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## **Copyright Solutions for Institutional Repositories: A Collaboration With Subject Librarians**

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### **Abstract**

This work investigates using subject librarians to conduct copyright clearance in an institutional repository (IR). At Utah State University, the library assures copyright clearance for faculty scholarship, thereby garnering input of faculty scholarship into the IR. Currently, subject librarians are not widely participating in routine IR work; however, the involvement of subject librarians with the IR offers benefits to the subject librarians and the institution as a whole. This article provides a model for institutions needing new solutions for copyright clearance using subject librarians and discusses the rationale, benefits and challenges of adopting this model.

Options for access to electronic scholarly and educational information continue to increase each year. The Internet supplies entrance to many digital libraries, discipline repositories, Institutional Repositories (IRs), open access journals, and subscription jour-

nals. Today it is common (and some argue necessary) for a university to have an institutional repository showcasing the scholarly output of an institution. As repositories continue to expand and become more relevant, the benefits and challenges of running and maintaining them grow.

This article details a project by the Merrill-Cazier Library at Utah State University that utilizes partnerships and collaborative opportunities between departments. Specifically, the project sought to determine how feasible it is for subject librarians to participate in copyright clearance for the IR. The library's decision to perform copyright clearance on behalf of authors submitting to the IR is an attempt to encourage faculty support and use of the IR, while requiring very little time and effort on their part, especially considering the time intensive nature of copyright clearance work. As IRs strive to include accurate metadata and access to as many works as possible, the process to obtain permission (copyright clearance) to include a copyrighted full-text can involve time consuming steps. Thus IRs are faced with a bottleneck. This article identifies the benefits and challenges for the subject librarians and the repository in pursuing this goal.

## Literature Review

Current literature in the field of librarianship focuses on a number of issues relating to IRs, including best practices for start-up, policies and copyright issues. However, very little literature exists that relates specifically to suggestions for copyright workflow when the institution, not the faculty authors whose works are being submitted to the IR, is responsible for copyright clearance. In her article detailing Loughborough University's IR, Barwick (2007) points out the benefits of not relying on faculty self archiving: "Administrative demands on academics are high and we were keen that this would not be an obstacle to the growth of the service" (p. 11). Utah State's approach is similar; we want to use our services relating to copyright clearance as a marketing tool for the IR among the faculty.

A number of studies focus on the reference librarian's role in promoting the IR, especially through educating faculty on copyright and open access issues. Buehler and Boateng (2005) emphasize how the shifting role of the reference librarian should also include "negotiating with publishers on behalf of faculty [in order to retain author rights] or encouraging faculty to retain the right to publish in IRs" (p. 294). Jenkins and Breakstone (2005) detail the importance of reference librarians' roles in marketing IRs, including "anticipating barriers," "facilitating the spread of faculty interest," and "providing a link to graduate students" (p. 317). They explain that "reference librarians can facilitate its movement into the mainstream search process by explaining its value" (p. 320). Bell, Foster, and Gibbons (2005) describe the process of preparing reference librarians for their new roles, particularly as marketers and consultants regarding IR material, including establishing a group of library liaisons who are trained in the features of the IR, preparing documents to help answer frequently asked questions by faculty, and helping the librarians develop a better understanding of the importance and role of grey literature in the publishing field. Palmer, Terreau, & Newton (2008) present three case studies detailing IR policies, strategies, and conditions for the development of an IR. They report

differences in approach and policies, but in the end state the importance of an IR coordinating with liaison librarians.

Unlike our study, the previous studies do not specifically focus on the relevance of using subject librarians to perform copyright clearance. While the institutions above may mention larger roles in the IR for reference departments, studies like these focus mainly on using reference librarians as marketers and educators regarding the IR.

The IR at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) specifically mentions that their reference librarians have been involved at all stages of the IR development, including “definition of goals and scope, evaluation of system and content, forming strategies and procedures, interpreting publisher’s policies, contacting and servicing faculty members, acquisition of content, and promotional efforts” (Chan, Kwok, & Yip, 2005, p. 271). Philips, Carr & Teal (2005) chose their Reference and User Support Services unit as the unit responsible for planning the IR. They determined the major skill sets included creating policy, educating patrons, marketing, reviewing metadata and overseeing formatting. Bailey (2005) focuses on how reference librarians should serve as change agents in the introduction of an IR. They can help create policy, assist in design of interface, identify self-archiving activity, promote the IR to faculty and graduate students, inform faculty and graduate students about IR policies, deposit materials, create metadata, prepare explanatory and promotional documents, train users in IR deposit and searching, and answer any questions regarding the use of the IR.

