

# Building a Framework for IR Success: A Roadmap

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Designed for those who are just starting out with a new repository as well as librarians who are interested in revitalizing an existing IR, this document sets out essential strategies for building a successful, sustainable IR initiative. At bepress, we've launched hundreds of IRs and watched them progress through their first year and beyond; based on that experience, we've pulled together some best practices that will help you build a strong foundation for future success, regardless of where you are in your IR implementation.

This document contains three sections:

- Essential Points and Considerations
- Sample Timeline
- Additional Resources

If you'd like to see how three different institutions have implemented the recommendations in this document, please visit the case studies:

- A Case Study on the Development of ValpoScholar at Valparaiso University, <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/repository-research/81/>
- A Case Study on the Development of DigitalCommons@ Brockport at The College at Brockport, [http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/dc\\_reports/16/](http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/dc_reports/16/)
- A Case Study on the Development of Scholar Commons at the University of South Florida, <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/repository-research/85/>

For resources on specific topics, please visit the Digital Commons Community Library at <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/library/>

## Essential Points and Considerations

Depending on where you are in your IR implementation, some of the following points may be more or less relevant; however, it is useful to revisit each of them periodically to assess whether you are still on track, what more needs to be done, and what you have already accomplished.

### 1. Set some goals

What do you see as the main purpose(s) of the IR, and what goals would you like to achieve in the next year to move forward with it? What about the next two years? Five years? Some typical goals include:

- Getting several collections that represent a breadth of content from across campus and use many of the different features and structures available in Digital Commons
- Building a focused collection that reflects a strategic strength or research focus of the institution
- Engaging new and strategic stakeholders, both individuals and departments, and creating ambassadors for the IR
- Hosting an event to introduce, or re-introduce, the services you can provide through the IR to your campus
- Making presentations about the IR to a certain number of departments, institutes, or offices, or reaching out personally to a certain number of faculty or staff
- Establishing a library-based publishing program on campus

Once you have set some goals, keep them handy and refer to them periodically to see whether you are on track; also, don't be afraid to change or modify your goals as priorities change and opportunities arise over time.

Goals are not always about numbers; also consider making goals that assess the IR's impact anecdotally or in other qualitative ways. Take a look at the reports section in our Collaboratory to get a sense of what others have done: <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/collaboratory/#reports>

Finally, **aligning your goals with institutional and library goals** is a good way to encourage buy-in and enlist more stakeholders at all levels, so be sure to stay up-to-date on new strategic goals for the campus and for the library. Consider creating a mission statement for the repository initiative that refers to these strategic goals.

See "The IR and Your Campus Mission" ([Appendix A](#)) for some examples of IR mission statements that connect nicely to strategic institutional goals.

## 2. Get the rest of the library involved

Librarians and library staff can be great allies and helping hands in your repository initiative: liaison and reference librarians can help you spread the word to faculty about the IR and its services, while your catalogers can start collecting and formatting metadata. Collection development librarians may be interested in helping to identify research collections on campus that need a home or folks that want to start new journals, while your archivist may be interested in digitizing and showcasing special collections. Find out what their interests are and involve them in projects that fit with those interests.

Educate the rest of the library about the basic features and services available through your IR and have them help identify people on campus whose needs may be served by the IR. Prepare them with talking points and a brochure or postcard that they can leave with potential contributors. Ask your Consulting Services representative to schedule a content tour for your library team, and take a look in the Collaboratory for examples of leave-behinds and brochures that others have created.

For additional resources on staffing, visit <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/staffing>.

### 3. Be familiar with and take advantage of the services and features included in your Digital Commons license

Knowing what you have available as part of Digital Commons and SelectedWorks will help you identify which problems you may be able to help solve on campus. The [Outreach Team](#) is always happy to present a content tour of features and example collections. When new features are released, check out the release notes ([http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/reference/#z\\_releasenotes](http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/reference/#z_releasenotes)) or give us a call to find out what's new. Ask us for examples of how particular types of content are being showcased in Digital Commons so you can visualize what might be possible for that type of content on your campus. For a general overview of the different structures available in Digital Commons, see "bepress Digital Commons Repository Organization: Publication Types Overview," <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/reference/68>

