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Accessibility of ARL Academic Libraries' Digital Library Projects

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Overview

- Project Background
- Survey
- Data Points
- Qualifications
- Results
- Recommendations
- Q & A

Project Background

- In September 2003, Milner Library created a task force for managing digital resources.
- Before implementing a digitization program, the task force wanted to ensure efficient access and integrated searching capabilities.
- Very little literature was found concerning access to digital library projects.
- Preliminary findings presented at '04 ALA Annual Poster Session.

Survey

- Criteria:
 - Association of Research Libraries (ARL) members
 - Academic
 - English-language websites
- Conducted in several phases from January-August 2004.
- Data stored in MS Access database.

Institutional Level Data Points

- Number of digital library projects
- Digital library website URL(s)
- Terminology used
- Level of access from the library's homepage
- Notes

Project Level Data Points

- Project name and URL
- Project type(s)
- Browse/Search accessibility
- OPAC access
- Federated searching
- Restricted access, and restriction explained
- Metadata included, and searchable
- Notes

Other Data Points

- Data points surveyed, but not analyzed
 - Project partnerships, on campus
 - Project partnerships, off campus

- Planned data point, but not surveyed
 - Usability testing

Selected Qualifications

- Institutions were not credited with projects if done in statewide consortia.
- If multiple ARL libraries collaborated on a project, the host site was credited.
- Evaluated:
 - Non-commercial sites
 - Electronic theses and dissertations projects
- Not Evaluated:
 - Commercial products
 - E-reserves
 - Text only finding aids
 - Pilot/experimental/“in progress” sites

Data Summary

- ARL academic, English-language libraries: **111** (123 total)
- ARL academic, English-language libraries with projects: **89** (80.2%)
- Total number of projects: **1,123**
- Average number of projects per library: **12.6**
- Median number of projects: **8**
- Low: 22 libraries had **0** projects
- High: 1 library had **112** projects

Library Website Access

- **43.8%** were accessible from homepage
- **36.0%** were accessible from secondary level
- **20.2%** were not accessible from the homepage or a secondary-level page

Example

- University of Utah
 - <http://www.lib.utah.edu/>

Project Types

- Image projects: **733**
- Text projects: **634**
- Exhibits: **213**
- Atlas/Map projects: **71**
- Finding Aid projects: **55**
- Audio projects: **43**
- Video projects: **35**
- Audio & Video projects: **9**
- Other projects: **14**
- Thesis/Dissertation projects: **13**
- *Projects with 2 or more types: 395*

Browse/Search Accessibility

- **91.3%** were browsable
- **51.6%** were searchable
- **45.8%** had both browsing and searching options

Example

- University of Toronto's *The Discovery and Early Development of Insulin*
 - <http://digital.library.utoronto.ca/insulin/>

OPAC Access & Federated Searching

- **33.1%** had OPAC records
- **25.6%** allowed some form of federated searching

Example

- University of Minnesota – Twin Cities' *Images*
 - <http://digital.lib.umn.edu/advancedsearch.phtml>

Restricted Access

- **6.1%** were restricted access
- **72.7%** of restricted access projects explained the restriction

Example

- University of Virginia's *Early American Fiction Collection (1789-1875)*
 - <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/eaf/>

Metadata

- **72.6%** contained metadata
- **43.5%** allowed metadata to be searched

Example

- Washington State University's *Early Washington Maps*
 - <http://www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/holland/masc/xmaps.html>

Recommendations – Library Website Access

- Make project access point available from the library homepage.
- Ensure projects are listed with more traditional online resources, such as OPACs and article databases.

Recommendations – Project Access

- Make browsable and searchable.
- Offer searching in OPAC and/or federated search engine, in addition to digital management software.
- Make item records, in addition to collection or sub-collection level records, searchable from OPAC and/or federated search engine.
- Maintain active URLs in OPAC records.
- Explain who can access restricted items and why.

Recommendations – Metadata

- Offer as much metadata as possible.
- Make all metadata searchable.

Questions?

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