d.) or the e-library *Stilistika*, but their common problem is a lack of support for professional e-publishing.

Integration of OA books in library systems

Academic library discovery systems rely on EBSCO services, which include OA books, with uneven coverage. There are no special discovery systems for OA content: all publications, both open and closed, are handled by the same system.

Occasionally, some libraries will include specific open access titles in their library catalogues, but not in a systematic way.

Important contributors

- **Dabar (Digital Academic Archives and Repositories)** <https://dabar.srce.hr/en>
- **Hrcak** <https://hrcak.srce.hr>
- **CROSB** <https://www.bib.irb.hr/>
- **Croatian Academic and Research Network CARNET** <https://www.carnet.hr/en/>
- **PUBMET conference** <http://pubmet.unizd.hr/pubmet2020/>
- **The National and University Library in Zagreb** <https://www.nsk.hr/en/>
- **Croatian Science Foundation** <https://hrzz.hr/en/the-foundation/organizational-structure/>
- **FF Open Press** <https://openbooks.ffzg.unizg.hr>
- **MorePress** <https://morepress.unizd.hr/>

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