Release Notes for Version 6.6 of Digital Commons

These notes introduce the new features released in version 6.6 of Digital Commons on October 2, 2009. As always, the features noted below are included with your Digital Commons subscription at no additional cost.

Administrative tools and enhanced display features

The marquee feature of the 6.6 release of Digital Commons is a new batch upload tool. Currently administrators can perform batch uploads by uploading XML files with submission data to the system. Now administrators can perform batch uploads using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. To further simplify the process administrators can export a spreadsheet pre-populated with column headings for each field on the submission form. Simply filling out the spreadsheet and uploading it completes the process.

Further enhancements to both the XML and Excel batch upload tools include:
- support for batch uploading disciplines from our three-tiered taxonomy
- support for batch uploading to image galleries
- enforced integrity for your controlled lists
- improved error handling

We expect this feature to greatly increase the number of users who can take advantage of Digital Commons' batch upload feature. Please contact bepress support to get started.

Administrators now have greater control over which emails their faculty receive when their work is posted to Digital Commons. Currently, when an administrator adds a submission to the repository, the submission's authors receive emails upon submission and publication. When applicable, they also receive emails upon successful PDF conversion, submission revision and submission withdrawal. To avoid sending these emails, some administrators refrain from entering author email addresses at the expense of the monthly readership reports.

With the 6.6 release the above author emails will be turned off by default, giving administrators the ability to work with faculty papers without generating these emails. Administrators are now free to enter email addresses for their authors and automatically deliver monthly readership reports. Entering author email addresses also enables administrators to use the auto-complete feature on submission forms to improve metadata integrity across multiple submissions by the same author.

If you have any questions about the feature or would like your authors to continue to receive these emails, please contact support@dc.bepress.com.

New features for the submission form

The 6.6 release brings several significant new features to Digital Commons submission forms. The first is support for Creative Commons licensing. Administrators can request that we add a pull-down menu to the submission form showing the 6 currently available licenses (version 3.0). Published submissions with Creative Commons licenses display the Creative Commons logo with text and a link to the appropriate license. Submitters will be able to apply Creative Commons licenses to all non-journal publications in Digital Commons. Support for Creative Commons licenses on journals is scheduled for the 6.7 release.

When creating submissions in Digital Commons, administrators can currently upload full-text objects or links to content on external websites. New for 6.6, administrators can enter a URL that points to a full-text on an external website. Clicking the submit button will then ingest the file from its remote server into Digital Commons.

Another new feature allows administrators to supply default metadata values for fields on the submission form. We expect this will come in handy for fields like "Language"; the default text can be set to "English" but the entry can be edited whenever necessary. The feature can also be configured to pass fixed metadata into submissions without providing an opportunity to edit the text.

We've noticed that a small number of series have received spam submissions. If you notice unwanted submissions, support can implement a "reCAPTCHA" widget to the submission form to ensure that only humans can complete submissions to Digital Commons. Read more about reCAPTCHA at: http://recaptcha.net

We've also added the following terms to our three-tiered taxonomy of academic disciplines:
- Arts and Humanities/Reading and Language
- Education/Curriculum and Social Inquiry
- Education/Community College Leadership
- Education/Disability and Equity in Education
- Social and Behavioral Sciences/Psychology/Quantitative Psychology

Enhancements to Events feature

Repository managers using Digital Commons to publish online journal content have the ability to customize these journals to effect the look and feel that best meets their stakeholders' needs. Starting with the 6.6 release, this same level of customization is available for branding events, conferences and symposia hosted on Digital Commons. By default, events will continue to inherit the look and feel of the hosting institution's site. To customize an event, please contact bepress support.

Two additional enhancements to events:
- We've streamlined the posting process for events. Submissions that are assigned to a track now retain their track assignment through publishing. Previously administrators had to re-assign submissions to tracks at publication.
- We've changed the way event start and stop times appear on event index pages. Previously dates and times appeared fixed at the top of the page - now administrators can choose where the dates show up. To change the new default setting, contact support and let your representative know where you would like the time and date fields to appear.

New display options for your repositories (Widgets)

In our ongoing effort to improve the display options available for Digital Commons repositories, we've begun offering "widgets" to highlight repository or other content. The first two available with the 6.6 release are embedded slideshows and RSS feeds.

Administrators can now create image galleries on Digital Commons that can be used to power embedded slideshows on static HTML pages in Digital Commons. Support can add these slideshows to your home page, series and community pages, or other pages on which you want to present graphical content. The slideshows can also be powered by feeds from Flickr or related gallery sites.

Administrators will also be able to pipe in content from RSS feeds onto Digital Commons sites via a new RSS widget. This widget will display titles from up to 3 feeds onto static HTML pages in Digital Commons. We can implement feeds on your home page, series and community pages or on dedicated feed pages. Feed titles can also be displayed in the sidebar. Contact support for details.

A closely related enhancement will allow feeds from Digital Commons image galleries to display thumbnails along with image metadata. This will allow site users who view Digital Commons content in feed readers to browse Digital Commons images directly from their feed readers.

Additional New Features

Researchers who use Zotero can now add Digital Commons content to their libraries with a single click. This feature applies to all Digital Commons publication types and will be available after site updates performed post-release. Read about Zotero at http://zotero.org.

Administrators now have greater flexibility for displaying links on their "Browse Collections" page (communities.html). Previously publications like series or image galleries only showed up when they were nested within a community. Now administrators have an additional option to display publications that are not nested within communities.

We've added new links on the My Account page for SelectedWorks authors. With the 6.6 release administrators can link to pages where they can upload content, manage subscriptions or edit their site directly from the My Account page.

SelectedWorks sites now have RSS feeds that display all posted content. The current feeds (e.g. http://works.bepress.com/MySite/recent.rss) display recent content; the new feeds (e.g. http://works.bepress.com/MySite/all.rss) contain metadata from all submissions posted to the site.

Finally, journal editors uploading back content will no longer have to approve individual submissions for publication. After assigning submissions to an issue, editors can close and publish issues in a single step.

Next Steps

If you have any questions about the above features or would like to start taking advantage of them, please contact support@dc.bepress.com.