E-Publishing Portal: A New Approach to Faculty Outreach

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Abstract

The recent journal price increases and state-wide budget cuts have forced librarians at the University of Maryland (UMD) to make outright cancellations to journals. The implementation of an in-house system for preserving scholarly work of faculty was necessary not only because of budgetary stringency. The ongoing "scholarly communication crisis", the recognition that the library system needs to be changed, the need for archiving e-journal content has prompted the construction of an institutional repository. This poster aims to identify issues encountered during the design process of a digital repository and suggests possible solutions. New roles of the users of this newly implemented system are described. The main elements of the service are outlined, outreach methodologies are discussed, and faculty concerns are addressed.

Keywords: institutional repository; librarian role; electronic service; digital preservation

Introduction

In order to enhance the process of scholarly communication in an open access environment, the University of Maryland Libraries has implemented a Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM) available at https://drum.umd.edu/. The motivation for building such a repository was multi-faceted: participating in an innovative technology, increasing exposure of the scholarly output of the University, offering a new service to our faculty (and the university system), providing a permanent archive, hosting electronic theses and dissertations as well as computer science technical reports. This service simplifies the process for making faculty research publicly available and permanently preserves institutional knowledge.

Background

The University of Maryland is one of the top 20 public research universities in the United States with 2862 full-time and 812 part-time faculty. DRUM started operating in June 2004 and by 1 December 2005 there were 72 deposited research papers. By 27 February 2006 there were 3025 deposited scholarly materials including Graduate School theses and dissertations.

Implementation Process of a Digital Repository

A proposal for implementation of a digital repository was submitted to the Chair of the University Library Council on 21 May 2003. The following procedures were established:

General working procedures

- *Administration*

The Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM) is operated by the University of Maryland Libraries. A project team has been established and a leader identified. Part of the original vision was to include one or more faculty members to the team from outside the library to handle any questions of appropriateness of content but this has not yet been implemented. Changes in the operating procedures may be suggested by the project team, the Dean of Libraries, or the University Council and all three are consulted on proposed changes. All final decisions rest with the Dean. He guides the collecting scope, overall mission, but daily decisions are made by the DRUM Team. Items included in the repository are subject to the University's intellectual property policy, copyright restrictions and the author giving non-exclusive distribution rights to DRUM.

- *Content and submission*

Only University of Maryland faculty members can deposit into DRUM. Deposits must be complete research works. The scholarly work is thereafter available freely across the web. Deposits are reviewed by DRUM staff for the presence of metadata and to be sure deposited files are complete. The file formats accepted are listed with their extensions.

General technical implementation

- *Software*

Considerations in selecting DSpace: 1) complete package, no development required, quick to implement; 2) open source (free) with a strong and well organized user community; 3) can run on SUN platform.

- *Hardware*

Two machines were used during the implementation process in order to avoid technical issues with the public computers during the experiment.

ISSUES During the Design Process of a Digital Repository

Technical support

A self-service deposit model is essential in order to minimize the level of staff effort required. Faculty have the authority to deposit without library staff assistance or approval. Our first steps in this regard were to integrate the registration process with the first-time login by authenticating and authorizing via the campus Light Directory Access Protocol (LDAP), which is a way to use University Directory information. The process confirms faculty status, department affiliation and creates a user record in DRUM. This allows the depositor to submit content the first time she/he logs in without a separate manual registration process. This is a local functional enhancement of DSpace at the University of Maryland that is not included in the core DSpace code.

Copyright and peer review concerns

Faculty have a couple of misconceptions about open access: "*Putting my work on a website is the same as Open Access", "I can't post a piece that has been published*", etc.

Education of faculty

Due to staffing limitations campus faculty have not been made fully aware of DRUM, its services, benefits and value. We expect that the recent hiring of a full-time DRUM Coordinator will fill this need and enable more intensive and regular outreach, training, marketing and assessment.

Librarians' roles in the new environment and outreach methodologies

A literature review has been undertaken to identify how librarians should respond to a digital repository and how they will help the successful implementation of this new service (Bailey, 2005). Since librarians at the University of Maryland have many other job responsibilities, we will not necessarily expect all these things from them, in part because we have opened a position for a DRUM Coordinator.

Conclusions

The environment of open access which led to the birth of digital repositories in academic research institutions imposes new changes not only in the publishing industry, but in librarianship as well. The future is unpredictable but we encourage the research community to follow today's publishing trends. We advise the implementation of the changes to occur the quickest possible way and go a step further by educating the potential users to embrace the new service.

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