These more integrated efforts of using reference librarians throughout each of these stages more closely parallel our own approach. However, HKUST hopes to mandate IR self archival for faculty in the future (Chan et al., 2005). This is a step we currently avoid because of the pressure it places on faculty.

## **History and Purpose**

Utah State University’s IR, DigitalCommons@USU (<http://digitalcommons.usu.edu>), was launched in November 2008. By June 2011, almost 16,000 items had been added to the repository, with many items providing full text access. The main purpose of DigitalCommons@USU is to provide open access to the scholarship and courses produced by Utah State University faculty, staff and students. In addition, it houses online journals, conferences, and personal web pages for faculty called Selected Works. Currently the repository features faculty publications, presentations, research reports, videos, images, undergraduate research posters, honors theses, graduate theses, dissertations, conference proceedings and OpenCourseWare.

The repository was launched in conjunction with the University’s Provost Lecture Series featuring David Shulenberger, Vice President for Academic Affairs at the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. Shulenberger spoke about the university’s role in research distribution in the digital age. He also provided the perfect launch for the new university initiative of disseminating scholarly work through Digital Commons. The university administration offered full support from the beginning. Richard

Clement, Dean of University Libraries at Utah State University, brought the new initiative to the attention of the other deans. Enthusiasm for the IR flowed down to the departments, and presentations about the benefits of the repository were made to many faculty. Two and a half years later, the work is continuing to move forward with a newly formed Copyright Committee on campus, continued departmental presentations about the repository, and increasing numbers of faculty interested and willing to have their publications deposited in it.

### **Structure of the Library**

Merrill-Cazier Library has a history of collaboration between departments. Staff and faculty from many departments, including cataloging, digital, government documents and administration take shifts at the information desk in collaboration with the members of the reference department. A member of the reference department also spends a few hours each week in Special Collections.

Likewise, the reference department handles the majority of the subject liaison work. Other departments also house subject librarians. Subject librarian roles include identifying, evaluating and selecting library resources pertinent to the University curriculum and faculty research. A subject librarian “serves as liaison to academic departments and communicates regularly with faculty in her assigned disciplines” (personalized role statement, Utah State University). This includes building online subject guides, providing instruction both in the library and in the department classrooms, and developing the collection to meet the research needs of faculty and students in the field.

Near the beginning of this IR project, a subject librarian approached the digital department and wanted to expand her skills and collaborate with another department. This illustrates the type of community and collaboration fostered by the library. While collaboration is encouraged, subject librarians’ participation with copyright clearance was not mandatory. All members voluntarily participated. This willingness to take on extra work in order to help the library as a whole is valued by the people who work at Merrill-Cazier, and it is a value fostered by the library’s administration.

### **Copyright Chasm for IR Work**

IRs generally strive to provide rich metadata and full-text access to the materials deposited in them. To remain within copyright laws, this frequently requires gaining permission from the original publisher of the work, often referred to as copyright clearance. The copyright clearance process involves many steps but follows a simple pattern of logic, beginning with identifying who the copyright owner is and what permissions they allow for the work. It becomes more complicated as copyright owners (often publishers) sometimes do not allow using a specific version of a published work in an IR; this is often the peer reviewed, edited and final published version of the work. Working through this process has the potential to be very time consuming and can require direct contact with the publisher, making it a bottleneck.

As the repository at Utah State University began to grow, there was an increased demand to add publications and other works to the repository. Central to the marketing plan of the repository is to inform faculty that the library will deposit work for them. The library's workload includes copyright clearance, metadata, and uploading full-text. This idea resonates with all research and teaching faculty members who are aware of the service and contributes to the success of the IR. Teaching faculty see the IR as a place for classroom artifacts (i.e. syllabi, student works, instructional material created by the teacher) while research faculty have another place to showcase their publications and grant work.

