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ABSTRACT

The Checklist & Guide offers an overview of the central considerations that institutions must address in planning and implementing an institutional repository (IR): cultural, organizational and administrative issues; content, accession and retention policies; faculty outreach and participation; and, technical and infrastructure issues. Although not a step-by-step detailed manual, this publication *does* provide a contextual introduction to compelling issues and concludes each section with valuable references for “Resources & Further Reading.” This Checklist and Guide applies the best practices and benefits from the experiences of professionals who have actually planned and implemented institutional repositories.

+ Establishing an institutional repository (IR) suggests digitally capturing, centralizing and preserving the intellectual output of a sole university that, ideally, will contribute to a more global system of distributed, interoperable repositories that provide the foundation for a new disaggregated model of scholarly publishing and communication.

+ Evolving digital publishing technologies and expanding networking, increases in the volume of scientific research, constraints over the costs of traditional journal pricing and uncertainty over the responsibility for long-term digital preservation of scholarly materials, have created opportunities in the academic community for the production, distribution, and interchange of scholarly materials.

+ Faculty participation in the IR is essential. The principal author’s benefit in contributing to the IR, enhanced visibility, supports the primary motivation for academic publishing: communicating with colleagues about one’s research and contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the discipline. Faculty do, however, elevate the importance of peer review, editorial selection and quality control, components of traditional journal publishing, and may be reluctant to contribute published articles to an IR that appear alongside non-peer-reviewed material. By offering digital publishing technologies, libraries may augment their relevance to faculty and administrators by directly affecting the structure of scholarly communications.

+ Working papers, conference presentations, monographs, course materials, annotated series of images, audio and video selections, and published peer-reviewed research papers may serve as content for the IR: the materials should be research-based or teaching-oriented; submitted by an institution's faculty; appear in a completed form ready for dissemination (non-ephemeral); and, be licensable in perpetuity, as granted by the author to the institution to preserve and distribute the work through the IR.

+ The operative axiom for the technical implementation of an institutional repository is that the content managed by the system will survive the system itself and may well migrate as new technologies evolve. As the provision of long-term access and preservation are essential elements of an IR's mission, the need to preserve multifarious digital objects should be addressed. The Open Archival Information System (OAIS) Reference Model is the standard for digital archive architecture and provides the framework within which preservation metadata evolves. The OAIS model is predicated on capturing content as "bitstreams" that are preserved in perpetuity.

+ For digital preservation, and access and citation purposes, each object in the IR will have a unique and "persistent reference identifier." The CNRI Handle System provides a system for assigning and managing "handles" for digital objects. The protocols enable a distributed computer system to persistently identify, exchange and manage networked digital content despite change of location and the lapse of time.

+ In order to provide access to a broader research community, users outside the institutions must be able to locate and retrieve information from the IR. Systems must support interoperability to provide access via multiple search engines. This requires persistent naming, standardized metadata formats and a metadata harvesting protocol. The Open Archives Initiative (OAI) was established to develop and promote interoperability solutions to facilitate the dissemination of content among institutional repositories.