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Building an Institutional Repository in Hard Times

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Abstract

This poster presents an overview of an exploratory research initiative to examine and assess the viability of development of an institutional repository system at a teaching-oriented mid-size university with minimal monetary commitment. A need has been identified for an institutional repository and necessary steps have been taken to implement it. Several departments worked together to create a prototype Institutional Repository using DSpace, an open source repository software. This poster focuses on the steps taken to set up and the plans to maintain a quality Institutional Repository at Valdosta State University without placing a large demand on the institution's resources.

Identifying the Need

The need for an IR at VSU was first recognized in early 2007 and a pilot project was initiated by the University Archives and Special Collections, Automated Systems, and the Master of Library and Information Science Program. Knowing that any funding for such a project was limited, an open source solution was chosen as a way to move forward with the project. The open source program DSpace provided the software necessary for VSU's IR project. This was a logical step, as DSpace is an unofficial standard platform for IRs across the University System of Georgia

Our Process

The process began by identifying willing parties within the library and evaluating how their skills could be best applied to the project. Next, the current web presence of digital content created by faculty and students was surveyed to identify candidate materials that could be used in the repository. Candidate materials for a repository were found in a number of faculty and departmental homepages and in student theses and dissertations. Because Valdosta State is not a large research institution, teaching materials were also identified as a potential source of content.

The next step was to set policies and procedures for the repository. The project needed to set metadata guidelines, file type controls, and copyright controls. It should be noted that policy development can potentially be one of the more time consuming steps in setting up a repository. However, the V-Text team has chosen to save time by surveying other policies and adapting them where appropriate. Already, VSU has received permission to adapt existing policies from other established repositories such as those at Georgia Tech and at the University of Texas at Austin.

Customizing the Interface

To further streamline the appearance and workflow process of DSpace, the Manakin interface (XMLUI) is set as the default interface to edit the look and feel of DSpace and personalize it to the institution's needs. Manakin uses Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to customize the DSpace interface. In addition to providing a more appealing interface than DSpace's native interface (JSPUI), the Manakin interface spells out error messages if there are any inconsistencies in metadata fields and workflows, for example. A staff member with extensive CSS experience from the library's Automated Systems unit volunteered to learn and edit the Manakin interface to fit in with the university's existing web presence and guidelines. Though there are quick start guides available (Donohue, Phillips, & Salo, 2007) for an average user to customize JSPUI and XMLUI, the learning curve for XMLUI was steeper than for JSPUI.

The Future of the Project

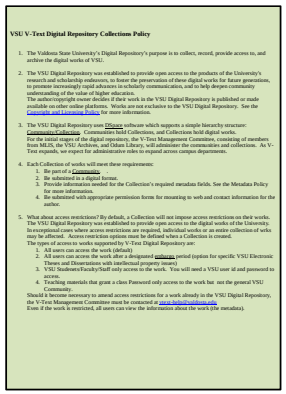
Though developing an IR program may seem relatively cheap and easy to implement at minimal cost, sustaining such a program in terms of keeping the community engaged and maintaining institutional support are key to the success of an IR program. The project team plans for the future focus on a minimal cost approach to maintaining VSU's IR. Plans are in place to use volunteers and interns to upload faculty and student content so there will be even more incentives for creators to deposit their materials in the repository. Though a release form for theses and dissertations exists, it has not been standardized and plans are in place to submit a standardized form to the Graduate School for students to submit with their theses and dissertations electronically. A faculty outreach program in spring 2009 will be initiated to raise awareness about the repository and inform faculty and students about hosting and making their scholarly works available to the public thorough Vtext.

The primary focus for future goals is on ensuring that faculty members have as much incentive as possible to upload material to the repository and that the uploading process is easy enough to keep contributions coming. The Vtext project is also participating in the GALILEO Knowledge Repository (GKR), a program created to promote and enhance IR initiatives across the University System of Georgia institutions.

Sample Document Views

Sample Submission Form

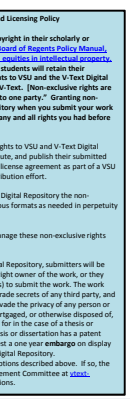
Vtext Policies



VSU V-Text Digital Repository Collections Policy

1. The Valdosta State University's Digital Repository's purpose is to collect, record, provide access to, and archive the digital works of VSU.
2. The VSU Digital Repository was established to provide open access to the products of the University's research and scholarship endeavors, to foster the preservation of these digital works for future generations, to disseminate increasingly valuable scholarly communication, and to help deepen community understanding of the value of higher education.
   The author/copyright owner decides if their work in the VSU Digital Repository is published or made available on other online platforms. Works are not exclusive to the VSU Digital Repository. See the Copyright and Licensing Policy for more information.
3. The VSU Digital Repository uses DSpace software which supports a simple hierarchy structure: Communities/Collections. Communities hold Collections, and Collections hold digital works.
   For the initial stages of the digital repository, the V-Text Management Committee, consisting of members from MLIS, the VSU Archives, and Odum Library, will administer the communities and collections. As V-Text expands, we expect for administrative roles to expand across campus departments.
4. Each Collection of works will meet these requirements:
   1. Be part of a Community.
   2. Be submitted in a digital format.
   3. Be submitted with metadata for the Collection's required metadata fields. See the Metadata Policy for more information.
   4. Be submitted with appropriate permission forms for mounting to web and contact information for the author.
5. What about access restrictions? By default, a Collection will not impose access restrictions on their works. The VSU Digital Repository was established to provide open access to the digital works of the University. In exceptional cases where access restrictions are required, individual works or an entire collection of works may be affected. Access restriction options must be defined when a Collection is created.
   The types of access to works supported by V-Text Digital Repository are:
   1. All users can access the work (default)
   2. All users can access the work after a designated embargo period (option for specific VSU Electronic Theses and Dissertations with intellectual property issues)
   3. VSU Students/Faculty/Staff only access to the work. You will need a VSU user id and password to access.
   4. Teaching materials that grant a class Password only access to the work but not the general VSU Community.

