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Marketing an Established Institutional Repository: Marquette Libraries' Research Stewardship Survey

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Introduction

Marquette University's institutional repository (IR) e-Publications@Marquette (e-Pubs) was established in 2008 by the Raynor Memorial Libraries. Like many nascent repositories, its first additions were retrospective theses and dissertations. Within a year of its first additions, a librarian was hired to develop and expand the IR's offerings, and the first recruitment of faculty material took place. Adding more faculty research and publications continues as a main component of the IR manager's job. As of April 2014, the total number of works in e-Pubs now numbers over 9,400, of which approximately 5,700 are from Marquette faculty.

A continual challenge has been in recruiting faculty work. Marquette has no deposit mandate and little official campus support for the IR. Despite those challenges, a respectable amount of work has been collected into the repository, though the percentage of faculty participating in the IR is still relatively small. The last set of status reports that were run and sent to faculty numbered at 485. Marquette's faculty numbered at 1,205 for the 2013 spring semester. To state that 40% of Marquette faculty actively participates in the e-Pubs program is overly-generous. Of that original number, many are not active participants. The status reports include co-authors, who may or may not have contributed their materials, faculty who have since left Marquette, and faculty who contributed their work once, but have not contributed since that initial deposit. As a result, the actual number of active faculty contributors is not known, and it is certain that participation is much lower than the 40% mark.

Attempts at marketing the IR as a repository for faculty have been ongoing and have taken different forms. From department visits with the Digital Projects Librarian and Dean of Libraries, to automated recruitment through an opt-in option via the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis - which collects all Marquette faculty achievements, and a symposium on open access and institutional repositories were brought to Marquette Libraries. This event was intended to inform all librarians about the current scholarly communication environment. Many of these librarians are department liaisons with regular faculty contact. While these activities have had a positive impact on faculty deposits, the Libraries have been seeking ways to publicize the repository in a more coordinated way. To address the ongoing recruitment challenge, the Coordinators of Digital Programs (the position was reclassified from Digital Projects Librarian) and Outreach and Marketing decided to survey Marquette faculty and look at areas related to faculty attitudes and use of the IR to inform marketing strategies.

Literature Review

There has been much research on faculty perceptions and opinions of institutional repositories. This area has been explored almost since the nascence of IRs, and many of the same issues have been explored, namely the issue of increasing faculty participation in IRs. The earliest literature on IRs appears in 2002 with Crow's "The

Case for Institutional Repositories: A SPARC Position Paper.” On the heels of that paper, and almost immediately librarians start expressing a constant frustration with the difficulties inherent with the capture of faculty work. (Peters 2002, Xia 2007, Davis & Connolly 2007, Bates et al. 2007, Xu 2008, Lercher 2008, Kim 2010, Covey 2011).

The literature consistently identifies the same barriers: faculty ignorance of the concept of IRs, an incomplete grasp of the benefits, as well as concerns over deposit negatively impacting their workload. Though IRs are no longer a new concept, and “despite the arguments for significant benefits of institutional repositories for both the individual researcher and the institution, the evidence...suggests that academic communities have been slow to respond.” (Cullen 2011) Papers on self-archiving have largely determined that faculty archiving their own work has been largely unsuccessful. “Lack of awareness and understanding of Research Showcase [the Carnegie Mellon IR] and the functionality of the software are significant barriers to faculty participation in institutional repositories.” (Covey 2011) The same article goes on to recommend mediated deposit and an aggressive marketing approach.

Another common theme to solve the faculty recruitment problem is continued marketing of IR services to faculty since “continued marketing leads to continued growth of the IR” (Madsen & Oleen 2013). A solid marketing framework should start as soon as possible, with Kocken and Wica (2013) stating that “before content recruitment can become a focal point of any marketing strategy, librarians and institutional repository managers must build awareness.” Though the importance of marketing for IRs is a commonly repeated theme as a solution for content recruitment, there exists much less literature on effective marketing for IRs. Gierveld (2006) points out that IRs are not developed in response to a market demand, making the recruitment of content challenging.

