Harvested IR Metadata Gumbo

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/alice_eng/11/
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This recipe provides librarians with a way to assess whether integrating metadata records for institutional repository content into a discovery tool increases usage and visibility. Usage statistics from several sources are gathered and compared.

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NUTRITION INFORMATION
This recipe is suitable for libraries with both an institutional repository and a discovery tool seeking to maximize the visibility of resources within the repository, and meet the ACRL Standards below. Harvests of metadata for IR content will have been selected for inclusion among the electronic resources that are searchable through the discovery tool, allowing users to discover locally created digital resources alongside corresponding physical items.

Retrospectively digitized theses and dissertations offered a good test case and were among the first resources added to the metadata gumbo.

Librarians customized metadata feeds to the discovery tool to include controlled terms and keywords in separate fields. Once those items proved searchable in the web-scale tool, other item types, such as archival materials, artwork, music scores, and faculty works, were added to the harvested series.

DIETARY STANDARDS
ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education (2011) Principle 4, Indicators 4.2, 4.4; Principle 5, Indicator 5.3

COOKING TIME
2 hours; allow 1 semester of prep time

COOKING TECHNIQUE
Gather usage statistics and slice and dice into digestible morsels for comparison. Though this is an ongoing project of adding, testing, and collecting usage information, an initial assessment may be conducted after several months of data are available.

INGREDIENTS
• Metadata records for institutional repository content integrated within a discovery tool
• Usage statistics gathered from the tool; ideally, these will be COUNTER compliant

PREPARATION
• Create consistent metadata within the institutional repository
• Select content types or series of records for inclusion in a discovery tool
• Contact the vendors of your institutional repository platform and discovery system to set up the harvesting process and ensure interoperability

ASSESSMENT STEPS
Consider what types of content are included in the repository. Is it mainly campus records, theses and dissertations, archival images, or a mixture? The completeness and formatting of metadata for these items will have an impact on how successful the integration and subsequent evaluation will be.

Determine which portions or content types from your repository should be made discoverable in the discovery tool. You may decide to include all content or only selections.

If possible, gather usage statistics prior to the implementation. Those statistics will be valuable for comparison later.

Test the results by searching in the discovery tool. Are the items discoverable and accessible? Do records display correctly? Are there any issues?

Gather usage statistics for the content you’ve made discoverable and compare them to previous usage.

Compare usage statistics among the institutional repository, your web scale tool, and any other usage tools your library employs to assess impact.
ALLERGY WARNINGS
Consistent metadata in the IR records is essential. Consider what the repository’s default delimiter is for keywords and controlled terms. Commas, for example, are problematic in records that include Library of Congress subject headings.

Reports from different vendors may not tabulate usage similarly. Match the terms as closely as possible to assess impact.

Linking issues may arise between the institutional repository and the discovery tool. Review the uniformity of the metadata and the OpenURL or linking tool your library uses.

Consider beginning with a small collection of items. For implementation, testing, and assessment purposes, it is much easier to manage a limited number of items.

CHEF’S NOTE
Consider the skill sets available within your library and from vendors, particularly related to metadata and harvesting. You may need to alter some aspects of the metadata for optimal results. Work with your repository platform vendor to make needed adjustments to fields, as well as which metadata elements are exposed for harvesting. Be patient as uploads and updates may not display immediately. Testing searchability after vendors have made updates and uploads can be time consuming, but accuracy is essential for successful discoverability.