

**DOMAIN:** Institutional Repository (IR)

**ARTICLE:** “Institutional Repositories: Evaluating the Reasons for Non-use of Cornell University’s Installation of DSpace,” Philip M. Davis, Cornell University, D-Lib Magazine March/April 2007, Vol 13 Number 3 / 4 (18-pages)  
<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/march07/davis/03davis.html>

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**ABSTRACT:**

The advent of the IR has marshaled considerable resources in its establishment but to date there has been little evaluation of their effectiveness, most especially, as regard to faculty participation. The article reports on a (3) part evaluative study of IRs and, specifically, describes the content holdings (largely under populated) and faculty participation (underutilized) in Cornell’s DSpace and compares these findings with (7) university DSpace installations. Interview results are provided from (11) faculty members, exploring their attitudes, motivations, and behaviors for non-participation in IRs.

+ Two philosophical approaches exists among those who work to justify institutional repositories: one views IRs as competition for traditional publishing, thereby, removing the role of scholarly publishing from third-party publishers and restoring it to the academy; the second approach envisions the IRs as a supplement to traditional publishing, i.e. disseminating “grey literature,” or documents such as pamphlets, bulletins, visual conference presentations that are neglected or ignored by traditional publishers.

+ Success of institutional repositories has been “somewhat spotty.” A brief review of previous studies to measure the participatory of IRs reveal that a significant international senior authors (2005) demonstrated a general lack of knowledge and motivation to utilize IRs (40% of all universities had operational IRs): DSpace was the most popular “content management” platform in use: an environmental scan of (45) IRs demonstrated that only a small fraction of an institution’s research output had been collected due to low faculty participation (2003); in addition, little evidence suggested that IRs were leading a reform in scholarly publishing.

+ By analyzing the data from the DSpace log files, the review derived just how widespread contributions to DSpace were over the 15-month time period: 50% deposited only a single item. Although a university-wide structure exists, much of it remains in skeletal form, with many collections empty or meagerly populated. There is little evidence to suggest that individual faculty is making significant contributions of regular scholarly output to the repository

- + Faculty surveys included male and female representatives from the physical sciences, social sciences and humanities. Most believe that there is little public interest in their primary research and that the research community has adequate access to their work through journals.
- + Faculty reasons for utilizing the digital repository include: permanence (sponsoring organization assumes responsibility in transferring documents into formats that may be read by future software); policy of granting agencies/publishers (pressure on authors to deposit manuscripts as a condition of funding); timeliness for disseminating scholarly works; registration of new ideas (providing a “date stamp” on every deposited manuscript).
- + Reasons for not using a digital repository include: copyright concerns, the publishing of original work (does pre-print or IR deposit bar the appearance of a future journal release?), questionable quality of the holdings in the repository, fear of plagiarism, and the absence of peer review before deposit.
- + Understanding the academic values of faculty and their reward system is essential for evaluating institutional repositories and predicting their future success. Also, understanding the reasons for non-participation from an institution’s faculty may assist developers and implementers of IRs in enhancements to software, developing an educational outreach program to encourage faculty use, and incorporating faculty submissions as part of the publication process.

#### **SUMMARY:**

Faculty hold various perceptions about the functions, risks and benefits associated with utilizing digital repositories which are defined by disciplinary norms and their reward structure. As eloquently stated by one academician: “While we are going through a digital revolution—in the way we teach and communicate with each other—the reputation of being published in the print journals is still the strongest incentive for motivation.” If the intent of the IR is to capture and preserve the scholarship of one’s faculty, it will need to address how best to solicit the confidence and participation of the institution’s faculty.