Extending the Conversation: The Liberal Arts Scholarly Repository (LASR)

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The Genesis of LASR

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LASR: an ever-evolving shared repository

Bucknell University
Carleton College
Grinnell College
St. Lawrence University
Trinity University
University of Richmond
Whitman College
Why a shared repository?

• Showcase liberal arts scholarship
• Chance to experiment with an IR
• Share the technical overhead
• Cooperate on best practices
• Introduce faculty and students to:
  – IR & publishing alternatives
  – Creative Commons license
A brief history.....

- First steps: CNI 2004…toe in water...
- BEPress → Digital Commons → DSpace → Portal
- Independent → NITLE → Independent → ?
- Members: 4 → 27 → 7
- Student papers → liberal arts scholarship → liberal arts education
Two Foundational Workshops

- Trinity University January 2008
  - Mission statement
  - Collection policy

- University of Richmond April 2008
  - Metadata standards
  - System architecture
Current issues & challenges

• Scalable governance & finance
  – Communication & momentum
  – Nobody thinking about this fulltime
  – Umbrella organization?

• Content recruitment
  – Local and joint strategies
  – Low hanging fruit?
Institutional context…. building a bigger digital archiving sandbox locally

- ContentDM
- Web content management systems
- Course management systems
- E-reserves

- E-portfolios
- Shared disk spaces
- Department servers
- Etc.
The Technical Solutions of LASR

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The benefits of a shared technological solution

• Shared efforts and expenses
• Small shops have fewer staff to repurpose for new efforts
• Shared consultant to develop solutions
• More contributors = more content faster
• New and different approach
• More uses
DSpace Repository

- Open source software
- Heavily used and being developed and improved
- Support from MIT, NITLE, JISC, etc.
- Members were able to experiment with DSpace without huge expenses
  - NITLE DSpace
DSpace Repository

- Ability to adapt/change features to meet our needs
- Can handle many types of content
- Each institution can have its own “IR” within the LASR repository
- Workflow can be set up to meet the goals of the institution
DSpace Repository

- Shared metadata standards
- OAI/PMH compliant
- Shared mission
- Shared preservation policies
LASR DSpace

Bucknell  Carleton  Grinnell  Richmond  St Lawrence  Trinity  Whitman
Drupal Portal

- Open source software
- Content Management System
  - Text and pointers to other kinds of content are stored in a database, dynamically retrieved and composed, and presented to a user in response to a request sent via a web-browser.
- Many “modules” have been and are being developed
LASRepository as a harvested model
Drupal Portal

• Public interface to shared repository content
• Powerful searching across content from all institutions
• Aggregation / OAI Harvesting of content from participating repositories
  – Institutional repositories within LASR Dspace
  – IRs on other platforms in other locations
Scholarship is a conversation that depends on the work of others. Vital to this exchange of ideas is the accessibility of research, criticism, and other scholarly and creative work to the larger community of scholars. The Liberal Arts Scholarly Repository is an openly accessible archive that documents the scholarly and other creative activity of the students, faculty, and staff of the participating institutions. It provides individual scholars at those institutions (and beyond) the opportunity to share, explore, discover, and evolve the ideas, experience,
Next Steps

• Get the Portal populated and fully functioning
• Recruit more content on our campuses
• Add more LASR content to the IRs, where-ever they live
• Encourage and facilitate legal usage of LASR in the ways that we imagined, as well as the ways that our potential users may imagine.
• Continue to monitor and adapt as we proceed
A Shared Policy Framework

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Benefits of a Shared Policy Framework

- Defining a new type of repository
- Aggregating content and achieving scale
- A foundation for local practice
Policy Documents

• Mission Statement
• Collection Policy
• Metadata Guidelines
• Preservation Policy
Mission Statement

… The Liberal Arts Scholarly Repository is an openly accessible archive that documents the scholarly and other creative activity of the students, faculty, and staff of the participating institutions …
Collection Policy

• Whose work

• Types of work
  – “scholarly, educational, research-oriented, or original creative work”
  – “works produced by students”
  – “works that document the history of liberal arts institutions”

• Copyright and access
Metadata Guidelines

• What gets harvested
• Mandatory elements
• Optional elements
• Modified fields
Preservation Policy

- Selection
- Metadata
- File formats
- Storage
- Future steps
Challenges

• Student Content
  – Information literacy opportunities
  – The nature of undergraduate works

• Long-Term Thinking
  – The fragility of digital objects
  – Curating our new special collections