As a Digital Commons subscriber, you also have unlimited access to a wealth of resources, including our [Consulting Services](#) and [Outreach](#) teams. We encourage you to contact us with questions of all kinds, such as:

1. What is the best publication type to use for my content? Are there any additional features I can take advantage of to help showcase it well?
2. I'd like to increase the discoverability of my IR content; what is the best way to do that?
3. How can I spruce up the look of my IR and make it more navigable for visitors?
4. What are some methods for increasing faculty engagement?
5. How do I generate more participation and buy-in from campus stakeholders?
6. Do you have any examples of copyright workflows?
7. We have a faculty member asking about starting a journal for her students; do you have any examples of student journals in Digital Commons?
8. Can you help my journal editors set up a new peer-review workflow for their journal?

Our blog, the DC Telegraph (<http://blog.digitalcommons.bepress.com>), regularly showcases stories about how others in the Digital Commons community are using the platform to serve institutional needs, so that is another great way to see different platform features in action.

### 4. Seek out new collections and build support

The best way to find new collections and build more support is to get out and talk to people. Start by asking, "How can I help?" To figure out where to begin your efforts, conduct an environmental survey of your campus and do a campus needs assessment ([Appendix B](#))—browse department and administrative websites, check out research centers and institutes, search for journals published by faculty, students, or groups on campus, and look at faculty CVs. Are there unmet or previously unrecognized needs on your campus that the library can meet with repository services? Get your liaison/reference librarians involved by asking them to survey their own departments. This will also give you and others in the library ideas about who is working on what, what is unique to which disciplines, which departments are publishing in which journals, and additional background knowledge to inform your conversations with potential contributors.

Think broadly when conducting your environmental survey: Digital Commons has a variety of structure types and built-in features that can effectively showcase a wide range of materials—giving you a broader

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base of stakeholders and embedding repository services, and the library, in more areas across campus. If you're not sure whether a particular set of materials would be a good fit, feel free to ask us! Some examples include:

- Faculty articles, technical reports, presentations, books, and conference papers
- Student work, including theses, dissertations, research posters, reports, and creative works
- Journals, conferences, and campus events
- Archival and special collections such as images, postcards, letters, oral histories, maps, yearbooks, and videos
- Administrative and campus documents, including faculty senate minutes, press releases, newsletters, and course catalogs

For examples of the different types of materials each discipline or office may have, see our Model Collections at <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/featured.html>.

Being open and saying “yes” to collections, especially early on, can be helpful in more ways than one: one of the best ways to get the content you want and build more stakeholders is to get them involved in whatever capacity you can—let them see the advantages and get a better sense of the possibilities; then they'll be more likely to bring you other types of content as well!

As you decide which of these to move forward with next, also **think strategically**: who are some important stakeholders whose buy-in you'd like to get? A particular faculty member or department? A prominent, well-known research institute? A group or project with which the President or Provost is involved? The Alumni Office? The Graduate School? Take a look at your institution's organizational chart and keep strategic institutional goals in mind to help you think about whom to target next. Building support in the right places will help you spread the word further and faster, opening doors and creating more opportunities.

For more resources on collection development, see <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/policies/>.

## 5. Develop an outreach and marketing strategy

Getting out and talking to people is probably the most effective outreach and marketing strategy you can employ. Let the campus community know who you are, what problems you can solve, and what solutions you can offer. You may find that the first problem you help someone with is not related to the IR at all—but you will have positioned yourself as someone who can help and he or she will likely come back to you with more things for which the IR is a solution. Keep in mind that different people and groups have different needs and interests—listen to what those are and adjust your pitch accordingly. And as mentioned previously, supply the other librarians with talking points and a leave-behind so that they are prepared when there is an opportunity to talk about the IR and its services.

