



Dr Leti Kleyn enhanced the awareness for International Open Access Week by hanging lanterns at the University of Pretoria's Merensky Library.

Gate to fountains of knowledge open to all

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RESEARCH information previously available only to academics, is becoming more accessible by the day, and anyone with internet access can read or research in any library.

This access through Institutional Repositories was celebrated by university libraries all over the world during the International Open Access Week. The University of Pretoria also took part.

Dr Leti Kleyn, open access manager at Merensky Library at UP, says it is now so much easier for everyone to do research for study purposes or simply to satisfy a curiosity. "One does not have to be an enrolled student to delve into more than 10 000 academic papers, 8 000 theses, thousands of photographs, look at the (university's) amazing Moerdijk collection or

wander about the maps of San rock paintings of Mapungubwe – all under the auspices of UP."

But it goes further. "If you want to see the treasured Chopin Collection, you can find it at the repository of the University of Chicago."

A conference convened in Budapest by the Open Society Institute in 2001 to promote open access (which, at the time, was known as Free Online Scholarship) resulted in the Budapest Open Access Initiative.

That gathering, with its 13 signatories, was seen as a defining event in the open access movement.

Ten years later new goals were set: within 10 years open access would become the default method for distributing peer-reviewed research in every field and country.

Open access means free availability on the internet of information, including permitting any users to



UP recently participated in the International Open Access Week.

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Open access uses technology to make possible massive electronic distribution of the peer-reviewed literature available, free and with unrestricted access to it by all scientists, scholars, teachers, students, and others with curious minds.

"The reasons to remove restrictions are to share knowledge and accelerate research. Knowledge has always been a public good in a theoretical sense. Open access makes it a public good in practice," said Professor Peter Suber, of the Open Access Project at Harvard.