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Learning Abstracts: ScholarSpace @ JCCC

Barry J. Bailey
Johnson County Community College, bbaile14@jccc.edu

ScholarSpace @ JCCC

The concept of institutional repositories is frequently thought of as an exclusive implement of universities[1] and other "Publish or Perish" four-year colleges. If this were the limit and scope of valuable repositories, the implication would be that they are the only entities who create scholarship worth preserving and sharing. Fortunately, a few community colleges have stepped up to reserve space within the Web's global scholarly community. With the creation and maintenance of Scholarspace @ JCCC (http://scholarspace.jccc.edu), Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas is preserving the intellectual output of their institution.

Institutional repositories (IRs) are accessible, online locations for members of a campus's community (staff, faculty, administration, and students alike) to submit academic material for digital preservation and distribution. The types of submission candidates are limitless, but include things like term papers, previously published scholarly articles, pre-publication articles, art/images of art, presentations, videos, software, reports to communities, digital editions of campus publications, or conference proceedings. The primary qualification is that the material stored was produced during the author's time associated with the host institution or for a program hosted by that institution, and is an intellectual production of the author(s).

Billington Library at Johnson County Community College operates and maintains ScholarSpace, and oversees the curation of very different collections within the IR. Currently, the monthly campus publication, *Imprint*, and its previous incarnation, *This Month*, are being digitized back to pre-digital publication days. More recent publications, like the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion's *Many Voices - One Community*, are being archived as they are being published. Other publications were advents of having an IR: The Honor Program's *JCCC Honors Journal* (http://scholarspace.jccc.edu/honors_journal) highlights the work of selected Honors students, and since it exists in digital form only, can include alternative forms of media (video, slideshows, audio, etc.) as additions or as a substitute for traditional articles. In addition to serial publications, the annual Summer Institute of Distance Learning and Instructional Technology (SIDLIT) conference had lacked a serious home for preservation. Since it is hosted at JCCC, it was appropriate that ScholarSpace became the place to store it (http://scholarspace.jccc.edu/sidlit).

Material need not be limited to a serial events or publications. By providing space for each department or group, ScholarSpace is able to house works outside of a rigid context. These items range from original, unpublished papers to presentations given at conferences. By allowing this type of flexibility, submissions are encouraged and easily placed within, providing the best opportunity to represent the diverse scope of material being produced at JCCC.

The IR is not a typical Web site with collected links to connected material, though. A truly successful IR has a strong backbone of metadata behind it which allows for integration into larger scholarly communities. By supporting an organizational standard called "Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting" (OAI-PMH), materials from an institution like JCCC find themselves at home with material from campuses from around the world. One of the

largest aggregates exits in OAIster (http://oaister.worldcat.org/). Searching at this location gives anyone doing research a portal into freely available scholarly resources. Here, one can find articles written by Harvard professors from the Harvard IR integrated with resources from, for example, a community college's IR. It is the ability to participate in the freely available scholarly arena that makes ScholarSpace such a valuable tool for Johnson County Community College.

The reality facing many institutions is that even as budgets are reduced, most large publishers are increasing the cost of access to their database. In California, some community college campuses have zero paid access to scholarly material: "No Gale. No Ebsco. No Proquest. Nothing."[2] The alternative movement towards open access via resources like IRs is becoming a strong and necessary interconnected community of legitimate scholarly publication. With 6,588 downloads of full-text articles (5,731 within the last year), the demand and interest for materials produced by community colleges exists. With many of the downloads originating from searches within OAIster, it has proven that sharing in this global community works to efficiently share the knowledge with other institutions.

Just because publishing isn't necessarily mandated at 2 year institutions doesn't mean it doesn't happen, and it certainly should not discount the quality of the resulting product. As more community colleges utilize the Internet to contribute to the global community of IRs, the roles of two-year institutions as a scholarly resource becomes more solidified.

ScholarSpace is hosted using the Digital Commons framework. For more information on institutional repositories, visit their Web site at http://www.bepress.com/ir/ .

notes

[1] Lynch, Clifford. "Institutional Repositories: Essential Inrastructure for Scholarship in the Digital Age", *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*; April 2003; 3, 2; Research Library; p327. An example of an article referring to IRs as a university product. This is common in articles.

[2] Neufield, Kelley. "Report From the Field: California's Community College Crisis" (2009). ACRLog <http://acrlog.org/2009/08/06/report-from-the-field-californias-community-college-crisis/>