Additionally, consider the following:

- Make sure that links to, and information about, the repository are in places where people on campus will find them when they need them—the library homepage, departmental websites, LibGuides, etc.
- Write a press release announcing the IR and the services you can provide
- Host an official IR launch event to introduce the new services and start the conversation about how the library can help
- Host an Open Access Day or other event that allows you to present the services you have available and find out more about what needs might exist on campus
- Use your early adopters as ambassadors—bring them with you to presentations, ask them to talk to others in their department, encourage them to spread the work via their networks, and solicit testimonials that you can share
- Show your current collections as examples so others can see how theirs might look; if you don't have an example of a particular type of content up yet, ask us—we're happy to send you examples from other institutions
- Tweet, blog, and/or post to Facebook announcements of new collections, milestones, and interesting content
- Send regular reports or make presentations on progress to stakeholders

Publicizing your collections and successes will not only increase awareness, but also bring in new visitors and new content. Take a look at the Collaboratory for examples of brochures, leave-behinds, promotional presentations, etc.: <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/collaboratory/>

## 6. Report your success

In addition to press releases, social networking, and regular reports and announcements throughout the year, wrap up each year with an annual report. Look back at the goals you set for the IR at the beginning: which did you fulfill? Were there any you didn't? If so, why not? Did your goals change over the course of the year? What were your successes? What did you learn? What would you like to pursue or achieve for the next year? Some of the typical things included in annual reports are:

- Total number of objects added
- Total number of structures created
- Total number of downloads and cover page hits
- Average downloads per object
- Total number of new collections
- Total number of departments and offices represented
- Total number of unique institutional authors
- New stakeholders engaged
- Local and global reach of IR content
- Social media presence—mentions on Twitter, Facebook, etc.
- Outreach and marketing efforts, including presentations on and off campus, announcements and press releases, placement of links on external websites, etc.

Other things you might include:

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- Powerful anecdotes that give context to the numbers
- Descriptions of particular projects and collections that contribute directly to furthering strategic campus and library goals
- Quotes or testimonials from faculty or other stakeholders
- Goals for the next year

Digital Commons reports and Google Analytics can give you a lot of information on traffic and usage. Supplement that information with narratives and anecdotes to tell the full story—most importantly, how the IR has helped solve problems on campus.

Additionally, consider your stakeholders: who are they and what information will be most valuable and interesting to them? Sign up department chairs to receive automatic monthly reports on their department's collections, or a donor for reports on content they contributed; send a monthly or quarterly summary of activity to your Library Director. Report to the Provost on how the IR has promoted the research goals of the institution, or let the President know about the ways in which it has pushed forward strategic institutional goals. Let your stakeholders know how you are helping them to reach their own goals!

- Take a look at the reports section in our Collaboratory to get a sense of what others have done: <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/collaboratory/#reports>.
- For more information on reporting in Digital Commons, visit <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/usagereports>.

## Sample Timeline

### What might the next year look like?

Below is a sample quarter-by-quarter schedule of how your next year might go as you ramp up your repository initiative. We encourage you to meet with Consulting Services and Outreach every quarter to go over goals, barriers, and successes, and to contact us at any time with questions or if you'd like resources, examples, references, or other materials.

#### Q1: IR Assessment and Goal-Setting

- Take a close look at your IR and assess it in terms of its overall design and navigability, how well it indicates its purpose and contents, whether you are implementing best practices for discoverability by search engines, and whether contact information for the repository administrator is easy to find. Discuss with Consulting Services what you might like to do to improve any of these.
- Conduct an environmental survey of your campus, and determine which materials you will target first. Consider both those that are strategically important as well as those that will be easier to acquire.
- Based on your IR assessment and your environmental survey, set some goals for the next year and beyond.
- This is also a great time to bring in other librarians and library staff—brief them on goals, have them help conduct environmental surveys, and enlist their expertise to determine, for example, what collections to pursue or how to approach faculty.

#### Q2: Outreach and Collection Building

- Begin uploading those new collections you identified that are easy to acquire
- Experiment with new features or structures to create a more compelling user experience.
- Develop your talking points with your liaisons, create a brochure or other piece of collateral, and develop a short presentation.
- Start making appointments to go out and talk to groups or individuals on campus. Consult your university organization chart and your environmental survey to determine where to focus your initial efforts.

#### Q3: Publicize the IR to Campus

- Plan an IR Day or Open Access Day (or week) to introduce (or re-introduce) your campus to the IR and to the services the library can provide. Invite your early adopters to speak about their experiences, present the collections you've built so far and others that are in the works, discuss your successes, and include compelling stories and statistics. Consider having an annual event to keep the IR in people's minds as well as to alert new faculty, staff, and students to repository

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services. Providing food, drinks, and a celebratory atmosphere can help generate interest in the repository initiative.

