SEMLOL
Annual Spring Meeting Minutes
"Digital Repositories: Creating and Managing Collections Online"
April 27, 2012
South University

Introduction:

Michele Mecha-Fuher welcomed the SEMLOL members to South University. She gave a brief history of the institution, noting that South University had been established in 1899. This campus in Michigan was the first campus established in the North. She invited the SEMLOL members to tour the Library and university facilities during break or after the meeting.

Business Meeting:

Colleen Streeter also welcomed the SEMLOL members to the Spring meeting and paid tribute to Elizabeth Lindley, a board member and colleague who had unexpectedly passed away. Colleen noted that Elizabeth was a very dedicated librarian and a very caring person. She made friends wherever she went. She was involved in DALNET as well as SEMLOL and was looking to get involved in MLA as an officer. She made quilts and blankets with her mother and donated them to Project Linus, which provides home-made craft items to sick children in need of some home comfort. Colleen noted that the website for Project Linus is http://projectlinus.org/ if anyone might be interested in making a donation in memory of Elizabeth.

Colleen then moved on to the business portion of the meeting. She presented the slate of candidates for the new executive board. She also discussed the redesign of the SEMLOL webpage, showing the new SEMLOL logos and noting that the members could make suggestions for features on the new website. The new website will hopefully be up by the Fall meeting.

Colleen also let the members know that the membership list is being updated as well as the Infopass status of SEMLOL member institutions. Notices to the Deans and Directors had been sent to solicit updates for these two lists, but she also encouraged the members to contact a board member about changes in both of these areas. Finally, Colleen reminded the membership that SEMLOL has a Facebook page and she encouraged the members to "like" the SEMLOL page. She told the members that a discussion feed about digital repositories, the topic of the current meeting, had been established on the SEMLOL Facebook page and she encouraged the participants to contribute to the online discussion.

Spring Program Presentations:

Sarah Martin, University of Detroit-Mercy, Associate Dean for Technical Services and Library Systems, "DALNET Digital Depository."

Sarah Martin presented on the DALNET Digital Depository housed at the University of Detroit-Mercy. The system used is DSpace and U of D-Mercy acts as a vendor/host for the DALNET libraries.

Sarah provided a history of how the repository came to be. In 2009, a taskforce was formed to explore the needs and implementation of a digital repository for DALNET and its member institutions. This taskforce developed a chart for the needs of the member institutions.

Two parts for the repository were identified:

1.   An internal system for the storage of documents.

2.   An external system to access information stored in the system from outside.

The taskforce reviewed the available products including DSpace and Digital Commons. U of D-Mercy was already running a DSpace system for their thesis collection. DALNET asked U of D-Mercy to host a DSpace installation for them.

Sarah described how the U of D-Mercy thesis collection on DSpace works. She noted that the system allows students to upload their own materials into DSpace. The item is reviewed by the Library, cataloged and vetted before being made live. Each student has their own account. If they don't have an account, they can create one. The interface is very simple. She provided the following URL for individuals to see a demo of how DSpace works: http://demo.dspace.org .

Sarah then provided the following reasons for selecting DSpace:

1.   It is widely used by academic institutions.
2.   It is password-protected.
3.   It can be made accessible to the public if required.
4.   The content in the system is backed up for security.
5.   It is available to the users via the web.

U of D-Mercy then made a proposal to DALNET with the following points:

➢ U of D-Mercy will maintain the hardware/software and provide training to the consortium members.
➢ The DSpace installation will be OAI harvestable (information can be pulled out of it if a member decides to leave the consortium).
➢ U of D-Mercy will be responsible for hardware configurations, installation and maintainence.
➢ Members will have both password protected and open access materials hosted on the site.
➢ U of D-Mercy will be responsible for system software, installation, updates, etc.

Four institutions joined the DALNET DSpace system: Cardinal Adam Maida Alumni Memorial Library, Detroit Medical Center, Marygrove College and Oakland Community College. DALNET provided grants to those institutions who chose to participate. The initial implementation costs were approximately $44,315 and the annual maintainence cost was $9,495.

Sarah then provided an overview of what an institution would need to run DSpace:

1.   A Tomcat web server
2.   PostgrSQL database server
3.   Linux or Windows
4.   Java runtime environment (Oracle Java JDK 6)
5.   Apache ANT
6.   Apache Maven 2.2
7.   Handlenet
8.   EXAIN

Before implementation of the system, a review was conducted to see what materials were

to be added to the digital collections for each institution. It was necessary to determine how much space would be required for each collection before the hardware could be acquired. A work plan with the following points was developed:

1. Finalize contracts from participating institutions.
2. Assess collections from all institutions.
3. Return all forms to U of D-Mercy.
4. Expand the U of D-Mercy server room to accommodate the new DSpace installation.
5. Choose the appropriate hardware.
6. Order the equipment.
7. Install the software.
8. Provide training to member staff.
9. Input one collection and test the system.
10. Customize the installation and continue with the project.

Sarah noted that U of D-Mercy is at step six: ordering the equipment. She also noted the following issues which were raised:

➢ What happens when a new member wants to join? What is the financial commitment?
➢ What about security and copyright issues? Who has permissions, ownership and copyright to the housed materials?

Sarah noted that Library and Information Students are using the DSpace sandbox to experience DSpace as a learning environment. They are digitizing materials for the member libraries that are in DALNET's DSpace installation.

After Sarah's presentation, there was a lively question and answer period. Then the members were invited to enjoy the refreshments provided during the break.

Julia K. Nims, Information Services Librarian and Alexis Braun Marks, University Archivist, Eastern Michigan University, "Putting a Spotlight on Scholarly and Creative Works Using Digital Commons: Challenges and Opportunities."

