

Perceived Values and Benefits of Institutional Repositories: A Perspective of Digital Curation

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Abstract

Institutional repositories (IRs) are increasingly deployed in academic institutions to manage a variety of digital content including educational, research, and archival materials. The proposed benefits of IRs have been identified in the literature including increased knowledge sharing, control over the digital assets of the university, and preservation. All of these benefits involve digital curation because they span the information life-cycle and involve achieving goals that are central to digital curation. In this paper, we report on an empirical study examining how library directors and others involved in IRs articulate their benefits. The purpose of this study is two fold: (1) to investigate whether IR administrators and staff agree on a set of values and benefits that IRs can offer and (2) to examine the extent to which IR administrators and staff understand the role of digital curation in the process of IR establishment. Our underlying theory is that how people conceptualize the benefits of IRs effects all other digital curation decisions. Therefore, how staff perceive the value and benefits is one of the fundamental questions to be addressed in IR development. Early identification of explicit benefits and value would assist IR staff in justifying the establishment of an IR to the larger university and provide a framework for IR development. The study is part of a larger research project Making Institutional Repositories a Collaborative Learning Environment (MIRACLE).