eScholarship Repository
Supporting Scholarly Communication at the University of California

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Introduction

In existence since 2002, the eScholarship Repository provides a full spectrum publishing platform for scholarly content produced by University of California faculty. It has enjoyed an impressive growth rate, with over 200 UC academic units and departments on 10 campuses submitting over **16,000 papers**. Usage now exceeds **50,000 full-text downloads a week** on average, with over **5 million total documents accessed to date**.

After 5 years, the Repository is undoubtedly a success, but faculty awareness is still fairly low and adoption could be much higher. Why hasn't the long-expected shift in scholarly communications toward electronic publication taken place?

In an effort to find out the UC Office of Scholarly Communication commissioned a study from Greenhouse Associates on faculty use and perceptions of the Repository. This poster seeks to present some of the report's findings and how the eScholarship Repository might change as a result.

The Repository

The eScholarship Repository provides a central location for University of California faculty to deposit any research or scholarly output deemed appropriate by their participating University of California research unit, center, or department. This can take the form of pre-prints, post-prints, edited volumes, peer-reviewed series or journals.

The Repository is powered by tools from the **Berkeley Electronic Press**. UC licenses this suite of electronic publishing tools on behalf of its faculty. This infrastructure enables the rapid and low-cost creation, management, and dissemination of on-line scholarship by UC researchers.

Contributor Services:

• Training for Faculty and Staff
• Creation of Web Presence for Units and Publications
• Workflows and Software that Support Peer Review
• Individual and Batch Upload
• Ability to Associate Any Related Content
• Automatic conversion to PDF of Word and RTF
• Usage Reports
• Guaranteed Permanence & Preservation

User Services:

• Metadata and Full-Text Search
• Email Notification
• RSS feeds
• Object-Level Indexing by Google

Findings

Scholarly Communication

• Peer-reviewed online-only journals are emerging as vehicles for providing more publishing opportunities to younger scholars and faster overall publishing cycles. No online-only journal, however, has yet achieved the status of any traditional print journal in its field.

• Working papers and other "gray literature" are regarded in many disciplines as important and influential forms of scholarship, even though these forms of output do not accrue towards tenure and promotion.

• While scholars generally believe that tenure and promotion policies will be forced to change in response to new forms of scholarly communication, there is no consensus about how and when such change will take place.

Repository Participation

• There is very little active individual contribution of scholarly works to general repositories such as eScholarship. Submissions tend to occur when there is an institutional agreement to load works automatically without any participation by the individual scholar.

• Both departmental and personal web sites widely exist, often featuring various works of individual scholars. However, updating of works on these sites is spotty. Department administrators reported difficulty in getting scholars to offer their works for inclusion on web sites.

• Departments and research centers that have used eScholarship to publish working papers are highly enthusiastic about the results (as evidenced by download reports).

Faculty Perspectives

• Enhancing discoverability of work is the primary reason that scholars contribute to repositories. Timeliness of availability, in light of the long publishing cycles of traditional journals and monographs, also appears to be a driver.

• Scholars do not see publishing in repositories as contributing to tenure and promotion, although some see indirect benefits in building their visibility within their fields and soliciting feedback on early versions of their work.

• eScholarship is regarded as a "publishing system," not as a "repository," by some respondents, especially those with the most active experience contributing to it.

• The term "repository" is regarded negatively by most respondents as a passive "host" for previously published works.

Obstacles to Contribution

• The primary obstacle to participation in eScholarship is lack of perceived benefit to individual scholars.

• Other, though far less critical, obstacles relate to misunderstandings about the repository and its capabilities and uses. A symptom of these latter challenges is faculty confusion over whether the repository is for pre-publication or post-publication works.

Repository as Research Tool

• Few scholars use eScholarship as a research tool, instead preferring discipline-specific repositories, which are more targeted and therefore have a higher concentration of relevant materials than eScholarship.

Implementation

• Research centers find the process of establishing an on-line collection or journal unnecessarily long and laborious and expressed a desire for more complete information on system capabilities and limitations.

Recommendations

A number of steps were suggested in the report to increase faculty awareness and adoption of the eScholarship Repository:

• Reposition eScholarship as a publishing platform for working papers and other "gray literature" that augments traditional journal publishing and for e-journals as an alternative to print journals.

• Establish an effective field network of campus librarians and faculty liaisons within targeted departments. Establish a staff position dedicated to the growth and support of the network

• Undertake targeted, focused needs analysis for the individual departments and research centers, including studies of the user population and more robust web analytics for eScholarship content.

• Develop institutional support at department, campus, institute, and system-wide levels and advocate for institutional change by supporting long-term modification in the tenure and promotion system.

Future

In light of the study's recommendations, as well as proposed changes in the University of California's policy on faculty copyright, it has become apparent that the Repository is ready for major changes in purpose, content, and functionality. Some of the projects now being considered include the following:

• Enter into a close collaboration with the University of California Press with the goal of establishing the eScholarship Repository as online a publishing imprint worthy of supporting tenure.

• Undertake a major effort to increase awareness of the Repository and adoption by a larger segment of the faculty. We are already in the process of creating an outreach and marketing position within the unit.

• Refocus our efforts on our most successful formats (working papers and e-journals) and expand the types of publishing activities we support (e.g. Electronic Theses & Dissertations).

• Unify and rationalize the myriad of current eScholarship services so that collection creation and content navigation are less confusing and laborious.

• Improve end-user access and search capabilities by replacing the user interface with XTF, an OpenSource, OAI-compliant publishing architecture. Implement a new discovery mechanisms such as "more like this" and add book-bag functionality.

• Start prototyping new approaches to our repository architecture. As a first step we would like to create XTF modules for DSpace and FEDORA with the eventual goal of using one of these to replace the Bepress database.

For further information

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The eScholarship Repository:
http://www.cdlib.org/programs/escholarship.html

The Office of Scholarly Communication:
http://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/

XTF (eXtensible Text Framework):
http://www.cdlib.org/inside/projects/xtf/