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People Profile: Barbara Blummer

Editor

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Librarians, who typically acquire, distribute, and manage primary research materials are especially affected by the transition of scholarship to an open access model. The Libraries and Publishers Working Group that produced the "Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing" recognizes the role of librarians in developing support mechanisms to foster transition to open access publishing. This can be done through education and outreach activities for users on the benefits of open access publishing, and by listing and highlighting open access journals in catalogs. Other advocates of open access also underscore the importance of librarians in promoting open access. Suber believes librarians have a major role in teaching scholars about open access("Removing the Barriers"). Richard Geyde in "Open Access is Only Part of the Story" characterizes librarians as crusaders and urges them to lobby for change and to educate researchers on all the issues of open access.

Numerous authors recognize the important role of librarians in an institutional repository. Geyde notes that librarians have the skill to design, develop, manage, and maintain institutional repositories. Quint envisions a big depository of all open access scholarly content managed by an information professional who creates institutional repository policies such as permanence and preservation. Fytton Rowland and others in "Delivery, Management, and Access Models for Eprints and Open Access Journals" also views library staff as instrumental in ensuring an institutional repository is set up properly and includes the correct content.

Academic librarians worldwide are facilitating the establishment of institutional repositories in their institutions. At the ARL Mid-Winter Meeting in Boston in January 2005, Margret Branschefsky, DSpace User Support Librarian at MIT, presented a talk on the library's joint venture with Hewlett Packard in developing DSpace, an institutional repository software designed for MIT faculty members' digitized research and teaching materials. At MIT, the library's role in the institutional repository project centers on marketing the concept to faculty who are responsible for submission, metadata, and decisions regarding content and access. Branschefsky described the library's promotion of DSpace, which included press releases, brochures, presentations to university groups, announcements on email lists, and hosting events. Recently, the speaker explained, the library hired a marketing consultant who suggested that they identify an audience, locate the decision maker, and provide extensive public relations information. Branschefsky believes librarians need to recognize the barriers to participation, anticipate resistance, and develop new approaches to encourage the development of institutional repositories at their sites.

University of Rochester librarians are also active in facilitating an institutional repository for their institution. At a recent workshop on establishing an institutional repository, Susan Gibbons, Assistant Dean for Public Services & Collection Development at the University, outlined her experiences with their institutional repository. Gibbons noted the library's role in selecting the repository software, working with the Libraries' information technology staff for set-up and promoting the project to faculty members. Library staff at the University provide support with the deposits, promote the project, provide scanning services, and offer a helpline. Ms. Gibbons views the librarian's hardest task as convincing faculty of the need to self-archive.

According to Paula Callan, E-print Archive Coordinator Librarian at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), the library staff is active in promoting an institutional repository at her institution. Ms. Callan oversees the development and population of the repository by reviewing metadata for deposited items, performing permission checking, and, if necessary, helping academics with permission requesting. Ms. Callan also works with liaison librarians to assist researchers through workshops on the deposit process. However, Ms. Callan describes her primary responsibility as promoting the repository and especially reminding researchers to self-archive their publications, since QUT requires all staff to deposit copies of new scholarly publications unless there is a legal impediment. All costs incurred are supported through the library budget, since the institutional repository is deemed to enhance research impact and so is considered a major benefit to the institution. Ms. Callan believes that many of the liaison librarians enjoy promoting and supporting self-archiving since it embeds them in the research process of the University.

Although many open access opponents warn institutional repositories may replace libraries, some librarians maintain they offer new opportunities for information professionals. In the "Repository Adventure," H. Frank Cervone, Assistant University Librarian for Library Technology at Northwestern University, notes the numerous opportunities for libraries in managing institutional repositories. According to Cervone, librarians can move from passive transfer agents of information into active partners in the dissemination process. He believes this will ensure librarians' future position in the digital publishing process. In a presentation Cervone delivered at the "Computers in Libraries Conference" in Washington, DC in March 2005, he emphasized the importance of preservation and metadata to institutional repositories. He maintained librarians are especially skilled to manage repositories because of their training in metadata creation as well as preservation of materials.

In addition to institutional repositories, librarians are also promoting open access journals. Edward Iglesias, Integrated Systems Coordinator at Loyola University, noted their librarians have activated numerous open access journals in its SFX server, which allows these titles to be listed in the library's A-Z list of journals. According to Iglesias, they also list the SPARC Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) in the library's OPAC with a link. Although they are treated like other journals, all costs for open access journals at Loyola are supported through the Information continued on page 67