

Strategies for Opening Up Content: Laying the Groundwork for an Open System of Scholarship

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It seems not so very long ago that an easy strategy for libraries to open up content was to let people roam the stacks. Many library users did and still do think of library and information content as books and journals and, more recently, audiovisual and other non-book formats. These materials were located in physical facilities and library users looked for them using first card catalogs and then online catalogs. How things have changed. Within a generation, a significant amount of content became digital and is now being delivered in a myriad of formats. As content has moved digital, there are as many ways to make content open as there are kinds of content.

Technologies exist to mix and mash, morph and merge content to bring new ideas together. Bibliographic information and metadata are pushed and pulled through Internet and Web technologies that are now part of the library user's daily life. However, that same Internet has made it possible for content to become less accessible. Barriers of cost and firewalls can prevent library users from obtaining necessary information. Content can be so fragmented that it is difficult to find. Digital therefore doesn't necessarily mean easily available. The research library is still challenged to find ways to bring its collections and users together.

This issue of *RLI* focuses on several strategies now being deployed by institutions and individuals to increase the amount of content that is open and available to the research library community and by extension the larger world. Research libraries may have a role to play in all of these strategies, but it is important to note that the drivers to open up content often are others in the scholarly and research community as well. The strategies discussed in this issue

of RLI are by no means all of the possible strategies, but taken together they provide insights into how institutions and individuals can work collectively to build a strong foundation that will enable content to be opened up for use.

Campus Open-Access Statements from ARL Institutions

Boston University, February 2009
<http://www.bu.edu/today/node/8320>

Brigham Young University Instructional Psychology and Technology, November 2009
<http://opencontent.org/blog/archives/1137#axzz0mLbfHi8M>

Cornell University, May 2005
<http://www.library.cornell.edu/scholarlycomm/resolution.html>

Duke University, March 2010
<http://library.duke.edu/blogs/scholcomm/category/open-access-and-institutional-repositories/>

Harvard University
Business School, February 2010
Faculty of Arts and Sciences, February 2008
Graduate School of Education, June 2009
Kennedy School of Government, March 2009
Law School, May 2008
<http://osc.hul.harvard.edu/OpenAccess/policytexts.php>

University of Kansas, April 2009, revised February 2010
<http://www.lib.ku.edu/scholcomm/openaccess/>

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, March 2009
<http://info-libraries.mit.edu/scholarly/faculty-and-researchers/mit-faculty-open-access-policy/>

University of Nebraska–Lincoln, April 2010
http://www.unl.edu/libr/news/documents/UNL_IR_resolution.pdf

University of Oregon Department of Romance Languages, June 2009
<http://insideoregon.uoregon.edu/romance-languages-adopts-open-access-mandate/>

Southern Illinois University Carbondale, April 2010
<http://facultysenate.siuc.edu/0410atta.pdf>
<http://facultysenate.siuc.edu/0410attb.pdf>

Institutional Strategies

A recent development at the institutional level has been the movement by faculty groups to pass resolutions in support of open access. The process of policy development is highly dependent on the governance structure at the particular university and the wording of the final resolution is necessarily a product of that process. The most important aspect of this movement is that the resolutions are being led by faculty members. Research libraries provide support and often help to coordinate the activities, but the case for openly accessible content is being made by the scholar leader. In their article, Ada Emmett and Town Peterson provide a glimpse into the process at the University of Kansas.

Another strategy being used at the campus level is the development of open-access (OA) funds. OA funds are set aside by an institution to support publication models that enable free, immediate, online distribution of, and access to, scholarly research. The late 2009 announcement of the establishment of the Compact for

Open-Access Publishing Equity (COPE) increased interest in this strategy. COPE encourages universities and research-funding agencies to develop “durable mechanisms for underwriting reasonable publication charges for articles written by [their] faculty and published in fee-based open-access journals.” Greg Tananbaum of ScholarNext has written a practical guide for

the implementation of an open-access fund and, in this issue of *RLI*, summarizes some of the major considerations involved when undertaking this activity.

Library Strategies

As content formats change, libraries seek new ways to make that content available. Since libraries and consortia license a significant amount of digital content on behalf of the user community, it is appropriate to look to changes in terms and conditions that would ensure that content be made as open as possible. In this issue of *RLI*, Ivy Anderson describes an effort by an ad hoc working group to add a clause to content licenses in order to include author self-archiving rights. The draft clause is now being circulated to libraries, their stakeholders (both internal and external), and the broader library community to gather comments and encourage discussion.

In addition to licenses, libraries are involved in a number of other activities to open up content. Foremost in this set of activities is the digitization of special collections, the participation in mass digitization projects, the support for electronic theses and dissertations, and the exposing of metadata for works held in library collections. Research libraries also manage repositories and support publishing activities (particularly for journals) on behalf of their institutions. These strategies have become component parts for a new open system of scholarly communication.

Author Strategies

Ultimately, though, decisions about opening up content are the responsibility of the copyright holder. There are several strategies now in place that authors can use to open their content. Libraries have been engaging authors in discussions for many years about their rights as copyright holders.

Before publication, author-rights addenda developed by SPARC and local campuses have been used by many authors to modify their publishing agreements. In recent years, authors have been encouraged to use Creative Commons (<http://creativecommons.org/>) and Science Commons (<http://sciencecommons.org/>) licenses.

As authors are finding bibliographic data about their published work on the Internet, they have become interested in opening up the full content. In her article, Melissa Levine describes a newly developed HathiTrust permissions agreement by which authors can designate that their work be made available.

Additional Strategies

Not included in this issue of *RLI*, but just as important to the scholarly system, are those strategies to open up content that result from funder mandates and public policy actions. Many funders mandate that researchers deposit publicly funded or research institution–funded work in digital repositories as a condition of receiving the grant. This helps to build the corpus of openly accessible research information.

All institutions can examine the variety of ways in which content can best be opened up and made available to the larger community. ARL itself has begun the process to open up its older publications. Many titles were scanned through the Google Books Library Project. As a Google Books publishing partner, bibliographic data for ARL content has been exposed in Google Book Search and is now being made 100% viewable. ARL also recently used the HathiTrust permissions agreement to open up one of its own publications and will open more in the near future.

As content formats and delivery have changed, so have the opportunities and strategies to increase content availability. This issue of *RLI* explores just a few of these means. Research institutions, libraries, and authors can examine their own circumstances and, working together, identify those strategies that have the best prospects to open up content that will result in a more open system of scholarship.

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<http://www.arl.org/resources/pubs/rli/archive/rli269.shtml>.