- Launch a couple of larger projects, such as journals or conferences.
- Set up some regular methods of keeping the campus abreast of new collections, services, and milestones—a Twitter feed, Facebook page, LibGuide, or blog—and consider which stakeholders might benefit from receiving regular reports on collections in the repository.
- Check back in with your liaisons or support staff—do they need more talking points, leave-behinds, refreshers, reminders, or other resources?

### **Q4: Wrapping Up the Year**

- Review your goals, organization chart, and projects currently in process, and start making goals for next year based on these.
- Check in with your IR Manager and library team about what worked and what didn't, and start making plans for improving workflows in the coming year.
- Write up an annual report and share it with the campus; choose some compelling tidbits to present in a press release.

Another way to think about this is with respect to the academic year—for instance, those Q1 activities of assessing the IR and setting goals are great for spring, while the summer is an excellent time to devote to building new collections and familiarizing others in the library with the repository. Once people are back on campus in the fall, launch your outreach and marketing efforts in earnest, getting on the schedule for departmental and new faculty meetings, inviting people for informal meetings, and sharing your projects and successes with the rest of campus.

- For a sample one-year timeline, see the Marshall University Institutional Repository Proposal ([http://mds.marshall.edu/lib\\_faculty/2](http://mds.marshall.edu/lib_faculty/2)).



## Additional Resources

If you'd like to read more about implementation and development of repositories in year one and beyond, we recommend the following:

- Kickstarting IR Success at Any Stage, Courtney Smith, bepress, <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/webinars/3>
- Staffing the Repository: How to Build Your Team and Use It Effectively, Brad Matthies, <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/webinars/2/>
- The Institutional Repository at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln: Its First Year of Operations, Paul Royster, <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libraryscience/58/>
- Creating an Institutional Repository “on the Cheap,” Brad Matthies and Kenetha Frisby, [http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/librarian\\_presentations/5/](http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/librarian_presentations/5/)

Also see the Digital Commons Community Library, where we have collected together resources on a wide variety of topics, from copyright to staffing to publishing: <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/library>.

## Appendix A: The IR and Your Campus Mission

When talking about an IR to your campus leadership outside the library, the most important thing is to speak in the language of your campus mission and strategic plan. As you enter into these conversations (or in a written proposal), make sure you're positioning the IR as a campus-wide endeavor that will contribute to the success of the institution, rather than as an internal library project.

### Checklist: Connect the IR to your institution's mission and success

- Have you used language from the campus mission, vision, priorities, and strategic plan?
- Have you explained what the IR will do to make your institution more competitive?
- Have you shown how the IR will improve the value that your library creates?
- Have you emphasized direct benefits to faculty and students?
- Have you explained why an IR is needed now, and what problems it will solve?

### Some good examples

The following excerpts are drawn from presentations and reports that "made the case" for an IR to campus stakeholders. You can find references to the full text below.

"If your institutional mission statement includes any of the following terms: disseminate, share, promote, produce, demonstrate, qualitative, or quantitative, the institutional repository provided through Digital Commons can help you accomplish that mission. Digital Commons at UMaine provides an opportunity to bring all of UMaine's scholarship, research, and creative work together under a single umbrella in order to preserve and distribute that work on a global level."

***University of Maine: campus presentations (Kimberley Sawtelle)***

"The real strength of the IR is in its ability to collect, preserve, and project the scholarly output of the University and make it available to the people of the state and beyond."

***Utah State University: how the library described the IR to campus (Richard Clement)***

"An institutional repository is an excellent vehicle for publicizing the quality of research conducted by the faculty, staff, and students, and for sharing unique institutional collections with a wide audience. Through Scholars' Archive, JWU scholarship and collections are able to gain more global visibility via the web. This has the potential to attract new students, researchers, faculty, and funding, as well as further increase Johnson and Wales's reputation as an institution of higher education."

***Johnson and Wales University: presentation to the Deans' Council (Erika Gearing)***

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“ScholarWorks is a collection of services designed to capture and showcase all scholarly output by the Boise State University community. These services include:

- Identifying and making available via the ScholarWorks web site documents and files produced by the faculty, research groups, and students of Boise State University.
- Creation of SelectedWorks pages which highlight the scholarly accomplishments of each individual faculty member.
- Distribution of regular reports that provide data on the impact and usage of faculty publications.
- Access to simple and inexpensive electronic publishing of original series, journals, and monographs.
- Promotion of research efforts via a searchable database, reports to key administrators and stakeholders, and coordination with other research recognition activities.”