Julia K. Nims and Alexis Braun Marks presented on Digital Commons. They first discussed why Digital Commons was selected and provided some background for the creation of a digital repository. The decision to create an institutional repository at Eastern Michigan University was made when the trend for IRs became strong. Between 2004-2005, DSpace was selected to create the IR at EMU. The first collection added to the DSpace installation was the thesis and dissertation collection. The Library hosted the system. For this initial installation, there were two few people available with the skill to run DSpace. In addition, the librarians and the other end users were not comfortable with the interface. In 2008, the Library began investigating alternatives to DSpace and reviewed many products including Digital Commons. Eventually, Digital Commons was selected.

The following advantages of Digital Commons in comparison to DSpace were cited:

➢ Items in the IR are housed on Digital Commons servers. The system is hosted, so there is no need for maintainence of hardware or software.
➢ The contents are optimized for "discoverability" with Google searches.

> ➢ There was a great cost savings in terms of startup/maintainence costs and staffing.

The switch to Digital Commons was made in 2008. Content for the repository needed to be determined. A decision was made to use DC as an archival repository as well as storage for institutional scholarly work. Thus, two silos of digital works were created: scholarly/creative works and archival information. The next need was to identify what constitutes a scholarly/creative work and what doesn't. Scholarly works included journals, conference proceedings, faculty research, art, etc. Among the collections developed were the journals and conferences modules which are very useful. Four journals currently contribute to the journals module. A decision was made to add frequent university publications to the scholarly/creative works silo, including the following:

1.   EMU Today
2.   Eastern Echo
3.   The Eastern
4.   Cellar Roots
5.   Press Releases
6.   Newsletters

Other collections that have been proposed include:

1.   Non text-based capstone projects, dramatic presentations and concerts.
2.   Data sets.
3.   Faculty tenure documents.

The two presenters noted the challenge that exists in persuading faculty to add content to Digital Commons. They noted that the materials which are added to the IR are there permanently. The current policy for student work is not to add it to the IR. In the future, where more rigorous review of student work could be made, then the decision to add student work to the IR might be changed. But there needs to be a guarantee of quality.

On the practical side, Julia and Alexis noted that Digital Commons provides an initial 1 terabyte of storage space for free. After that, there is a charge for any additional space which may be required. It was noted that there may be a need to examine alternative storage solutions if video, audio and data sets are added to the collections. If these type of collections were created, the system could potentially run out of space in 3-4 years. It was also noted that the cost of the IR needs to be shared campus-wide. The IR is a campus resource and the Library can't sustain the cost of installing and maintaining it alone.

Julia and Alexis discussed the Library's role in the IR. They cited three basic roles for the Library:

1.   Publisher
2.   Service Provider
3.   Host

It was noted that the Library could become a publisher which provides a certain prestige. By assuming the role of publisher, the Library demonstrates to scholars and vendors that there are alternatives to publishing scholarly works. In addition, the Library provides access for the public use of scholarly works. The Library would have editorial control, but the issue with this is that the Library also assumes liability for the contents of the scholarly works. In addition,

publishers (who are in the business of making money) provide services to authors, such as editing, fact checking, design layout, etc. and all these services have costs. Libraries don't have the funds to pay for such services, nor the staff to assist authors. Libraries are in the business of providing access, not making money. So libraries would not be functioning as traditional publishers.

In regard to the Library as service provider, this is a role that the Library can assume. Most libraries regard themselves as service providers and are comfortable in this role. In regard to the Library as host, the Library would need technical expertise to host an IR system. This role would only be available to those libraries with the money and technical staff for hosting a system.

Alexis discussed hierarchy schemes for the IR noting three top schemes:

1. Type of material.
2. Academic unit.
3. Status of author (i.e. faculty, student, etc.).

She noted that it was very important to determine this hierarchy before the IR is setup. At EMU, the librarians did not have any input on the initial decisions for the DC hierarchical structure of the system and so the interface is not as intuitive as it might be.

As mentioned above, it was noted that it was difficult to get faculty to input content to the IR even though faculty tend to be altruistic and like to share their work. Faculty are also aware that publication in the IR can enhance their scholarly reputation and it gives them a forum to make a stand against for-profit publishers. So why don't faculty post content to the IR? Reasons cited include:

➢ It takes too much time and effort.
➢ Copyright considerations.
➢ Quality concerns.
➢ Fear of being plagiarized (or scooped).

Currently at EMU, only about 15-20% of the faculty post content to the IR. Other challenges noted were:

➢ Staffing
➢ Workflow
➢ Delegation and training
➢ Follow-up with interested parties
➢ How to capitalize on opportunities without becoming overwhelmed

In regard to staffing issues, faculty often need assistance in posting items to Digital Commons. So staff will walk them through the process. In regard to workflow, since the librarians were not involved in the initial setup of the system, there is a need to get the information to work together across content silos. For content posting, there is a need to identify what can be delegated and what training is needed for users. What can be done by the record creator and what can be handled with a form? What tasks require more intense training?

The presenters noted that it was important to follow-up with those parties who had expressed an interest in posting content, but then never got back to the Library about it.

The following advantages to Digital Commons were cited:

1. The Library can be a leader in scholarly communication.
2. DC provides a systems framework that frees the Library to focus on outreach and education.
3. DC has the potential to raise the Library's visibility and relevance to university stakeholders.

After the Digital Commons presentation, there was another very lively question and answer period.

Open Forum Discussion on Digital Repositories

After the presentations, the SEMLOL members participated in an open forum discussion on digital repositories. Representatives from member institutions shared their experiences with IRs at their own institutions and asked questions of both their fellow members and the presenters.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00pm

Submitted by: Margaret L. Danowski
May 24, 2012