Common marketing activities found in the literature include the creation of informational brochures and flyers, presentations to faculty groups, and using personal academic connections (Mark 2006; Mercer et al. 2007). Subject liaisons have been touted as effective partners (Bell et al. 2005), having regular contact with faculty. In theory, these tactics should help address awareness problems—however, it is

difficult to understand which tactics are most effective due to a lack of assessment.

Researchers suggest that librarians should promote the professional advantages faculty receive when using their IR (Kim 2010)—advantages such as wider audience reach due to open accessibility, persistent links to their work, and easy sharing of work through RSS feeds and email. Marketing should promote these advantages while also addressing faculty concerns such as copyright infringement (Covey 2011).

Research from Gierveld (2006) and Gibbons (2004) suggests the needs for more discipline-specific marketing under the premise that disciplinary faculty are motivated to participate in IRs for different reasons. Gierveld asserts that “scientists are driven to research and publish because of their intrinsic motivation to inquire and to share” and “because of the way the scholarly system is organized: to publish in order to gain recognition, credit, funds and tenure.”

Matching audience motivations with marketing messages through this process of segmentation will likely garner more participation (Gierveld 2006). Segmentation subdivides the target audience into diverse groups for which specific sets of benefits and features can be developed and addressed through marketing. For example, computer scientists prefer to publish through conference proceedings. Information scientists are more accepting of open access journals for publication. Physicists are known to readily share and collaborate on research. Thus, marketing messages must be crafted specifically to meet the preferences of each segment of the audience.

Tailored and personalized impressions are necessary to alter faculty perceptions. Marketing should explain to the physicist the benefits of an IR over using arXiv (or at least in addition to). Marketing should promote the preservation aspect to retiring faculty and the increased distribution aspect to junior faculty. These tailored messages should invoke viral marketing, where the benefits of using the IR are spread among faculty by word of mouth (Gibbons 2004). Gierveld (2006) also advises using a social marketing strategy that promotes the idea that IRs and those who publish their work in them better society by sharing knowledge with a larger audience, thus providing a greater good.

Methods

To determine why faculty were or were not using e-Pubs, a survey was created and sent out to 369 Marquette University faculties, which is one-third of faculty members, excluding Marquette Law School faculty. Law School faculty was excluded because the law school has its own IR. As a result, it was decided that Law School faculty responses could be inapplicable at best and misleading at worst.

Saving the exclusion of law school faculty, the parameters for the targeted participants were very broad. They represented a random sample of full time and part time faculty, as well as tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty, including adjuncts and participating faculty. The goal was to reach anyone who might be publishing, regardless of department or status.

In addition to basic demographic questions, the survey aimed to answer two main questions:

- Why does Marquette faculty use/not use the IR?
- In what ways does faculty view the IR as best supporting their research needs?

Specifically, the survey looked to determine not only if faculty use the IR, but why they did or didn't. When they did use it, what were the motivations or perceived value associated with participation? IR awareness was a main focus of the survey as well; the investigators were interested in how faculty had learned about e-Pubs (if at all). Also of interest was faculty knowledge of services currently available through e-Pubs, including services to students. Finally, the investigators were interested to know if faculty had unfilled service needs.

Results

Survey participants numbered at sixty, a response rate of 16%. That rate is consistent with other library survey results and was deemed an acceptable response rate for analysis, based upon past performance. Though the response rate was not overwhelming, the responses were spread out across departments. More responses were received from hard sciences, but a large number of responses came

from humanities and social sciences too. Responses came from twenty-one departments, and all of Marquette's colleges were represented (save the law school). Because of the small response rate and the relatively small sample size - though 16% of those surveyed responded, only 5% of Marquette's total faculty was represented - the findings were not generalizable. However, the goal of the survey was to determine enough about faculty attitudes and needs to create a marketing plan. For that purpose, the responses were adequate.

Of those who responded, 44% used e-Pubs as a venue to deposit their work. While the number corresponds with the number of authors in the IR, as can be determined from author reports, there is likely some self-selection bias at play. If the sample size and response rate had been larger, this bias may have been less obvious. Regardless, the survey answers were able to allow the investigators to begin to perceive how faculties view the IR.

