Lightning Talk Proposal– Session: Communal Sharing of Research Data

Using the Digital Commons platform for sharing research data internally and publicly.

Summary

The Albertsons Library at Boise State University manages the Institutional Repository, ScholarWorks, which runs on the Digital Commons platform, to make scholarly works widely available. When researchers working on a grant funded project needed a system to internally share and track data from their various projects, eventually making that data publicly available, we developed workflows to use the existing tools of the Digital Commons platform to meet their needs. As the Digital Commons system is designed to make works openly available, the capabilities of the system were stretched and reimagined to handle the internal sharing request. The benefits of using a system already managed and supported by the Library outweighed the limitations.

Researcher Needs and Solutions

Researchers for The Boise State National Science Foundation EPSCoR, *Managing Idaho's Landscapes for Ecosystem Services* (MILES) grant have several data sharing needs including:

1. a closed system where researchers within the project can share data,
2. a platform to make final data products discoverable and persistently available and citable world-wide, and
3. a way to track usage of the data.

Once the data are ready for public dissemination and appropriate metadata are obtained from the researcher, creating a record in the ScholarWorks collection for the project[1], and assigning a DOI, accomplishes the second need. The Digital Commons system automatically tracks downloads of objects and emails reports to the individual creators and administrators satisfying the third need.

The first need proved more difficult, but a solution was found using the reviewer process in the Digital Commons system which was designed for peer review of manuscripts. The workflow consists of:

1. adding all project participants as peer reviewers for the collection (maintaining this list as researchers start and leave the project),
2. collecting metadata and files from the researchers
3. assigning all reviewers to each new submission and adding new researchers to existing records

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4. adding a number of days to review as a way to keep track of when the record is due to be made publicly available
5. once the data is ready to be made publicly available, only the final version of the data and approved metadata are posted

The added benefits of this process are that all researchers are notified each time a new data product is added to the system and they can add notes which will be retained in the record. This workflow allows for researchers not affiliated with the institution to be reviewers, but researchers with a Boise State ID can sign on with their Boise State credentials. As the project has required timeframes for data to be made publicly available, the administrators can be notified of upcoming due dates. As records are created for internal sharing well before they need to be publicly available, the administrators can evaluate and request metadata. The system does have limitations in size of files and visualization of certain file types.

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Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Notes

1 http://scholarworks.boisestate.edu/miles_data/