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| 1 | 1. The Role of the British Library in Ing-wen Tsai’s Doctoral Thesis
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| 2 | 1.2 Internal Review of Roly Keating, the Chief Executive of the British Library |
| 3 | A report based on the records disclosed under the U.K. Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) |
| 4 | On September 25, 2019, The British Library confirmed to LSE that it did not hold a copy of President Ing-wen Tsai’s thesis and had never made a microfilm copy of the thesis.  |
| 2. Emails between LSE and BL(1) |
| 5 | Clive Wilson’s immediate response was:I figured if you had it, we would have found it four years ago when we first looked. |
| 2. Emails between LSE and BL(1) |
| 6 | It indicates that for the record of Tsai’s doctoral thesis to be added to EThOS on June 24, 2015, it must have existed in the U.O.L. libraries first.  |
| 7 | Cambridge’s response on June 5, 2023, confirms that only a digitized thesis from the early 1980s deposited in its institutional repository Apollo will be discoverable in EThOS.  |
| 8 | Nevertheless, the record of Tsai’s doctoral thesis was added to EThOS on June 24, 2015, when it was not deposited in L.S.E.T.O., nor did it exist in the Senate House Library, the IALS Library, or the LSE Library. |
| 9 | It leaves the British Library the only library that has catalogued Tsai’s doctoral thesis since June 24, 2015. |
| 10 | In June 2019, Tsai’s long-overdue doctoral thesis ignited an academic firestorm in Taiwan.On June 12, 2019, LSE found that pro-Tsai media in Taiwan relied on the British Library EThOS record of Tsai’s thesis to prove that Tsai’s doctoral thesis once existed in the U.O.L. libraries.  |
| Subject: RE: Ing-Wen Tsai’s PhD thesis <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3721962> |
| 11 | LSE soon followed suit.It was LSE’s response to Hwan Lin’s FIOA request on June 14, 2019. As previously circulated, all PhDs from that period were awarded under the University of London banner and would have been sent first to their Senate House Library. They clearly received their copy because otherwise, it would not have been processed and appeared on their catalogue – and from there to appear on the British Library catalogue |
| <https://taiwanenews.com/doc/Lin_report_OCT2019_Eng.pdf> |
| 12 | On September 23, 2019, Tsai’s Office held a press conference in the Presidential Office Building. Two of the PowerPoint slides used in the press conference shows that Tsai’s Office also relied on the British Library EThOS record of Tsai’s thesis to prove the existence of Tsai’s doctoral thesis in the libraries.  |
| <https://www.president.gov.tw/News/24788>file:///C:/Users/user30318/Downloads/ea1f235e-0a0f-4e3c-8758-ae9a0456f9c2%20(10).pdf |
| 13 | Two FOIA requests pertaining to the EThOS record of Tsai’s thesis have been sent to the British Library.The second one was sent on April 4, 2022, requesting the cataloguing records of Tsai’s thesis in 2015. |
| BL response on April 26, 2022. |
| 14 | It was sent after the requester discovered that the record of Tsai’s thesis was added to EThOS on the same day when the LSE Library initiated an investigation of the whereabouts of Tsai’s doctoral thesis on June 24, 2015.The second FOIA request raises serious concerns about the integrity of the EThOS system managed by the British Library. |
| 15 | The British Library refused to provide the cataloguing records in 2015, finding that the request had no legitimate public interest and was vexatious. It even refused to enter into any further correspondence with the requester’s email address. |
| BL response on April 26, 2022. |
| 16 | The U.K. Freedom of Information Act 2000 is enforced by the Information Commissioner’s Office, ICO. |
| [SN02950.pdf (parliament.uk)](https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN02950/SN02950.pdf)<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN02950/SN02950.pdf> |
| 17 | After a complaint was filed with ICO, an internal review conducted by Roly Keating, the Chief Executive of the British Library, was released on July 12, 2022. |
| BL internal review on July 12, 2022 |
| 18 | It has been over three years since Hwan Lin submitted his first FOIA request to the British Library on June 21, 2019, alleging that the British Library might have added Tsai’s non-existing doctoral thesis to EThOS.The whereabouts of Tsai’s non-existing doctoral thesis had been adjudicated in the intervening years. |
| ICO Decision Notice Reference: FS50908339https://ico.org.uk/media/action-weve-taken/decision-notices/2020/2617860/fs50908339.pdf |
