

New, New, New

UAB's New Repository on a New Platform with a New Librarian

Amy Reese, Institutional Repository Outreach Librarian April 28, 2023

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham is launching a new open access repository using the Digital Commons platform. I was hired to make this happen. Starting with nothing, my first question was, so now what?

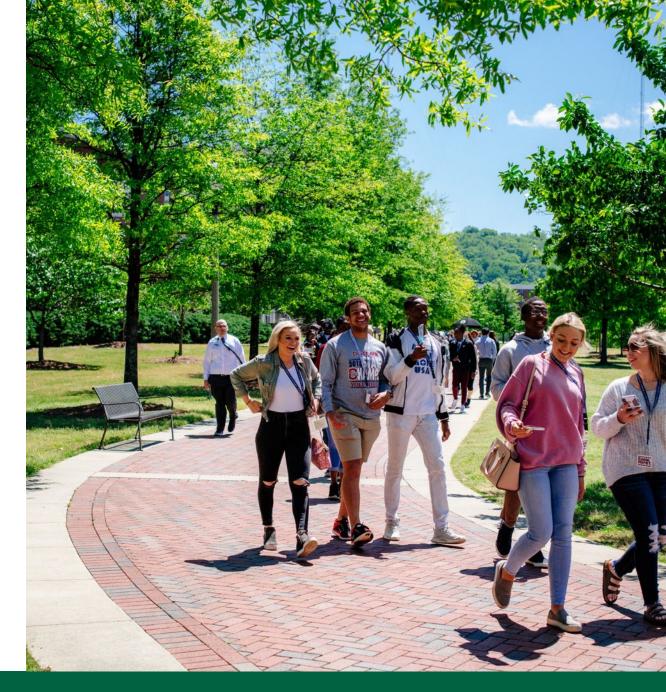
I intend to discuss the challenges faced with having zero institutional knowledge and having a skill set grown under a very different focus with different tools.

I also plan to discuss why repositories are important, why institutions should do more to preserve content that shows their specific and unique focus, and hopefully provide some ideas on how to sell the local repository concept (to contributors and to those in charge), especially in an age where everyone Googles first.

As part of this, I hope to encourage you to discuss the lie of ubiquitous information, and the role both institutions and libraries should be playing in promoting unique local content.

About UAB

- Public institution
- Located in Birmingham, Alabama (1.2M people)
- One of the largest Academic Medical Centers in the United States.
- Alabama's largest single employer with 26,000+employees and an annual economic impact exceeding \$7.15B.
- Forbes 2021: America's Best Large Employer
- Named four straight years as a Diversity Champion by *Insight Into Diversity* Magazine
- In top 10% of universities globally for research and reputation per U.S. News



About me

- Experienced librarian and have worked with closely with archives and historic collections
- Previous work administering DSpace and ContentDM repository platforms
- Have moved around, and know that every place has something that makes it special
- Believe that repositories can help us create the future we want by informing us of the past





The NEW Librarian

https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu

Coming to UAB

Was not planning to leave my last position

. . .

but things changed

Previously worked in library systems, loved the problem -solving and the work I did with repositories and its relationship to archives and history

(https://library.ndsu.edu/ir/ & https://digitalhorizonsonline.org)

My position (Institutional Repository Outreach Librarian) is a new position that needed expertise I have

Was looking for a career reboot — to keep myself engaged and stimulated

New Institution / New Focus

Different organizational structure Medical vs. Agriculture

New constraints (HIPPA)

More potential for privacy/confidentiality issues

A platform in place but no vision to guide its development

No existing content

No clue who has content

Do we migrate content?

- Existing ContentDM collections?
- Which ones?
- Collection policies?

So many questions:

- What is special here & how do we find it?
- Will people use it?
- What audience is missing?



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

This wasn't my first repository, so what did I know already worked?

- High-quality student focused content
- ETDs electronic theses and dissertations
- Capturing institutional history as it's being made





The NEW Platform

https://bepress.com/products/digital-commons/

The major turnkey platforms:

Digital Commons

Hosted environment

Modified schema

Content collections can be moved, but items can't

Attractive interface

Tools for metrics

Built-in possibilities

Specialized collection types

Reliant on customer support

DSpace

Open structure

DC schema

Content containers can't be moved, but items can

Interface can be customized

Simple process for bulk metadata edits

Updates behind schedule

ContentDM

Hosted environment

DC schema

Moving content is difficult

Interface is dated

Content structure is difficult to navigate at scale

Updates fall short





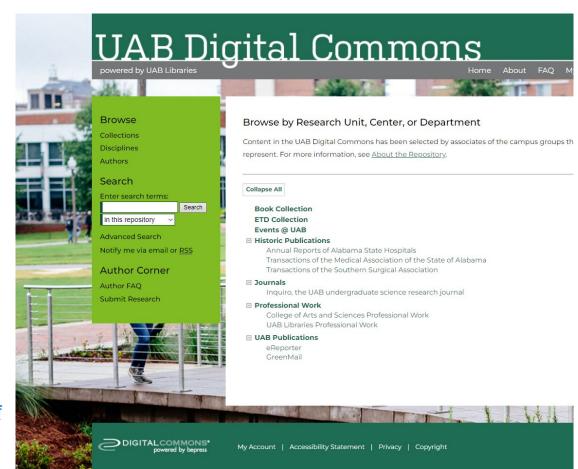
The NEW Repository

https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu

The good stuff:

- Different series types for different content types ¹
- Ability to manage events and their associated content ^{2,3}
- Some of the collection types can be used creatively ^{4,5}
- File preview windows

- 1. https://bepress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/DGpublication-types-at-a-glance.pdf
- 2. https://digital.sandiego.edu/symposium/
- 3. https://www.uab.edu/service-research/expo
- https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/ereporter/
- 5. https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/books/1/



The bad stuff:

- Very reliant on customer support
- Email confirmation of completed updates
- Different time zones
- Administrator vs. operator





What's the point?

of institutional repositories]



- everyone, everywhere, all the time

[including your contributors]

No really, what's the point?



gratuitous cat picture

Because people will

- ...just Google what they need
- ...never find my work
- ...de fer to publishers' demands
- ...need citations to prove relevance
- ... fear loss of control of their work
- ...say the process is too hard

No really, what's the point?

Because

- ...Google does crawl the content
- ...more people than you expect will actually find your work
- ...open access is an actual thing and publishers are shifting
- ...the more people that find your work will cite it
- ...you have a content administrator who can actually help



gratuitous cat picture



A word of advice



[good luck]

Contact me

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