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Accessibility of ARL Academic Libraries' Digital Library Projects

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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/](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](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/](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](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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