| 19 | In June 2020, U.O.L. submitted its explanation about the whereabouts of Tsai’s doctoral thesis to ICO.Tsai’s original thesis held by the University library was lost or mis-shelved sometime between mid.1980s and 2010s over which period there were numerous structural changes to the library. |
| Id. |
| 20 | On December 11, 2021, when a case relating to Tsai’s 1984 PhD was appealed to the First-tier Tribunal, Judge Hazel Oliver, Alison Lowton and Anne Chafer rejected U.O.L.’s explanation. the explanation originally provided by U.O.L. that the thesis had been lost or mis-shelved might not be correct, as there was no catalogue or microform record of the original thesis. |
| Appeal Reference: EA/2020/0286https://www.casemine.com/judgement/uk/61c4c27cb50db9485a84119f |
| 21 | However, three judges also found that:this does not mean that President Tsai was not awarded a PhD degree, or that there has been academic fraud. It simply means that the thesis was not filed correctly in the libraries in 1984. |
| Id. |
| 22 | One month later, on January 11, 2022, Suzie Mereweather, Head of Data Protection and Information Compliance at the time, released U.O.L.’s response to a FOIA request for the publication date of Tsai’s doctoral thesis.I can now respond to your request regarding publication of the thesis titled "Unfair trade practices and safeguard actions".  The University of London has not published this thesis as no physical copy of the thesis was received into the University from the examiners. |
| [The publication date of Tsai Ing-Wen's PhD thesis which was held by Senate House Library? - a Freedom of Information request to University of London - WhatDoTheyKnow](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/the_publication_date_of_tsai_ing#incoming-1949227) |
| 23 | U.O.L.’s response proves that Judge Hazel Oliver, Alison Lowton and Anne Chafer decided the case without reasonable grounds. U.O.L. publicly admitted that no physical copy of the thesis was received by U.O.L. in 1984. In other words, U.O.L. had no Tsai’s doctoral thesis to be filed incorrectly in the libraries in 1984. |
| 24 | Six months later, in the internal review issued on July 12, 2022, Keating provided the background of the case.In 1984 Dr. Tsai Ing-Wen received a doctorate from LSE, but no copy of the thesis was published by that institution.In 1984, that institution was U.O.L. |
| BL internal review on July 12, 2022 |
| 25 | The British Library only holds final validated theses awarded by UK universities in EThOS to demonstrate the quality of U.K. research and offer reassurance to the universities, authors, and users.  |
| https://www.bl.uk/ethos-and-theses/faq-for-ethos-and-theses |
| 26 | Since only doctoral theses awarded by U.O.L. were required to be deposited in the Senate House Library and to be made available for public reference, the doctoral theses deposited in the Senate House Library were the final validated doctoral theses awarded by U.O.L.  |
| 12.1(a) |
| 27 | By providing the above statement as the background, Keating knew that Tsai’s final validated doctoral thesis awarded by U.O.L. did not exist in 1984 when the PhD was awarded, nor did it exist when the record of Tsai’s thesis was added to EThOS on June 24, 2015. Hwan Lin’s allegation raised on June 21, 2019, was legitimate. |
| 28 | No remedial measure was taken. Instead, Keating justified the EThOS record of Tsai’s non-existing doctoral thesis added to EThO on June 24, 2015, by arguing that LSE published Tsai’s doctoral thesis in 2015. |
| BL internal review on July 12, 2022 |
| 29 | Keating must have missed the press statement released by LSE on October 8, 2019.LSE received not Tsai’s long-overdue final doctoral thesis, and not even a facsimile of the final doctoral thesis, but a facsimile of Tsai’s personal copy of the thesis.Furthermore, it was not in 2015 but in 2019. |
| https://www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2019/j-October-2019/LSE-statement-on-PhD-of-Dr-Tsai-Ing-wen |
| 30 | Under the M.O.U. between the British Library and LSE, the metadata of Tsai’s thesis that can be harvested from the L.S.E.T.O. has always been a digital copy of Tsai’s personal copy of the original thesis presented to the Library in 2019. |
| http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/3976/ |
| 31 | The catalogue record that LSE can supply to the British Library has always been a photocopy of Tsai’s personal copy of the original thesis presented to the Library in 2019.The Creation Date was not 1984, not 2015, but 2019.  |