   Should it become necessary to amend access restrictions for a work already in the VSU Digital Repository, the V-Text Management Committee must be contacted at vtext-help@valdosta.edu
   Even if the work is restricted, all users can view the information about the work (the metadata).



VSU V-Text Digital Repository Copyright and Licensing Policy

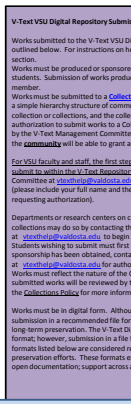
Faculty, researchers, and students own copyright in their scholarly or educational work at VSU, as stated in the Board of Regents Policy Manual, Section 603.03 determination of rights and equities in intellectual property, part D. Therefore faculty, researchers, and students will retain their copyright while granting non-exclusive rights to VSU and the V-Text Digital Repository when submitting their work to V-Text. [Non-exclusive rights are defined as "rights not limited or restricted to one party." Granting non-exclusive rights to the V-Text Digital Repository when you submit your work still enables you to grant, assign, or retain any and all rights you had before your submission.)

Copyright owners will grant non-exclusive rights to VSU and V-Text Digital Repository to copy, display, perform, distribute, and publish their submitted work within copyright law or any applicable license agreement as part of a VSU or V-Text repository communication or distribution effort.

Copyright owners will grant VSU and V-Text Digital Repository the non-exclusive right to migrate their work to various formats as needed in perpetuity for preservation and usability.

The V-Text Management Committee will manage these non-exclusive rights granted to VSU and V-Text.

When submitting a work to the V-Text Digital Repository, submitters will be asked to warrant: They are either the copyright owner of the work, or they have permission from the copyright owner(s) to submit the work. The work does not infringe any copyright, patent, or trade secrets of any third party, and does not contain any libelous matter, nor invade the privacy of any person or third party. The work has not been sold, mortgaged, or otherwise disposed of, and is free from all exclusive claims, EXCEPT for in the case of a thesis or dissertation with pending patent(s). If a thesis or dissertation has a patent pending, the author has the option to request a one year **embargo** on display and distribution rights through the V-Text Digital Repository.
Some works may not fit the warranties or options described above. If so, the submitter should contact the V-Text Management Committee at vtext-help@valdosta.edu for further licensing options.



V-Text VSU Digital Repository Submissions Policy

Works submitted to the V-Text VSU Digital Repository should fulfill the requirements outlined below. For instructions on how to submit works to V-Text, please see the Help section.
Works must be produced or sponsored by Valdosta State University faculty, staff, or students. Submission of works produced by students must be sponsored by a faculty member.
Works must be submitted to a Collection. [V-Text uses DSpace software which supports a simple hierarchy structure of communities and collections. **Communities** hold a collection or collections, and the collection holds digital works.] Submitters need authorization to submit works to a Collection. Initially that authorization will be granted by the V-Text Management Committee. As the project expands, various members of the **community** will be able to grant authorization.

For VSU faculty and staff, the first step is to identify the collection you would like to submit to within the V-Text Repository. Next, email the V-Text Management Committee at vtexthelp@valdosta.edu to request authorization to submit your work (please include your full name and the name of the collection for which you are requesting authorization).

Departments or research centers on campus wishing to establish and manage their own collections may do so by contacting the V-Text Management Committee at vtexthelp@valdosta.edu to begin the process.
Students wishing to submit must first obtain a faculty sponsor. Once faculty sponsorship has been obtained, contact the V-Text Management Committee at vtexthelp@valdosta.edu for authorization.
Works must reflect the nature of the Collection to which they are submitted. All submitted works will be reviewed by the V-Text Management Committee. Please see the Collections Policy for more information.

Works must be in digital form. Although any digital format will be accepted, submission in a recommended file format is strongly encouraged in order to facilitate long-term preservation. The V-Text Digital Repository accepts work in any digital format; however, submission in a file format listed below is strongly encouraged. The formats listed below are considered relatively stable and therefore facilitate long-term preservation efforts. These formats exhibit all or many of the following characteristics: open documentation; support across a range of software platforms; wide...

A portion of this project was funded by a grant from the Valdosta State University Faculty Development Committee. Participating departments included the Masters of Library and Information Science, the Valdosta State University Archives and Special Collections and the Odum Library.