

Building Effective Discovery Tools for Academic Promotion and Tenure Evidence: The Added Value of ETD and Institutional Repository Metadata, Citations and Access

John H. Hagen

West Virginia University Libraries, U.S.A.

Abstract

In this presentation we will explore the utilization of Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) and other institutional repository (IR) collection metadata, citations and access statistics as a means of providing effective discovery tools for university students and faculty. These resources can facilitate the administrative process of gathering evidence of scholarly activities for use in promotion and tenure performance evaluations. This value added approach to IR services is becoming increasingly important because the very transparent nature of open access collections creates a public record of research. Access can be accounted for in the quantity of downloads, inferring some sense of popularity. Further, citation analysis, the measure of vogue, is becoming increasingly critical for an individual and/or institutional entity as a metric of the dissemination, peer review, acceptance, success and ultimate contribution to the research cycle. This provides a foundation and means for the formation of the virtual social constructs surrounding these scholarly works. Historically, the scope of IRs has been about providing access to the research work itself. Ironically, the topic of metadata, access and citation analysis initially appeared to be ancillary to the research process, yet has revealed itself to be intrinsically linked with the research phenomena – the evolving processes and the ETDs and faculty e-publications themselves.

In digital library collections, the selection and incorporation of appropriate local metadata and statistical profile analysis applications along with the provision of a means to find that information is directly related to the facility or difficulty with which a client may seek and discover relevant results. With promotion and tenure workflows now moving out of paper and becoming electronic and universities beginning to mandate submission not only of ETDs but also faculty publications into IRs, the elegant solution is to collect and track this information electronically upon ingest and make it available and interoperable to support these new practices.

What kinds of information does our audience demand? Graduating students want to see hit counters; they want to know how many downloads their dissertation received last year / for all time. Faculty and administrators want an immediate list of how many committees did Professor X chair in the last five years. How many ETDs did his college produce in the past year? How many journal articles did I publish last year? Can I produce my citation lists on demand? Whose dissertation was the most popular last year? Which department is the most popular? The list goes on. This presentation will include examples of various existing and planned metadata standards, statistical analysis software and discovery tools presently in use or to be implemented in the West Virginia University Electronic Institutional Document Repository (eIDR).

In sum, the measure of scholarly output through the sensible use of metadata and the statistical analysis of peer access and citation linkage to a scholar's research works can provide a wealth of information to help advance and promote our scholars. By making informed decisions about the metadata and analysis framework and by developing appropriate system tools to make "easy button" solutions available to our academic clients, the discovery process becomes a truly powerful value-added IR service. Ultimately this provides a cornerstone for the continued quality and success of our students, faculty, institutions and research – Priceless!