| https://librarysearch.lse.ac.uk/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma99148938412302021&context=L&vid=44LSE\_INST:44LSE\_VU1&lang=en&search\_scope=MyInst\_and\_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,unfair%20trade%20practices%20and%20safeguard%20actions&offset=0 |
| 32 | The title page shows that the thesis was submitted in 1983, not in 1984, when the PhD was awarded. |
| http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/3976/1/Tsai\_\_unfair-trade-practices-and-safeguard-actions.pdf |
| 33 | Normally, the publisher is not a component of the metadata of the LSE doctoral theses. |
| https://librarysearch.lse.ac.uk/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma99148938412302021&context=L&vid=44LSE\_INST:44LSE\_VU1&lang=en&search\_scope=MyInst\_and\_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,unfair%20trade%20practices%20and%20safeguard%20actions |
| 34 | But LSE included the publisher of the photocopy of Tsai’s personal copy of the thesis in the metadata. It was a producer that was not identified, and probably in Taipei. |
| https://librarysearch.lse.ac.uk/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma99148938412302021&context=L&vid=44LSE\_INST:44LSE\_VU1&lang=en&search\_scope=MyInst\_and\_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,unfair%20trade%20practices%20and%20safeguard%20actions&offset=0 |
| 35 | When the LSE Library catalogued the personal copy of Tsai’s thesis, one of the factors they considered was “some deniability on our part if necessary.”  |
| Subject: More on the PhD Thesis by Ing-Wen Tsai ... |
| 36 | To list a producer not identified and probably in Taipei as the publisher of Tsai’s personal copy, LSE denies that it published Tsai’s personal copy. |
| https://librarysearch.lse.ac.uk/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma99148938412302021&context=L&vid=44LSE\_INST:44LSE\_VU1&lang=en&search\_scope=MyInst\_and\_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,unfair%20trade%20practices%20and%20safeguard%20actions&offset=0 |
| 37 | On September 25, 2019, LSE informed the British Library that Tsai had decided to make her doctoral thesis available online not through the L.S.E.T.O. but through Taiwan’s national library.  |
| 2. Emails between LSE and BL(1) |
| 38 | The National Central Library is the counterpart of the British Library in Taiwan. Two days later, on September 27, 2019, at 10 am local time, the National Central Library made Tsai’s personal copy of the thesis available online.  |
| https://www.ncl.edu.tw/information\_237\_10588.html |
| 39 | On September 25, 2019, Tsai’s Office also promised LSE a digital copy of Tsai’s personal copy of the thesis. |
| 2. Emails between LSE and BL(1) |
| 40 | A note signed by Tsai on October 3, 2019, is found in the digital copy of Tsai’s thesis now available in the L.S.E.T.O..It was addressed to LSE, showing that Tsai’s Office provided a digital copy of Tsai’s thesis to LSE. |
| http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/3976/1/Tsai\_\_unfair-trade-practices-and-safeguard-actions.pdf |
| 41 | However, LSE’s response to a FOIA request on August 7, 2020, stated that LSE downloaded a scanned copy of Tsai’s personal copy directly from the National Central Library and uploaded the scanned copy to the L.S.E.T.O.Again, LSE denied that it was the publisher of the digital copy of Tsai’s personal copy, now available at L.S.E.T.O.. |
| LSE |
| 42 | In short, as the Chief Executive of the U.K. National Library, Keating justified the EThOS record of Tsai’s non-existing doctoral thesis with Tsai’s personal copy of the thesis published not by LSE in the U.K., but by an unidentified producer, probably in Taipei. |
| 43 | Keating also found that a copy of Tsai’s doctoral thesis was ingested into EThOS in 2015.  |
| BL internal review on July 12, 2022. |
| 44 | Logically, a non-existing doctoral thesis can never be ingested into EThOS. |
| 45 | In addition, when the M.O.U. was signed in September 2013, LSE opted out of the thesis ingestion service offered by the British Library. LSE theses are accessible only via links to L.S.E.T.O.  |
| 8. Q2. Ethos MOU LSE |
| 46 | Furthermore, in response to Hwan Lin’s FOIA request on July 18, 2019, the British Library clearly stated that they had a record in EThOS of Tsai’s thesis but not the full file, and a note on the EThOS record stating that Tsai’s thesis was missing from the University.  |
| <https://taiwanenews.com/doc/Lin_report_OCT2019_Eng.pdf>10. 190718 Response 1936 |
| 47 | This is the “missing from the University” note in the EThOS record of Tsai’s thesis added on June 24, 2015. |
