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Anatomy of An Institutional Repository: Dissecting the Metadata Process

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Background
In 2006 the Lamar Soutter Library at the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) licensed ProQuest’s Digital Commons institutional repository (IR) software and launched eScholarship@UMMS to preserve and promote the medical school’s research and scholarship. Cataloging and metadata skills were important for the project for adequate organization, identification, and description of documents, which would facilitate discovery within the repository and via search engines.

The Challenges
- Library’s first digitization effort
- Becoming skilled with new hosted IR software
- Collections differ in scope and format
- Coordination of workflow with Library Systems department
- Inexperienced with Dublin Core and XML
- Defining team member roles
- Time management
- Establishing new relationships outside the Library

Metadata Tasks for Collections
- Review template for adding new records to the system: add/remove/enhance fields
- Specify fields to display in all views of the data: admin, user input, output
- Specify display order of fields
- Determine workflow
- Write instructions for Cataloging staff
- Perform ongoing quality control and enhancement of submitted records, including assignment of MeSH terms and links to the OPAC, PubMed, and publisher websites

Library Publications & Presentations
Description: Articles, posters, presentations, book chapters, book reviews and other publications authored by Lamar Soutter Library staff.
Number of documents: 81
Usage: 1433 full-text downloads in 11 months

Dissertations
Description: Dissertations authored by students in UMass Medical School’s Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.
Number of documents: 323
Usage: 12,446 full-text downloads in 11 months

Senior Scholars Program
Description: Abstracts of research projects in which 4th year medical students devote two or more months to a project under the guidance of a faculty member.
Number of documents: 41
Usage: 2019 cover page downloads in 5 months

International Medical Education Program
Description: Trip reports of UMMS students serving in foreign countries, including descriptions of sites and clinical experiences, photos, personal reflections, maps, and advice for future students.
Number of documents: 71
Usage: 1089 cover page downloads in 4 months

Women’s Faculty Committee
Description: Publications authored by UMMS Women’s Faculty Committee members, organized into personal researcher pages.
Number of documents: 131
Usage: 1311 full-text downloads in 11 months

Conclusion
Performing metadata analysis and enhancement for eScholarship@UMMS has been an invaluable experience for the cataloging staff at the Lamar Soutter Library. Catalogers developed new skills and are part of a successful project with high visibility and interaction with faculty and students. The metadata is harvested by Google, making the work of library catalogers more evident than ever before. However, the establishment of the repository has introduced new challenges in time management and in the balance of traditional versus repository-related cataloging duties.

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