

UAB THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM.

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 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 \$7.15 B.
- 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



UAB THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM.

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

UAB THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM.

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>
4. <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/ereporter/>
5. <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/books/1/>

The screenshot shows the UAB Digital Commons website. At the top, there is a green header with the text "UAB Digital Commons" and "powered by UAB Libraries". Below the header, there is a navigation menu with links for "Home", "About", "FAQ", and "M". The main content area is divided into several sections. On the left, there is a green sidebar with a "Browse" section containing links for "Collections", "Disciplines", and "Authors". Below this is a "Search" section with a search box and a "Search" button. Further down are links for "Advanced Search", "Notify me via email or RSS", and an "Author Corner" section with links for "Author FAQ" and "Submit Research". The main content area on the right has a heading "Browse by Research Unit, Center, or Department" and a paragraph of text. Below this is a "Collapse All" button and a list of collections, each with a plus sign icon and a brief description: "Book Collection", "ETD Collection", "Events @ UAB", "Historic Publications" (with sub-items: "Annual Reports of Alabama State Hospitals", "Transactions of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama", "Transactions of the Southern Surgical Association"), "Journals" (with sub-item: "Inquiro, the UAB undergraduate science research journal"), "Professional Work" (with sub-items: "College of Arts and Sciences Professional Work", "UAB Libraries Professional Work"), and "UAB Publications" (with sub-items: "eReporter", "GreenMail"). At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the "DIGITAL COMMONS powered by bepress" logo and links for "My Account", "Accessibility Statement", "Privacy", and "Copyright".

The bad stuff:

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



The screenshot shows the UAB Digital Commons website. The header features the title "UAB Digital Commons" in white on a dark green background, with "powered by UAB Libraries" below it. Navigation links for "Home", "About", "FAQ", and "M" are visible. A green sidebar menu on the left contains sections for "Browse" (Collections, Disciplines, Authors), "Search" (with a search box and "In this repository" dropdown), "Advanced Search", "Notify me via email or RSS", and "Author Corner" (Author FAQ, Submit Research). The main content area is titled "Browse by Research Unit, Center, or Department" and includes a "Collapse All" button. Below this, several collection categories are listed with expandable icons: "Book Collection", "ETD Collection", "Events @ UAB", "Historic Publications" (with sub-items: Annual Reports of Alabama State Hospitals, Transactions of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, Transactions of the Southern Surgical Association), "Journals" (with sub-item: Inquiro, the UAB undergraduate science research journal), "Professional Work" (with sub-items: College of Arts and Sciences Professional Work, UAB Libraries Professional Work), and "UAB Publications" (with sub-items: eReporter, GreenMail). The footer contains the "DIGITAL COMMONS" logo (powered by bepress) and links for "My Account", "Accessibility Statement", "Privacy", and "Copyright".

“

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

...defer 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

UAB THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM.

[good luck]

Contact me

 205.934.2925

 Mervyn H. Sterne Library, 917 13th St S, Birmingham, AL

 reesea@uab.edu

 <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu>

[Amy Reese, Institutional Repository Outreach Librarian]

UAB THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM.

Thank you!