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We're All In This Together: Supporting the Dissemination of University Research Through Library Services

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We're All In This Together
Supporting the Dissemination of University Research Through Library Services
(Speaker Notes)

Universities have always had a research mission, but they have not necessarily taken responsibility for disseminating this work. In modern academia however, faculty have almost unlimited ways of describing and sharing they work they have created. This new environment is challenging the standard practices for publishing scholarship and as a result **universities have an opportunity to change the way their research is disseminated**.

The University's Role in the Dissemination of Research and Scholarship - A Call to Action describes several **strategies universities could use to support the dissemination of its research**:

- Retain the rights to disseminate and preserve scholarship developed
- Develop tools, policies, and infrastructure to help disseminate scholarship, especially for unique and localized content
- Develop reward systems which refocus efforts on dissemination

Libraries, especially institutional repositories, are well positioned to implement these strategies as universities incorporate dissemination as a core function. Librarians already have the skills and resources for understanding and working with the publishing industry. They have a foundation in negotiating licenses, building efficient infrastructures, and analyzing user needs. Additionally, few campus entities have as full and comprehensive understanding of what scholarship is being produced by their researchers as libraries do.

Unique Library Services Supporting Research Dissemination

Advocating for Author Rights

- Oregon State University created an **authors' rights workshop** "designed to train librarians in their roles as authors and as envoys to educate others on campus" (Wirth & Chadwell, 2010). The workshop gives participants the opportunity to learn about the importance of author rights, identify journals that support self-archiving, and practice reviewing copyright transfer agreements.
- Several university libraries have developed **open access funds**. SPARC defines open access funds as "a pool of money set aside by an institution to support publication models that enable free, immediate, online distribution of, and access to, scholarly research." (SPARC). Policies and amounts vary from university to university.
- Boise State uses a **mediated deposit model** to identify journal article that are eligible to be included in its IR, track down the publisher's copyright policy, and work with the author to obtain their permission to include their work. This approach alleviates professors of having to do all the depositing tasks and provides an opportunity to individually communicate with faculty about their publications.

- Many libraries have developed guides and **information resources** to help explain the options authors have when publishing their scholarship.

Creating Researcher Pages

One of weaknesses libraries have had when marking institutional repositories to faculty is that the focus has been on the institution and not on the individual author. **Researcher pages are a way to show an immediate and personalized benefit for faculty participation in institutional repositories by highlighting an individual author and their work.**

- Offered through the Digital Commons platform, SelectedWorks pages use a standard template and provide basic information about an author's professional activities (expertise, courses taught, grants received, etc.). In addition to posting documents directly to the SelectedWorks page, content can be harvested from the main institutional repository.

- UR Research from the University of Rochester was developed as an open source repository software. The system provides a workspace for faculty to post different versions of their manuscripts, share files with other researchers, and provide links to works not hosted in the repository.

Reaching Out to Other University Stakeholders

- Oregon State University developed a partnership with their University Advancement office to provide access to original research. When writing articles about a research project, the Advancement office contacts the library staff who works with the faculty to include the publication in the institutional repository.

- At Boise State, the Library collaborates with the office of Institutional Analysis, Assessment & Reporting to share publication data.

- Many repositories are beginning to host conference proceedings and other event information. These types of projects provide a wonderful opportunity to reach out to other campus groups who may not have the resources to preserve and disseminate this kind of scholarship.

Generating Publication and Usage Data

Since research dissemination is an individual activity, it is very difficult to keep track of what is being produced at a university. It is even more difficult to understand what issues our faculty face when trying to publish their scholarship or how their research is being used once it is published. **Institutional repositories contain some of the most comprehensive information regarding faculty scholarship and as a result serve as a wonderful record of a university's contribution to their community.**

- Because Boise State's IR includes at a minimum bibliographic information for all published works, it can create complete lists of the university's scholarship that could then be segmented by department.

- Although there are already tools available to help determine the merit and impact of an article or journal, repositories can also provide more localized usage data. The Digital Commons

platform enables repository managers to run a variety of download and page view reports. This information can be organized by date, collection, or usage.

- Familiarity with copyright transfer agreements provides IR staff a clearer picture of who is publishing a university's scholarship, what rights faculty have over their work, and most importantly who truly owns their intellectual property.

Developing Publishing Services

In Fall 2007, a survey was conducted of ARL member libraries regarding their publishing services. The survey defined library-based publishing as **"the organized production and dissemination of scholarly works in any format as a service provided by a library"** ("Campus Publishing," 2007). Simply housing or digitizing documents was not considered publishing in that survey. The follow-up report noted several common services provided by libraries including: hosting, digitization, copyright advising, and editing.

- One of the most common activities libraries are engaging in is the hosting of journals. Two platforms frequently used are the Open Journal Systems, an open source publishing tool and the electronic journal feature included in Digital Commons. Both systems allow librarians to work with faculty to solicit submissions, manage peer-review processes, and provide indexing and other discovery tools.

- Other universities have collaborated with their traditional university press to develop open access monographs and alternative dissemination models

Curating Data

The concept of data curation is generally defined as **"managing and promoting the use of data from its point of creation, to ensure it is fit for contemporary purpose, and available for discovery and reuse".** (Lord, Macdonald, Lyon, & Giaretta, 2004) By actively curating data not only are universities complying with funder regulations, they are also allowing a type of transparency for the research produced on their campus. This not only supports scientific progress, it also helps ensure the authenticity of the data preserved. Additionally **curation work completed by skilled staff actually improves the data** through the addition of metadata and other contextual information usually lost over time.

Data curation services provided by libraries varies greatly depending on researcher needs, level of librarian expertise, and availability of resources to support such initiatives. Researcher willingness to share their data, as well as the tools available through the library can also influence how data is described and preserved. Some libraries will provide simple record keeping services, only including in their repository a basic descriptive record for research projects conducted at their university. Other university libraries have invested substantial resources in developing extensive data curation services that may include consultation, metadata support, and long-term file preservation.

Strategies for Developing Research Dissemination IR-Based Services

- **Frame your institutional repository as a service** that responds to researcher needs and works to become an active member in the research process. Go beyond thinking of institutional repositories as only a digital collection of university scholarship and instead think of ways that the library can engage with faculty as they begin their research.

- Conduct an environmental scan **to gain an understanding of how research is developed and disseminated on your campus**. Determine who is supporting those efforts and what policies or infrastructures exist that affect research dissemination.

- **Gather information on who is publishing your university's scholarship** and investigate how this is impacting the effective dissemination of research. Find out who owns your university's intellectual property and if there are ways to use author rights to further disseminate these assets.

- **Offer library staff**, including both those directly managing repository services, as well as those fulfilling other duties such as serving as a departmental liaison, **opportunities to learn about scholarly communication issues**. Help librarians develop the expertise they need to support their faculty in disseminating their work.

Resources

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