Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication

Volume 1 | Issue 1 eP1024

Starting, Strengthening, and Managing Institutional Repositories by Jonathan A. Nabe

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Triumph, TF. (2012). *Starting, Strengthening, and Managing Institutional Repositories* by Jonathan A. Nabe. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication* 1(1):eP1024. http://dx.doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.1024

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JLSC is a quarterly journal sponsored and published by Pacific University Library | ISSN 2162-3309 | http://jlsc-pub.org

ISSN 2162-3309 JLSC

BOOK REVIEW

Starting, Strengthening and Managing Institutional Repositories

Jonathan A. Nabe

2010 | Neal-Schuman Publishers |169 pages | 978-1-55570-689-0 | US $90.00

Over the past decade, the U.S. has experienced an explosion in the number of institutional repositories (IRs), from just more than 20 in 2002 to approximately 400 active repositories as of August, 2011. For any institution seeking to implement a repository, Jonathan Nabe has written an informative and practical manual, divided into two parts. Part I provides guidelines for starting and managing an IR, while Part II shares seven cases of actual IR implementations. Nabe starts with the premise that all IRs need to begin with a plan which includes the key ingredients of staff, funding and platform. In addition, he stresses that librarians are the most logical choice for managing an IR because librarians are well-versed in sharing information, seeking input and gathering feedback, and, in academic institutions, have established contacts within the faculty and staff.

Nabe's passion for IRs informs his belief that repositories need managers who are willing to invest time and energy as IR champions within their institutions. This manager/champion also needs support from dedicated and interested IT and hourly staff member(s). To ensure sustainable funding, it is preferable that funds are committed at the institutional level (e.g. university administration) so that they are not easily cut from the budget (although Nabe admits that most IR funding is through library budgets).

The book also includes a thorough evaluation of IR platforms (both-open source and commercial), a discussion of developing IR policies by utilizing other institutions' policies as a starting point, and the importance of marketing the IR to the administration, faculty, and staff in order to get it populated. Part I concludes with chapters on collection development and growth, strategies for increasing use, and assessment of the IR. Each chapter contains very informative textboxes in the margins, and an end-of-the-chapter list of references. Part II is dedicated to the "real-world experiences" of seven existing academic IRs and is one of the strengths of the book. Each institution provided its own case study; each case covers a variety of topics, including background, planning, marketing, building support for the IR, policies, measuring success, lessons learned, staffing, and future outlook. Unfortunately, not all topics are covered equally in each library's chapter but the reviews of the IRs are informative and helpful for anyone planning to establish an IR.

Although Nabe discusses seven different IR platforms in the beginning of the book, only three are represented in Part II: Digital Commons (4), DSpace (2) and Digitool (1). Also missing from Part II is a critique of each university's experience based on Nabe's design criteria from Part I, which would have highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of each IR's implementation.

Overall, this book should be extremely useful for any librarians interested in establishing or strengthening an IR or for anyone who wishes to learn more about IRs. The information provided is relevant to starting an IR, but could also inform the growth and long-term success of existing IRs. Some information may become dated (e.g. platform capabilities) but the issues and strategies for success are sure to be timeless.

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