

**SUMMARY REPORT  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PRESENTATION  
FACULTY SENATE MEETING  
APRIL 23, 2009**

The Faculty Senate first tackled the issues of the production and dissemination of digital scholarship in a Special Report of the Research Library Council to the Faculty Senate on May 10, 2007, in Senate Document No. 07-035. "Access to scholarly literature is vital to all members of the academic community," that report read. "Scholars and their professional societies and associations share a common interest in the broadest possible dissemination of peer-reviewed contributions. Unfortunately, the business practices of some commercial publishers of journals are contrary to these interests and threaten to limit the promise of increased success that digital technologies inherently provide. Development of library collections is more and more constrained by the rising costs of journals and databases."

Since that time, digitization has resulted in new programs, new policies, new procedures, and new equipment so that, Jennifer Howard recently wrote in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, "recently changing" is the term most often used these days to describe the landscape of scholarly communication. Scholars [and teachers] have to clear new and higher hurdles as they bump up against copyright and fair-use issues, open-access mandates, and a baffling array of publication and dissemination models. [For instance] how much of his own published work can a scholar post on a personal Web site without raising the publisher's ire? How much of someone else's work can he use in his course pack without trampling on fair use and risking a fine or legal action? How does a researcher upload her work to her institution's repository, and are there consequences if she opts out? Those are just some of the questions that professors. . . find themselves tripping over."

And as these problems grow more frequent and more acute, various responses have developed.

(1) MIT's professors voted unanimously to adopt a policy stating that all faculty members will deposit their scholarly research papers in a free, online university repository (in addition to sending them to scholarly journals), in an effort to expand access to the university's scholarship (<http://dspace.mit.edu/>). The policy is modeled on one adopted last year by Harvard University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences. At MIT, as at Harvard, professors can opt out of the policy if, for instance, the journal that accepts their work does not allow for publication of articles.

(2) The University of Michigan Press has reported that it will shift most of its scholarly publishing from being primarily a traditional print operation to one that is primarily digital.

(3) Baker & Taylor has announced a worldwide partnership with Ebrary to develop new digital content products and services as well as to integrate tens of thousands of e-books and other titles that Ebrary has aggregated for more than 330 leading publishers, following a move by Google to put online all the books at five major repositories: Bodleian Library of the University of Oxford and the Harvard, Michigan, and Stanford Universities, and the New York Public Library.

(4) At the Conference of Historical Journals at the American Historical Association's annual meeting in January 2009, Professor Bonnie Wheeler, editor of the journal *Arthuriana*, said journals are caught between the changing habits of readers, who increasingly just want individual pieces of content, not aggregates published by journals. A journal started today, however, is likely to be online-only and open access. And more and more readers now discover bits and pieces of any journal's content --an article here, a book review there--through electronic databases and aggregations like JStor, Project Muse, and EbscoNet.

(5) Colgate University Library has moved all books offsite, filling the renovated library building instead with computers to call up the books digitally if available or order books to be shipped to the library for use.

On our own campus, digitization affects librarians, research practices, scholarly publication and, in time, personnel decisions.

## **Libraries**

As users become more digitally focused, the demand for electronic format increases. In meeting this demand, libraries are spending more of the acquisitions budget on electronic resources (62% at UMass Amherst) and less on print resources (16% on print monographs and 15% on print journals). While the preference for electronic resources is clearly higher in the STM (Science, Technology, and Medical) and social science disciplines, humanists are quickly becoming familiar with this format for journal publications and digitized historical manuscript collections and will have extensive monograph collections available digitally through the Google Library Project. Multimedia formats are becoming more requested for curricular use, which also increases pressure on the print budget. Since digital materials take far less space, the reconfiguration of library arrangements and the redeployment of personnel necessarily follow.

## **Digital Dissemination and Publication of Monographs**

A new trend is that monographs are increasingly being scanned and distributed digitally. Google Books is a major player, but their quality varies, they have little bibliographic control, and their database is proprietary. The collaboration between the Internet Archive and the Boston Library Consortium (of which UMass Amherst is a member) provides another model: one in which the database will be open and scanned items linked to bibliographic records. Commercial digital libraries are a third kind of purveyor of online monographs; the UMass Amherst Libraries recently subscribed to Ebrary, a digital library, due to demand by instructors of online courses who want their off-campus students to have access to digital monographs.

