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OpenSIUC Talking Points

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OpenSIUC Talking Points

Answers to common questions about institutional repositories

Why is the library doing this? How is this part of the library's role?

The library's role is to provide access to information resources for the university and for researchers in general. Traditionally, the library has done this by getting materials and making them available to the campus and to researchers beyond the campus. This traditional approach is breaking down, and OpenSIUC is one way that the library is exploring alternatives. By enabling free access to materials produced at SIUC, OpenSIUC is taking a new approach to expanding access.

In addition, with more and more content going online only, preserving works in digital format is one way libraries can ensure preservation of digital materials.

Why do you say the system is breaking down? Isn't it just a problem that the library / university / state aren't spending enough for library materials?

Journal prices have steadily increased at a high rate, with many years of double-digit inflation, for over two decades. Morris Library's budget hasn't been able to keep up with these price increases, resulting in repeated journal cancellation projects, and reduced purchasing of books. Other libraries are facing similar problems, making access to publications more difficult for a lot of people.

Even if the library budget could keep up with the price increases, many of the companies that sell us the journal subscriptions are in a semi-monopolistic position where they are likely to keep increasing prices until cancellations eat into their revenue.

Why should I put my work on OpenSIUC?

Making materials available for free on the Web helps other scholars find and use your work. If it isn't freely available, someone who works at a place where their library doesn't carry your publications has to wait for interlibrary loan, pay for personal access, or ask you for a reprint to be able to access your work. Any of these three options slows down their work and is a barrier to your work being read. Materials in OpenSIUC are easily located via standard search engines such as Google or Yahoo.

Research articles that are available for free on the Web are downloaded more often than those that are available on the Web for a fee. Although there is some debate about whether making materials open access can lead to more citations, there is good evidence that open access articles are cited more often than those that are not.

Why would I want to use OpenSIUC rather than just putting my articles on my pages in the department's site?

Five reasons: higher visibility, permanence/preservation, ease of use, download statistics, and recruitment.

1. Because it is in a repository, your article will receive higher ranking in search engines such as Google, GoogleScholar and OAIster.
2. OpenSIUC assigns a permanent URL to each documents or other file in the repository. This means that each item will still be at the same location even if the department rearranges its Web site or if you move to a different university. Also, we are committed to preservation. Our goal is that OpenSIUC will maintain posted materials for the long term, and to the best of our abilities, we plan to migrate file formats when necessary.
3. Depending on how easy it is to post materials on your department's Web site, OpenSIUC may be an easier way to get materials up quickly. Submission to OpenSIUC is simple, requiring only author, title, date, keywords and abstract (optional), and the file(s).
4. You can automatically receive monthly download statistics, so you know how much your work is being used. If you want to maintain your own site, you can just link to your file in OpenSIUC.
5. Having all of SIUC's research in one place makes it easier to find and showcase our research activities, which can aid recruitment efforts.

Why would I want to use OpenSIUC rather than just putting my articles on arXiv or some other disciplinary repository?

It's not mutually exclusive, there are reasons to do both. Some journals write their copyright transfer agreements so that they do not allow authors to post their articles on any Web sites other than their institutional sites. OpenSIUC provides a place to post when posting on a disciplinary repository isn't possible. Reasons 4 and 5 above also apply to this question.

What about copyright?

Authors depositing works in OpenSIUC must be the copyright owners of the work or have the copyright owner's permission to deposit the work in the institutional repository. In most cases, authors transfer some of their rights to publishers when they submit their articles for publication. Copyright transfer agreements vary by publisher, with some taking away more rights from the author than others. Most of the publishers however do allow authors to self-archive some version of their articles (i.e. pre-print, final draft post refereeing, publisher PDF). The Sherpa/Romeo database (<http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/index.html>) collects data on publishers' self-archiving policies and indicates that over 65% of the 414 publishers included in the database allow some type of self-archiving.

Copyright transfer agreements can be negotiated to allow authors to retain some of their rights that publishers traditionally have been taking away. Several organizations have developed author addendums to make this process easy for authors. The Author Guidelines in OpenSIUC includes links to the SPARC Author Addendum, the University of Kansas addendum, and the Boston Library Consortia addendum, any of which can be used for this purpose. OpenSIUC staff can help authors who are unable to determine the copyright status of their work.

What about multi-author works?

OpenSIUC accepts submissions of multi-author works as long as one of the authors is affiliated with SIUC.

What kind of materials can go in it? What file formats? Do you digitize?

Any digital materials that meet the contributor and copyright guidelines as described on the OpenSIUC site. OpenSIUC only accepts electronic files. Published materials (pre- and post-prints), conference proceedings and presentations, technical reports, working papers, supplementary materials such as data sets, audio and video files, classroom support materials, are all common faculty contributions. Hopefully, theses and dissertations will go in there too. For undergraduates, we are accepting honors theses and other material on a case-by-case basis. OpenSIUC also supports journal publishing, with editorial tracking and peer-review support included. Contributions must be full-text - no citations or abstracts only. All file formats are accepted, but commitment to preservation and migration is limited, as described on the site.

Who does the work?

Ideally, submissions and management are decentralized, with departmental staff, faculty or students designated as administrators. The submission process is simple. A typical submission is less than 5 minutes. However, at this point at least, the Library will help with the process, and provide training.

Content is organized in series, which are placed in communities - typically a department, research center or institute, etc. Communities may have subcommunities - the College of Science will be a community, for example, and the Dept. of Plant Biology is a subcommunity. There is no limit to the number of levels of subcommunities nor is there any limit to the number of series within a community. Examples of series include Articles; Conference Proceedings; Working Papers; Educational Support Materials; etc. Each series has an administrator; an administrator may serve that role for more than one series. This is worked out at the time of the establishment of the series.

What if I leave the University?

Content will remain in OpenSIUC, although exceptions can be made. Talk to us!

Can I maintain different versions? Can I restrict access? Can I embargo?

Versions can be maintained and linked. Access can be restricted, though it is discouraged - the whole point of OpenSIUC is to make research accessible. Currently, embargoing is supported for theses and dissertations. It may be supported for all other communities and series in the future.

What do I do next?

Contact opensiuc@lib.siu.edu if you would like to participate.