In areas of motivation for including their work in e-Pubs, faculties were primarily motivated by the ability of the IR to increased dispersal of their research in furtherance of their academic career aspirations. Their secondary motivations were to raise Marquette's research profile, and finally their third motivator was to further the research of their discipline. While these results are not generalizable beyond the Marquette campus, and perhaps not even within Marquette, this result came as a bit of a surprise.

In addition to motivation factors, the investigators queried the faculty as to their perceived value of the inclusion of their work in e-Pubs. Unsurprisingly, especially when viewing the primary motivator, the greatest perceived value, by 36.4% of faculty, was in increasing the reach of the work by making it openly accessible online. The second and third greatest perceived values were very close at 23.7% and 22.3%. These values were having a stable URL for persistent access to the work and in receiving use statistics, respectively. The stable URL is closely related to the value of increasing the work's reach. Values of promoting research, or not having to hold onto copies of work did not seem to factor strongly into faculty's perception of the IR's value.

The information on motivation and perceived value were interesting, though with few surprises. Least surprising were the

reasons why faculty did not participate in e-Pubs. By and large, they did not participate for one of two reasons: either they were unaware of the existence of the IR and/or its purpose, or they found submission of their materials too inconvenient to participate. Both factors were mentioned time and again in the literature, so it was no surprise to see them borne out by the survey results.

Finally, the faculty displayed interest in some services e-Pubs does not currently offer. They were split evenly in favor of data preservation services and the archiving of conference materials, at 22.9% for both. A close third at 21.4% was interest in e-Pubs as a venue for digital humanities projects. The data preservation was no surprise, nor was the interest in digital humanities projects. These services had been occasionally inquired after. The archiving of conference materials was a surprise. Conference presentations are often thought of as less important in the eyes of the faculty than publications, though differences of opinion exist across some disciplines.

Implications And Further Research

The results implied the major roadblock for faculty participation was awareness, followed by convenience. Twenty-four percent of faculty respondents indicated that they did not participate because of inconvenience. Ironically, the effort required of faculty is quite minimal—to the extent that they must only check a box in the university's already mandated Faculty Activities Database. This perception of inconvenience was attributed as part of an overall lack of awareness about the IR.

Additional faculty reasons for not participating centered on value. This value perception could also be attributed to lack of awareness. Faculty who do participate reported that the value they gain from the IR is public access and self-promotion. Thirty-six percent of the survey respondents appreciate the IR because their work is made widely available on the Internet.

The survey identified additional services that interest Marquette faculty, services such as archiving conference materials, managing research data, and the creation of digital humanities projects. While conferences have now been established as part of the IR workflow, digital humanities projects and data management are more

complicated. Digital humanities projects require staff commitment beyond the current capabilities of the Digital Programs Unit. Data management requires participation of several university departments outside of the Libraries. A pilot project has been implemented to identify the possibility for a continued campus-wide data management effort.

With implementation of the marketing plan, the Libraries will be able to gauge additional faculty motivations and perceptions of e-Pubs. While the survey was a great start in efforts to generate more faculty participation, more research is needed. It is hoped that the faculty perceptions survey can be expanded to faculty at other institutions. This will help to identify trends in IR participation.

Conclusion

Like many other papers researching faculty attitudes about IRs, the Marquette survey finds there is a disconnect that exists between the realities of the repository and accompanying faculty attitudes. While many faculties recognize there is some value to contributing to e-Pubs, a major barrier continues to be a misperception of the ease of contribution. A number of faculty authors are still unaware of the existence and utility of e-Pubs.

Only continued marketing from multiple venues and points of view will overcome the persistent difficulties in sustained recruitment of faculty materials. The survey was extremely valuable in pinpointing areas of faculty interest to inform the best strategies for meeting their needs. Only time will tell which marketing strategies will be successful. Marketing the IR will be an ongoing process which must be tailored and revisited on a continual basis.

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