## **Sustainability**

The issue of sustainability is a key element in the discussion of new models for disseminating research and scholarship. Can we create a system that maximizes access to new research while still covering the costs associated with the production, dissemination, and archiving of that research? The combination of institutional repositories and open-access journals represents one promising approach. But is it sustainable? Various funding models are being tested, including fees paid by authors and subsidies from foundations or universities. One innovative model can be found at the National Academies Press. That press, at its website, provides free page-by-page access to all of its titles, while simultaneously offering print-on-demand copies for sale. Open access is a highly desirable goal. It will help make faculty research more widely available. It will increase rates of citations. It will open up new possibilities for collaborative research and teaching. But knowledge is expensive to produce. The challenge is to design, test, and deploy new models of publishing that will provide increased access to scholarship at a reasonable cost, while still maintaining rigorous standards of peer review, editorial selection, manuscript development, visual presentation, archiving, and preservation.

## **Authors' Rights**

Digital publication and new publication technologies generally make it imperative that faculty members and other authors (e.g., graduate students) in the university community become informed about issues regarding their rights as authors, including how these rights are created and possibly reassigned, modified, and separated, shared or lost. Many faculty members assume incorrectly that they retain rights to re-use or re-purpose their works when they sign an agreement with a publisher. However, the extents to which these rights are retained or given away--or, as in the case of NIH-supported research, must be made public--vary widely. Organizations such as the Scholarly Publication and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) and the Creative Commons non-profit corporation have created alternatives to exclusive publishing agreements so that authors may retain their rights to distribute their own works more openly. On campus, ScholarWorks is a digital repository, a mechanism whereby faculty authors who wish to distribute their scholarly works in an open access platform may do so. With current technologies, fewer and fewer works can ever be considered "out of print," and hence publishers may be less likely to make such concessions.

## **Impact on Personnel Decisions**

Online electronic publishing has increased the ability of researchers and educators to disseminate their work via traditional venues (electronic conference proceedings and journals, electronic books) and non-traditional venues (online moderated discussions, searchable datasets, multimedia tools to support and enhance teaching of research). These electronic publishing tools broaden the ability of faculty members to enhance the accessibility, reach and potential impact of their work. For some faculty, these forms of publication are becoming significant aspects of their academic work, but tools to evaluate their impact and importance are only just emerging.

Some forms of electronic publishing mirror traditional academic venues in their operation. For example, many e-journals operate on the same principles of rigorous peer review as traditional journals. The reputation of e-journals has evolved over the past 20 years to the point that some of the most prestigious journals in certain fields are published only or primarily in electronic form. Obviously, in such cases, the very fact that a journal is published exclusively in electronic form should not be considered as a negative aspect. The fact that a traditional venue abandons paper publication in itself should not be considered as an indication of poor quality. In this regard, publications in rigorously peer-reviewed e-journals and conference proceedings should be evaluated in the same way as traditional paper publications.

Established evaluation standards do not yet exist for other forms of electronic publishing, such as software tools, dataset archives, web sites, or moderated discussions. All of these are valuable academic activities--and are in fact either mandated or encouraged by funding agencies such as NSF and NIH. However, in each case, it must be determined whether the activity is best characterized as research, service, education, or a combination of these areas. Moreover, personnel committees need to consider ways in which the impact of the work can be evaluated. Acceptable ways of rigorous peer review have not been formalized, but there are some emerging evaluative tools. For example, some suggest that the number of links pointing to scholarly work, particularly from respected entities, could be considered a form of citation. Because electronic publications are increasingly prevalent and could have high impact on dissemination of academic knowledge, personnel decisions must consider this work and how to evaluate it.

## **Conclusion**

The rapid rise of digitization has, and will continue to have, fundamental and far-reaching consequences. This initial statement is to outline some of the most visible and important ones. The Task Force appointed by the Rules Committee of the Faculty Senate prepared this statement as requested by the Faculty Senate's Research Library Council. The Council will continue to track the effects of digitization on various parts of our campus.

## **The Committee**

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