With this service as policy comes a heavy burden on the library to deliver on that promise. The small staff of one full-time employee and one part-time undergraduate student was not enough. Many options were debated to solve the staffing and copyright clearance bottleneck problem including: hiring and training more students, hiring an assistant for the Digital Commons Coordinator, and farming out the work to others in the library who have helped in the past. The problem with hiring and training more students was two-fold. First, budgets are tight and, second, turnover of students due to student graduation was troubling for such a complicated procedure. Hiring an assistant had the same problem of tight budgets and quickly became an option that could not be considered. In the past, the Cataloging Department has often assisted the Digital Initiatives Department with metadata and MARC record creation for many projects, but this department has seen a decrease in staff and the specific need for copyright clearance didn't align well with Cataloging.

After considering many options for increasing help with the repository, a pilot project using help from other library departments began. The consideration of who to use in other departments was dependent on the highest possible value for the department and its members along with who was willing to participate. The project initially used one subject librarian, who was also the administrator exploring outside options for help with the repository. She was shown the initial workflow of adding a faculty vita to the repository (see Table 1) and was given one vita in the beginning.

**Table 1.**

*Workflow for Adding Faculty Publications to the Repository*

| Initial Workflow  | Current Workflow   |
|---|--|
| 1. Repository staff receive faculty vita  | 1. Repository staff or subject librarian receive faculty vita                                    |
| 2. Subject librarian adds citations to a spreadsheet exported from the Digital Commons software | 2. Repository student adds citations to a spreadsheet exported from the Digital Commons software |
| 3. Subject librarian adds completed spreadsheet to a FileMaker Pro                              | 3. Repository student adds completed spreadsheet to File Maker Pro                               |

| Initial Workflow  | Current Workflow   |
|---|--|
| <p>database</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Repository coordinator uploads completed spreadsheet to the repository via batch upload</li> <li>5. Subject librarians clears copyright and adds full-text and/or links to metadata in the repository</li> <li>6. Repository student conducts a quality control check on the finalized entry</li> </ol> | <p>database</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Repository coordinator uploads completed spreadsheet to the repository via batch upload</li> <li>5. Repository coordinator alerts subject librarian via email and in the FileMaker Pro database that a faculty members publications are ready for copyright clearance</li> <li>6. Subject librarian clears copyright and adds full-text and/or links to metadata in the repository</li> <li>7. A different subject librarian conducts a quality control check on the finalized entry.</li> </ol> |

Once the first subject librarian completed one vita, a second subject librarian began working on copyright clearance. She followed the initial workflow for copyright clearance as well. Once her first vita was complete, the two subject librarians sat down with the Digital Commons Coordinator, noting the difficulties and successes they had in their initial steps. It was clear the initial process these two librarians used was clunky and inefficient. To make the process more efficient, it was refined to the current workflow (see Table 1). This process streamlined the workflow and the librarian was no longer doing such rote work as spreadsheet entry. They could then focus on copyright clearance instead of the bottleneck to the workflow.

### Benefits and Challenges

For the IR, the main benefit of using subject librarians is obvious: the IR receives assistance with the time-intensive task of acquiring copyright clearance for scholarly works of the university. However, another perhaps more important benefit for the IR is the transformation of subject librarians into advocates for the IR. With a wider knowledge of the IR, librarians can inform faculty in their departments what it can do for them. Subject librarian work with the IR creates librarians who can better market and represent the IR to internal and external stakeholders, as well as the larger community. The IR librarian emphasized, "I believe the librarians, or anyone who is going to be doing the copyright clearance, needs to have a solid foundational understanding of the big picture."

Teaming with the IR helps subject librarians to gain a greater understanding not only of how the IR works, but also a deeper knowledge of their departments. By performing copyright clearance, subject librarians become aware of where faculty are publishing and the copyright policies common to their fields. Subject librarians identified this through informal email exchanges and interviews as the biggest benefit they found in

doing copyright clearance. One subject librarian replied, “I gain a better understanding of what that faculty member does, what they study, and where they are publishing.” This can contribute to collection development policies, and guide interactions with faculty. Through this work, librarians can also discover which faculty are publishing in open access journals and who would benefit from conversations about open access.

