Turn and Face the Strange (DAMS Changes): Temporarily Migrating Digital Collections into an Institutional Repository

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A concise history of digital repositories at the University of New Hampshire Library

Digitool
Fedora
Digital Commons
Institutional Repository
Digital Collections
Fedora Commons, Inc.

Log Number: **LG-72-18-0204-18**

DuraSpace will investigate barriers to upgrading unsupported versions of the Fedora repository platform used by approximately 240 libraries and archives in the United States. Use of unsupported versions puts the stability, security, and functionality of the content and services these institutions support at risk. This project will consult with an advisory board of stakeholders from the Islandora, Samvera, and Fedora communities; conduct an environmental scan of relevant community initiatives; and gather primary research data to inform recommendations for reducing barriers to upgrading. Project outputs will include user stories, an inventory of resources for upgrading, and recommendations for migration paths.

**Project Proposals**

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Proposal

The library will pause its implementation of Fedora 4, migrate Fedora 3 collections to our existing Digital Commons platform, and undergo a planning process to identify a sustainable technology solution (or set of solutions) for our digital collections and institutional repository content. This proposal is not a suggestion that we retreat from technology leadership in digital collections, but rather that we prioritize access to collections while we take the time to reassess our position in relationship to these technologies, our stakeholders, and our strategic plan.

1. Migrate Digital Collections content to our existing Digital Commons hosted platform, where the Scholars Repository is implemented. This would be a temporary move while other options are assessed.

2. On a three-year timeframe review repository options for various content types and, if a different platform(s) is selected, plan implementation and migration. This review and planning process would involve major stakeholders such as USNH IT, the library faculty, and Digital Collections/Scholars Repository users.

Oct. 2020
Best case: Our IR platform covers our digital collections needs

Worst case: Our needs are not met, but we have access to everything and time to regroup.
The Great Migration

253 Sub-collections
22,427 Items

Nikki Hentz
Institutional Repository Manager

Sarah Stinson
Digital Collections Manager
So I Turned Myself to Face Me

Or, “Wow I’m almost done with this MAP and now I have to redo it and it’s for a system not really made for this help”
Before
UNHCore MAP Version 1 (and 2)

- **Version 1.0.0**
  - Created before my employment
  - dcterm
  - System-agnostic; Fedora 3

- **Version 2.0.0**
  - My revisions
  - DPLA compliant
  - dcterm + dc + edm
  - Looking towards linked data
  - System-agnostic; Fedora 4
Every time I thought I’d got it made, it seemed the taste was not so sweet
Difference in Metadata Needs

Digital Collections
- Describing archival/rare/special materials
- Photos, books, documents, objects, etc
- Physical materials
- Descriptive information can provide history and context
- Access

Institutional Repositories
- Describing scholarly work
- Articles, posters, presentations
- Born-digital materials
- Descriptive information primarily bibliographic with a focus on affiliation
- Dissemination
Unique UNH Metadata Needs

Digital Collections

- Lots of serials
- Clothing collection
- Scanning information
  - Dublin Core too broad and vague
- Repeatable fields
- Crosswalk to DPLA eventually
- Flexible input

Scholars’ Repository

- Bepress Digital Commons
- Provided metadata templates
- Crosswalks to Simple Dublin Core
- Can request custom fields
- Templates for each resource type
- Fields not repeatable
- Rigid input
- MM-DD-YYYY only
  - What do we do about estimated dates?
  - What do we do about academic years?
  - What if we want to force ISO 8601 on people?
- Commas as delimiters
  - Can’t use semicolons or vertical bars
  - What do we do about subject headings with commas in them?
After
UNHCore MAP Version 2.1.0

- With fewer element options, get creative with Dublin Core mappings
  - Public won’t see the Dublin Core element anyway!
- MAP as “general guidelines and best practices”
- Collection-level concerns only in those templates
- Preference for LoC standards for ingest into Primo VE
  - Consistency
  - Index integrity
Important Notes

- I don’t create the metadata
- I don’t supervise the creation of the metadata
- I am new at UNH and therefore unfamiliar with collections and precedents
- Heavy reliance on the expertise of the staff who do this labor and oversee it being done
  - They tell me the unique needs and quirks
  - My documentation must be usable by people without formal metadata backgrounds
- Incorporating inclusive/ethical descriptive practices
  - Standards and systems can be obstructive
- Limitations of Digital Commons has forced me to think differently about what we need from our next system
- Written in Markdown
Instant wins

- Much better SEO and indexing
- Search within collections
- Bulk upload and update
- PDF preview option
- Better linking
- Ability to easily assign roles and permissions
- Robust use stats interface
- Vendor technical support
- OAI and DOI support

Compromises

- Problems with large file handling
- Lots of display and organization options, but not the ones we most need
- Search limitations
- Metadata Limitations
- Heterogeneous content makes is hard to present coherently
- No complex object support
What’s missing?

Support for long-term management and preservation of content (beyond backups and versions)

Preservation metadata

Data integrity/validation tools

Authenticity

Sustainability
What’s next?

Live with our choices for a little while
Identify our needs, wants, and hopes
Investigate our repository options and assess our support environment
Make new choices
Questions

What are the functional requirements of digital collections repositories and institutional repositories?

Can a repository system have all the components we need to support a variety of content types and still be implementable and migratable?

Is the separation of repository types about functionality or product segmentation?
Time may change me, but I can’t trace time ...

https://github.com/jlcolbert/unhcore-map
Questions?

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