Articles published by NIH-funded researchers to be submitted to PubMed Central (PMC). The articles are made publicly available no later than twelve months after the official publication date. PMC is NIH’s freely accessible, full text article repository, with close to three million articles currently deposited. NIH Policy manuscripts are about 10% of this amount. The rest of the content comes from publishers that voluntarily deposit their articles, usually after a publication delay.

Many health sciences (HS) libraries got involved in 2008 or earlier with support for researchers at their academy needing to comply with the policy. Efforts range from offering workshops and individual consultations to notifying authors which of their articles are non-compliant and what steps to take to make them compliant. There are a number of excellent NIH Policy LibGuides (e.g., Duke University and University of Washington) and video tutorials (e.g., New York University and Harvard University) created by librarians to assist researchers.

An informal survey in 2013 of Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) member involvement in supporting the Policy indicated a high level of activity amongst health sciences libraries. Of the 25 responses, all but four were actively involved with a support role. It’s remarkable that HS libraries are taking on this new responsibility at a time with shrinking staff and budgets. The work can be very involved and time-consuming, so it is no small decision to take it on.

Here are a few notable initiatives:

- **University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Library** runs reports on the NIH Public Access Compliance Monitor (PACM) of UAMS authors’ adherence to the Policy on a departmental, institutional, and individual PI level. The library shares the documents it uses to notify authors or other institutions’ benefit.
- **The Countway Medical Library at Harvard University** built an online submission system where authors can deposit their manuscripts. A librarian logs in to the NIH Manuscript Submission System (NIHMS) as a publisher, enabling deposit of multiple papers on behalf of authors. After a coordinated outreach effort, **Harvard’s** compliance rate jumped to the 90% range.
- With help from a grant, **Health Sciences Libraries staff at New York University** programmed an automated system to notify School of Medicine authors who have published articles that are not compliant with the policy. The program matches PACM data with an internal Sponsored Programs Administration database to identify active grants and contact emails. Seven months after the library started sending monthly email notices in June 2013, the SOM’s compliance rate rose from 79% to 87%.
- On behalf of authors with non-compliant articles published in “Method D” journals (where publisher makes initial deposit), the **University of California, San Francisco Library** sent lists to several publishers with a request to deposit the manuscripts into NIHMS. Results were mixed but fortunately the publisher with the most non-deposited articles agreed to deposit all manuscripts.

The advantages to the library are the opportunity to collaborate with different groups on campus, and filling a needed role. Offices of sponsored research have welcomed libraries’ help in supporting researchers trying to work through the complications of getting the PMC-CID, which indicates an article is compliant. Efforts where research offices and the library work as a team are particularly effective, as each group has its own strength. Librarians have established relationships with publishers and are accustomed to reading contract agreements and to finding the needle in the haystack. There are several steps to compliance with the NIH Policy, leaving plenty of room for error, so librarians’ perseverance with detail comes in handy.

Librarians who have discussed this topic informally among themselves often indicate that benefits include the opportunity to do outreach in new ways and with new constituents at their organization as benefits. Putting librarians in a public service role related to the policy is good exposure for the library, so long as the library comes off as a helpful resource and not simply as enforcement. The level of support is determined by the library’s priorities and available resources, by institutional culture, and by acceptance from campus groups of the library taking the lead in research policy compliance support.

You might be wondering, is it worth it for the library (or anyone else for that matter) to go to all of this effort? Consider the fact that PMC gets over 700,000 unique visitors daily, from around the world (a fact that doesn’t seem to matter, but which is nonetheless impressive).