However, many challenges must be overcome to reap such benefits. All subject librarians assisting with copyright mentioned a concern about managing their time. Fitting IR work into an already over-burdened schedule at an understaffed library can be difficult. However, this time crunch could be alleviated as the Merrill-Cazier Library moves more towards automated collection development and copyright clearance duties are written into librarians’ role statements. Most librarians agree that a weekly time commitment of two to five hours is an ideal goal, or at least reachable. However, many subject librarians, particularly those that serve reference or instruction duties, may find they have more time for IR work in the summer when class schedules tend to be lighter.

Copyright clearance also requires training. Subject librarians need to be trained in copyright clearance, IR publishing software, and data management systems (like FileMaker Pro). While initial training only takes a few hours, subject librarians often had extensive questions afterwards, since copyright clearance is a detailed process in which unique situations often arise.

## **Moving Forward**

At USU, we have learned a lot from this pilot program. While we started out with two subject librarians, we now have five subject librarians and four other staff including student workers, who now work on copyright clearance and quality control. As more people come on board, we find the need to not only standardize, but also to discuss.

We now have common language used in our internal documentation, letters requesting copyright clearance from publishers, and on our Digital Commons website. For example, a librarian requesting copyright clearance directly from a publisher now has a sample document from which they can copy text. Likewise, when posting documents to Digital Commons, librarians can rely on a document that provides suggested text for the comments section. We recently created a wiki, available to view by the public (<http://usudigitalcommons.pbworks.com/w/page/40923719/Welcome%20IR%20Liaisons>) where staff can keep track of issues and policies in an effort to standardize answers to some of the repetitive questions that arise. Documents posted include basic steps for copyright work using FileMaker Pro and Digital Commons and workflow for adding publications to Digital Commons. There is also a section of questions and answers to be posted as they arise.

We are still in the process of establishing many policies, including how to respond to publishers who only allow articles to be published for a specified amount of time, and how to handle problematic citations when posting information to Digital Commons. We hold monthly meetings to discuss these and other issues. We might discuss technical

problems with FileMaker Pro or Digital Commons. Another common debate is when to stop seeking copyright clearance for a given document. Currently, the procedure is to cease seeking clearance once the publisher's policies are known. Publisher's policies regarding copyright can usually be obtained through direct contact if they are not already posted somewhere on their website. Another option is the listing of publishers' copyright policies on the Sherpa RoMEO (<http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/>) website. If the publisher does not allow any version to be posted, or only allows it for a fee, the copyright clearer ceases at that point. A citation is always added to the repository and the full-text manuscript is added only when copyright clearance is established. The faculty member is notified when the process is finished, but they may not be specifically notified regarding each publication. In the future, we hope to expand and solidify our policies even further relating to these issues, while exploring better ways to market the Digital Commons to faculty, and to increase their awareness of copyright and open access opportunities.

## **Conclusion**

IRs will continue to be an essential option for promoting open access and supporting institutional scholarship. Thriving IRs rely on coordination between faculty, publishers and copyright clearers. While the literature suggests that a "new scholarly communication model is in the making and reference librarians are the agents for change" (Chan, Kwok, Yip, 2005, p. 280), we would add that the librarians' role expands beyond marketing and planning, which is where many IRs focus reference librarian collaboration. There is a need for help with copyright clearance, especially when the library is performing copyright clearance instead of faculty, which requires time and organization. Feedback from librarians, including subject librarians, shows that there are a number of valuable benefits from using subject librarians to help with this workload. However, the help of subject librarians cannot ensure success. Some librarians will be better suited to the work than others. Future changes may include specifying IR work as part of a subject librarian's role statement, though those particulars have yet to be instated at Merrill-Cazier library.

As IRs continue to grow and increasingly impact publishing and access to scholarly information, having them run smoothly becomes a top priority at an institution. From the work described above, expanding the involvement of library staff with the IR has benefits and challenges for everyone. However, the benefits appear to outweigh any challenge when approached with the right effort and attitude. Subject librarians can lighten the time-consuming task of copyright clearance in IRs while learning about their subject fields and how to better promote the IR. This strategy can also help encourage busy faculty to participate in the IR since they are not required to attain copyright clearance themselves. The repository manager, the library, and ultimately, the institution benefit from subject librarians involvement in IR work. These types of collaborative efforts offer new solutions for IRs and enable them to thrive.

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