***Boise State University: how the library described the IR to campus (Marilyn Moody)***

“For almost two years, the Library staff have been pursuing the possibility of the development of an institutional digital repository as a way of bringing together and highlighting the intellectual and publishing output of the University. This endeavor is consistent with the recent strategies developed by the University and the Academic Division to achieve the goals for Cedarville to become a voice of national influence, to increase awareness and reputation, and to elevate the visibility of the scholarship and credentials of its faculty and students. An institutional digital repository is a suite of on-line tools that enables the University to manage, display, and publish its intellectual output to the Web in a highly visible showcase.”

***Cedarville University: excerpt from library newsletter cover story announcing the IR***

### References:

Cedarville University, *Centennial Library E-News*, Volume 19, Issue 2 (November/December 2011).  
<http://www.cedarville.edu/~media/Files/PDF/Library/ENews/enews2011nov.pdf>

Clement, Richard W., "Leveraging Institutional Repositories to Support Your Institution's Strategic Mission (July)". *Library Faculty & Staff Presentations*. Paper 7 (2009).  
[http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/lib\\_present/7/](http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/lib_present/7/)

Gearing, Erika, "ScholarsArchive@JWU: The Power of Open Access Publishing". *Library Staff Publications*. Paper 11 (2011). [http://scholarsarchive.jwu.edu/staff\\_pub/11/](http://scholarsarchive.jwu.edu/staff_pub/11/)

Moody, Marilyn K., "Libraries and Strategic Change: The Role of Institutional Repository + Services." Presented at the Berkeley Electronic Press session on "Repositioning the Role of the Library through the Institutional Repository." American Library Association Midwinter Meeting, 2010. January 2010.  
[http://works.bepress.com/marilyn\\_moody/16/](http://works.bepress.com/marilyn_moody/16/)

Sawtelle, Kimberly J., "Introduction to DigitalCommons@UMaine" Fogler Library. University of Maine, Orono. (August 2012). [http://works.bepress.com/kimberly\\_sawtelle/2](http://works.bepress.com/kimberly_sawtelle/2)

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## Appendix B:

# Connecting the Dots: Campus Needs Assessment

Librarians frequently cite the needs below as catalysts for campus-wide IR enthusiasm at their institutions. Responding to these needs through a repository program has given libraries the opportunity to develop new and valuable core services. How many of these needs exist on your campus?

- The campus is going through accreditation and needs to demonstrate it is serious about research.
- A faculty member or center has a journal that is struggling, or wants to start a new journal.
- The campus has a high-profile conference whose papers are not getting preserved or posted.
- Faculty receive major grants but have no place to store their output or share their findings.
- The Office of Research wants to help faculty develop data management plans and comply with new data preservation requirements.
- Faculty profile pages vary widely by department. Some faculty have built their own pages and are uploading their own papers, or departments are manually building lists of faculty articles.
- Student theses, projects, exhibits, and honors papers have no home and disappear.
- A high-profile department or program needs a special showcase to really make its mark.
- The university press is struggling with an expensive print production process.
- Graduate students are looking for more research apprenticeship opportunities and ways to establish their careers.
- Faculty members feel passionate about open access and want a way to make a difference with their works.
- The campus is trying to reach out to the community or regional/state government with a joint research project or a special collection that needs a home.
- The academic division needs a better way to track faculty research output and faculty performance metrics.
- The undergraduate division is focusing on better ways to recruit and retain students, including through innovative hands-on learning opportunities.
- The campus has valuable archival collections that are not exposed or used as much as they should be.
- The campus has received a donor collection – perhaps personal papers or corporate papers – that deserve a special showcase.
- The alumni office has a great alumni magazine or newsletter that is print-only or needs better online support.
- The administration would like a better way to preserve and manage campus records, such as minutes from the faculty senate meetings.
- The university is seeking to enhance its reputation for research and raise its visibility among scholars.
- The campus needs a better way to handle and publish student electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs).

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