

Cooperative Curation Symposium: Inter-institutional Approaches to Supporting Scholarly Communication

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Closing Remarks

I'll do my best to summarize the outcomes of today's symposium and incorporate what was discussed - even on twitter - in my closing remarks. I'll also share my thoughts on next steps in cultivating inter-institutional approaches to supporting scholarly communication.

Tyler started us off this morning with some context for the case studies you learned more about today. It might be good to reflect on this some before talking about what I think are two of the major takeaways today, which I'll mention at the end.

It's clear that repositories have come a long way since they began roughly around 2002 as a publishing platform for digital scholarship. While most large ARL libraries have IRs (institutional repositories), many colleges and universities do not, but plan to, or hope to. And because IR building can be a slow process, we're now seeing statewide and consortial networks with shared values of open access, stewardship, and collaboration (as Toby mentioned) beginning to think about efficiencies in services, leveraging expertise/talent from multiple organizations in providing virtual library services.

While this is happening and while the rest of us are still racing to establish an IR, the content keeps coming and increasingly institutions are looking to their libraries to provide stewardship of digital scholarly materials. There is an urgency here and we should be, and are, asking ourselves the questions: how do we continue to learn from the experiences of others? how do we ensure we don't each make the same mistakes? how do we become better collaborators (as Katherine mentioned)? how do we leverage expertise from institutions with big R&D shops, robust metadata and digitization programs, and with successful outreach programs with well-defined value propositions that help to secure resources from university administration to fund repository programs?

We heard case studies today that really showcased some of the amazing work that's going on in this area. Each of them touched on their approaches to common components of consortial repository services: 1) their core values, 2) their technological infrastructure, 3) their approaches to collection development, outreach, and user engagement, 4) their relationships with other institutions, including member institutions and consortial organizations, and 5) their lessons learned going forward. A common theme that stood out was that repository collaboratives can, and often do, support a variety of types of digital scholarly content. They also support both the finished product and the production/publishing process for publications such as

journals, books, and conference proceedings, in addition to traditional IR content.

Supporting different types of content and the entire research lifecycle is becoming more important as scholarly and research environments change; it's not just textual materials anymore. We're managing research data, interactive digital humanities resources, websites, learning objects, and instructional materials. Some libraries are also becoming more involved in the process of creating new knowledge, not just archiving and preserving it. They're there in the virtual communities organizing information and supporting new research processes and practices. We're doing so much and we're beginning to ask ourselves the questions - (based on #gkr tweets) can we just structure the data and link it for context and have other interfaces and a network of repositories visualize it in meaningful ways for users? How do we integrate technology more into library services?

In terms of inter-institutional collaborations, one of the greatest challenges we face is how difficult it is to do what these institutions and organizations have done to establish consortial programs and services. I would argue that it takes an understanding of state and local government, of institutional organizational structures, and connecting with virtual organizations with similar mission focus areas. It takes creating a governance structure from the ground up, defining roles and responsibilities of each institution, creating a robust business and sustainability plan, often securing funding to hire full time staff, building an appropriate technology infrastructure, and addressing sociocultural barriers to repository development. These are incredibly difficult things to do, but they can be done. We would certainly benefit from continuing to share experiences and to foster collaborations to help us all preserve and disseminate information.

It becomes clear when we reflect on the urgency of need, the case studies, and the panel discussion, that perhaps the key is virtual collaboration networks. While this is not a new concept, perhaps we should take a closer look at how building a stronger network of statewide or regional IR groups, at how building a sense of community and a user-sensitive, shared and more invisible technology infrastructure (as Tim mentioned), and at how connecting this infrastructure and content to other repositories, could aid consortial groups and individual institutions in overcoming common barriers to inter-institutional collaborations and to establishing IRs. Perhaps we begin exploring how we can leverage the strengths of each of our programs and of existing IR-related virtual communities/organizations.

I believe the two major takeaways today are: 1) that we should challenge ourselves to continue to explore, perhaps through virtual IR community networks, how we can become better collaborators in creating and implementing successful collaborative services locally, nationally, and globally to address what really is a global information access issue. Robert asks the question "can we do this without top down funding?"; and 2) that we should challenge ourselves to imagine together what kind of repository services we want and should offer in the future, and how we'll make collaborative services more successful in building user-sensitive and shared services that support a variety of creative outputs and that are flexible enough to allow us to take advantage of

new global data and digital scholarship sharing opportunities.

So, I leave you with these thoughts. I'd just like say thank you to IMLS, to the panelists and presenters, to the Symposium and Workshop organizing committee, to the project directors, to everyone involved in the project, and especially to Marlee Givens, project manager for the GALILEO Knowledge Repository.