| 48 | This is the EThOS record after being updated on November 20, 2019, Under the “Availability of full text,” it states that “Full text unavailable from EThOS. Please try the link below.”  |
| https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?did=1&uin=uk.bl.ethos.652034 |
| 49 | It is because LSE opted out of the thesis ingestion service |
| 50 | Tsai’s non-existing doctoral thesis, the photocopy, and the digital copy of Tsai’s personal copy of the thesis published in Taipei have never been ingested into EThOS. Keating’s finding is in direct contradiction to the facts and evidence.  |
| 51 | Under Keating’s leadership, on June 27, 2019, at 14:56, the British Library emailed the L.S.E.T.O. after receiving several inquiries about Tsai’s non-existing doctoral thesis.The email was sent to check if the L.S.E.T.O. wished to remove the entire record of Tsai’s thesis from EThOS.  |
| 3. Emails between LSE and BL |
| 52 | Wilson responded on behalf of the L.S.E.T.O. the next day at 11:10. He admitted the LSE Library never had a copy of Tsai’s doctoral thesis to begin with, and even Wilson himself thought about shadowing the record of Tsai’s thesis in EThOS. |
| 3. Emails between LSE and BL |
| 53 | LSE was hoping to get a copy from Taiwan but was unsure what to do with the copy if it arrived. Wilson then revealed that Tsai was the President of Taiwan and asked the British Library to leave it for now.The British Library has never removed or shadowed the record of Tsai’s non-existing doctoral thesis from EThOS. |
| 3. Emails between LSE and BL |
| 54 | The 1983-1984 U.O.L. Regulations required all PhD students to authorize the British Library to make a microfilm copy for interlibrary loan and the supply of copies. The British Library must have known this regulation.  |
| 12.1(a) and (c) |
| 55 | On July 10, 2019, LSE informed the British Library that the photocopy of Tsai’s personal copy was catalogued, but digitization was not permitted, digital copying was not allowed, and LSE would not allow interlibrary loans. LSE’s instruction violated the 1983-1984 U.O.L. Regulations and the British Library knew it, but no records show that the British Library raised any concerns. |
| 3. Emails between LSE and BL |
| 56 | In addition, the British Library did not remove or update the record of Tsai’s non-existing doctoral thesis in EThOS after the LSE Library catalogued the photocopy of Tsai’s personal copy on July 10, 2019. |
| 57 | Wilson asked if the British Library would still keep “a restricted access note” on the EThOS record and if there was an option that would sound less secretive.  |
| 3. Emails between LSE and BL |
| 58 | The British Library’s response was: We do not have any other option on restricting a thesis on EThOS, but I have added a note to our records to explain that the thesis will be available in your special collections reading room. |
| 3. Emails between LSE and BL |
| 59 | Someone sent a FOIA request asking the reason why Tsai’s thesis had been put on restricted access for thirty-five years. PhD authors could request restricted access in exceptional situations, but only for two years at most.The British Library FOIA team raised the question internally.  |
| 6. FOI 1941 Request and Information |
| 60 | According to the 1983-1984 University of London Regulations, it was limited to five years.  |
| 12.2(a) |
| 61 | The restricted access note violated the 1983-1984 U.O.L. Regulations, but the British Library FOIA team was told thatit was the instruction they received from LSE for this thesis, and the British Library always followed the advice of the participating institutions when managing the thesis data in EThOS.  |
| 6. FOI 1941 Request and Information |
| 62 | LSE uploaded Tsai’s personal copy to L.S.E.T.O. around October 8, 2019. The British Library waited for six weeks, finally harvested the metadata from L.S.E.T.O., and updated the EThOS record of Tsai’s thesis on November 20, 2019, around 15:15. |
| 2. Emails between LSE and BL(1) |
| 63 | According to the British Library’s official website, they have a careful matching process updates existing EThOS records with additional data.  |
| https://www.bl.uk/ethos-and-theses/managing-theses |
| 64 | Tsai’s thesis in the L.S.E.T.O. has always been “a digital copy of Ing-wen Tsai’s personal copy of the original thesis presented to the Library in 2019.”  |
| http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/3976/ |
| 65 | No such additional data can be found in the updated EThOS record of Tsai’s thesis. |
| https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?did=1&uin=uk.bl.ethos.652034 |
