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2019 Northeast Institutional Repository Day

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A'Llyn Ettien

Boston University

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Permissions and Access for Copyright-Protected Theses

**Northeast Institutional Repository Day
June 18, 2019**

**A'Llyn Ettien, MLIS, AHIP
Collections Management Librarian
Boston University
Alumni Medical Library**

Once Upon a Time...

Today, actually.

Boston University Libraries
OpenBU

Boston University accepts dissertation and thesis submissions online, and makes them available open access in institutional repository.



Alumni Medical Library

In Ages Past...

Alumni Medical Library holds about 1200 print dissertations and theses from 50 years of graduates of the Goldman School of Dental Medicine



Let's Combine!

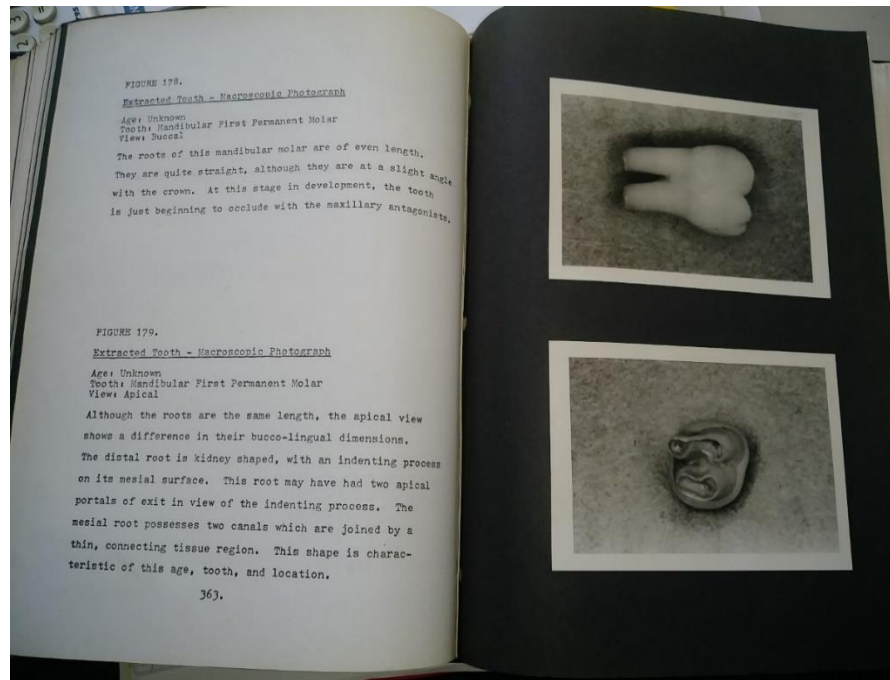
What could be more wonderful than to have all these dissertations and theses accessible in one place, permanently archived in the institutional repository?

Pretty much nothing, that's what.



Complication: Copyright

Authors did not specifically agree to online access when depositing these items with the library



Our Argument

Print access

Is limited to visitors of physical library or interlibrary loan requests from other libraries

Digitized work

If stored in OpenBU behind a BU password, is functionally similar to physical limitations of print



However...

Boston University Libraries

OpenBU

🏠 OpenBU

Welcome to OpenBU

The Boston University Institutional Repository contains documents and publications authored or co-authored by BU faculty, students, and staff.

OpenBU is an open access repository, which means that the work deposited here is freely accessible to all. Access is restricted only in unavoidable instances where publisher copyright restrictions prevail. However, many publishers worldwide now allow some version of their work to be made available in a repository.

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Alumni Medical Library

MAIL MERGE TIME!

- **Email (plus two follow-up messages) to about 500 authors**
- **Print mailing to about 800 (significant crossover with first group)**

In total, reached out to approximately 900 graduates in 30 countries who completed dissertations or theses between 1965 and 2016 (roughly 80% of authors)



Permission Forms

Email included link to Qualtrics survey with text granting permission for open access: authors could type name and check “yes” to sign

Print mailing included printed version of same text: authors could sign and return

Form modeled on the one signed by current graduating students submitting dissertations and theses online



Response

As of today, 174 authors have granted permission – making about 15% of total dissertation/thesis collection available for open access.

A bit underwhelming.

Still, 15% is more than 0%!

Two Collections Approach

OA Collection

Realistically will never be complete, but is larger than it might have been

Password-Protected Collection

Makes remainder of dental theses and dissertations digitally available, while clearly respecting author copyright



Password Protection

A workable, conservative approach to digitization of copyright-protected materials.

[GSDM: Historical Theses and Dissertations \(BU access only\)](#) [154]

Downloading is restricted to members of the BU community.

[GSDM: Historical Theses and Dissertations \(Open Access\)](#) [108]



Questions?

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