| 66 | When the record of Tsai’s thesis was added to EThOS on June 24, 2015, the date of award was 1984.  |
| <http://primocat.bl.uk/F?func=direct&local_base=ITEMV&doc_number=017428475&con_lng=eng>https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?did=1&uin=uk.bl.ethos.652034 |
| 67 | When Tsai’s Office relied on the EThOS record to prove the existence of Tsai’s non-exiting doctoral thesis in the U.O.L. libraries on September 23, 2019, the date of award was still 1984.  |
| 68 | However, after the EThOS record was updated on November 20, 2019, the Date of Award was changed to 1983. |
| https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?did=1&uin=uk.bl.ethos.652034 |
| 69 | According to “Managing data in each field,” found on the British Library’s website, the date of award used to be the date given on the title page, but now only one date is recorded in EThOS, the date the thesis was awarded.  |
| https://www.bl.uk/ethos-and-theses/managing-the-data-in-each-field |
| 70 | Someone at the EThOS Customer Services raised the question on December 09, 2019, at 15:07:The date of award has been changed from 1984 to 1983. Have we picked up the new date from the record held in LSE’s repository? Also, after looking at the thesis text, the thesis was submitted in 1983 but not awarded until 1984. |
| 4. Extracted Email Enquiry RE Change of Date |
| 71 | The reply was received 8 minutes later, stating that the change was in the harvested record from LSE. |
| 4. Extracted Email Enquiry RE Change of Date |
| 72 | The truth is the British Library ignored 2019 and cherry-picked 1983 from the harvested metadata. |
| http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/3976/ |
| 73 | The catalogue record of Tsai’s personal copy clearly states that the publisher is a producer that is not identified, probably in Taipei.  |
| https://librarysearch.lse.ac.uk/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma99148938412302021&context=L&vid=44LSE\_INST:44LSE\_VU1&lang=en&search\_scope=MyInst\_and\_CI&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,unfair%20trade%20practices%20and%20safeguard%20actions&offset=0 |
| 74 | Disregarding the information about the publisher, the reason given to the person at the EThOS Customer Services was: LSE are the publishers of this resource, and we took their metadata as being correct. |
| 4. Extracted Email Enquiry RE Change of Date |
| 75 | Resource Description & Access, RDA, is an internationally used cataloguing standard to ensure accurate metadata. |
| https://www.rdatoolkit.org/about |
| 76 | As the UK national library, to ensure accurate metadata, the British Library follows RDA and has participated in its development since its inception.It also plays an active role in the governance, development, maintenance, and propagation of the metadata standards used by UK libraries.  However, when the British Library updated the record of Tsai's thesis in EThOS, ensuring accurate metadata was not a concern, and RDA was a dead letter.  |
| <https://www.bl.uk/collection-metadata/strategy-and-standards>https://www.bl.uk/collection-metadata/strategy-and-standards |
| 77 | The record of Tsai’s thesis should be removed from EThOS because Tsai’s thesis in the L.S.E.T.O. was Tsai’s personal copy of the thesis, not the final validated thesis awarded by U.O.L. |
| https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?did=1&uin=uk.bl.ethos.652034 |
| 78 | However, instead of removing the record from EThOS, the record of Tsai’s thesis was updated just like any other final validated doctoral thesis held in EThOS. Looking at the EThOS record, Tsai’s personal copy of the thesis can easily pass off as a final validated doctoral thesis awarded by a UK university and held in EThOS. |
| https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?did=1&uin=uk.bl.ethos.652034 |
| 79 | The addition of Tsai’s non-existing doctoral thesis to the EThOS system on June 24, 2015, raises serious concerns about the integrity of the EThOS system managed by the British Library. |
| 80 | But Keating found that the request lacked serious purpose and was likely part of a concerted and/or state-sponsored disinformation campaign designed to harass the President and government of Taiwan, the UK public sector in general, and the British Library in particular. |
| BL internal review on July 12, 2022 |
| 81 | A second complaint was filed with ICO on August 22, 2022. On February 15, 2023, ICO issued a Decision Notice upholding the British Library’s decision, the request was vexatious under section 14(1) of the U.K. FOIA 2000.  |
| 82 | Voice generated by FreeTTSTo be continued… |

/End