CHAPTER 11

CRAFTING AN INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORY POLICY

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Policies form the backbone of an institutional repository because they dictate what type of content can be deposited and how that content will be managed. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) Libraries rewrote its institutional repository policies to accommodate a platform change. This chapter will use UNC's experience to discuss institutional repository policies, including the inclusion and withdrawal of content, access restrictions, and the deposit agreement.

INTRODUCTION

In 2009, the UNC Libraries launched the Carolina Digital Repository (CDR). Although the initial collection development focus of the CDR was to collect student papers, master's theses, and dissertations, the CDR gradually evolved to house the library's born-digital special collections objects. And eventually, support for born-digital collections became a major focus of the libraries' software development efforts.

After the UNC Faculty Council passed an open-access policy in 2016, the UNC Libraries team charged with implementing the policy reconceptualized the vision for the CDR. First, the passage of the open-access policy enabled the libraries to hire two additional librarians, which increased capacity for providing repository services directly to users. A second change was made to the structure of the repository itself. Rather than fit both born-digital objects and scholarly materials into one system, the libraries would develop a second system to house just scholarly

materials. This change would allow the libraries to better promote the discovery of both born-digital and scholarly materials, as well as integrate new features that were more appropriate to scholarly materials use cases, such as proxy deposit, ownership transfers, and user-created collections. The new system, which would handle scholarly materials only, was named the Carolina Digital Repository (CDR). The existing system was renamed the Digital Collections Repository and would house the libraries' born-digital collections.

Due to the repository platform split, there was an immediate need to rethink the repository's policies and documentation. Previous policies had addressed both scholarly materials and digital collections use cases, but it would confuse users to include digital collections documentation in a system which no longer housed that type of content.

Furthermore, the documentation that described the previous platform's functionality would not be applicable to the new system. Additionally, the new platform offered more end-user functionality that needed to be documented for both administrators and users. Finally, new direct-to-patron repository services needed to be documented. The repository's policy revision project assessed the CDR's existing policies for language and practices that no longer made sense for the new focus of that repository. Additionally, the project reviewed existing policies from peer institutions in order to determine best practices, and determine whether the CDR was delivering services similar to those of its peers. Finally, the assessment determined whether increased services were feasible, given the current staffing level and collections focus of the CDR.

ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING POLICIES

To begin, I looked at the CDR's existing policies in order to determine which aspects were still relevant to the institutional repository use case. The CDR had five existing policies, in addition

to the deposit agreement, which contained language or workflows that were not applicable to the new institutional repository. Moreover, these policies had not been updated for several years. The existing policies were:

- *Access restrictions*: This policy describes the types of visibility settings from which the depositor can choose.

- *Collection development*: This policy delineates the types of material that the repository accepts, as well as the affiliations of people who are allowed to deposit materials.

- *Deposit agreement*: This is the agreement which depositors agree to which allows the repository to provide access to and preserve their work.

- *Preservation*: This policy explains the methods that the repository will use to preserve deposited materials.

- *Rights of the depositor*: This policy explains the rights that the depositor retains when they deposit material into the repository.

- *Withdrawal of content*: This policy explains the criteria for removing content from the repository and the steps by which one may request removal.

I read each policy and determined which parts contained outdated platform information and staff responsibilities. Since the CDR was moving to a different platform, I needed to rework sections which referred to the old platform and incorporate language that reflected the new platform's functionality. Additionally, since my own role was new, I needed to update language in the policies to refer to tasks that my role would be performing, rather than my predecessor. Furthermore, during the development process, the repository's preservation software had been updated, and these revisions needed to be reflected in the preservation policy.

Second, I compared our policies against similar policies from peer institutions (see the appendix at the end of this chapter for a list of those universities). Initially, I sought institutions which hosted only institutional repository content or which used the same repository platform as the CDR. However, these criteria produced such a small sample that I widened my search to include institutions which posted their repository policies publicly. As this query produced policies from institutions of all sizes and varying repository platforms, I needed to be careful, in my assessment, not to include policy elements that would not be feasible for UNC's repository platform or staffing levels.

To start the assessment, I scanned each institution's policies broadly, to determine if they had an equivalent policy to UNC's. During the scan, I found that some of the UNC's policy areas were not represented on a one-to-one basis at other institutions. However, elements of the policy area were often present in other policies. For example, access levels and withdrawal of content were frequently mentioned together in other policies, although they are treated separately at UNC. During my broad scans, I noted many common policy elements.

Then I created a spreadsheet to record the policies from each institution for easy comparison. For each policy, I listed the institutions in separate rows, and common elements from my broad scan in the columns. If the policy contained the element, I indicated it on the spreadsheet and also included the corresponding language if necessary. Although creating the spreadsheet took a long time, it allowed me to view those aspects of the policies that were most relevant to my investigation in one place and determine the common policy elements for each institution. I assessed whether the policies were appropriate not only for an institutional repository but for the CDR, given our staffing levels. Since I am the only librarian fully dedicated to the CDR, I needed to make sure that the work was feasible for me to do, or was

appropriately sized to be delegated to staff members who are shared across our multiple repository platforms.

Our collection development policy required major revisions. The older policy included descriptions of born-digital content which would no longer be included in the new institutional repository. The institutional comparison spreadsheet helped me consider what types of materials other institutions accept into their institutional repositories and what categories of users would be allowed to deposit materials. The old policy had not considered alumni or emeriti as depositors, but since these categories were included on other institutions' policies, I felt it was prudent to consider them in a revised policy.

Our policy on the rights of depositors remained mostly unchanged. However, I did add some clarifying information about rights statements which were now supported by the new repository platform, and I listed the types of rights statements that the new system would accept. The institutional comparison revealed that other institutions added explanatory language about Creative Commons licenses, so I did as well.

The deposit agreement also remained mostly unchanged. The language was broad enough that it could be used for both the CDR and the born-digital repository. I did need to update the language to refer to my role in the deposit process, rather than my predecessor.

The preservation policy needed additional work. Although the bulk of the policy would not change in the platform migration, its language needed to be clarified and reorganized. First, I removed references to materials that would not be included in the CDR, such as born-digital and special collections objects, and I added additional types of scholarly materials that the CDR would include. From the institutional comparison, I found that many institutions specified preservation activities in three tiers, based on file format. This seemed like a logical way to

organize our policy as well and would provide clarity to depositors who might want to know what level of support they could expect for their files. For each type of file format that I discovered in the repository, I assigned it a preservation tier and added explanatory text for the preservation levels.

The preservation policy hit a snag during the review process. Unbeknownst to me during the drafting process, the libraries' digital preservation staff were drafting a similar preservation policy for their born-digital collections. Once this was discovered, I met with the digital preservation librarians tasked with drafting the policy and we compared our work. Ultimately, due to the similarity between the policies, we determined that the libraries should create an overarching digital preservation policy that would cover all of our use cases. The CDR's revised preservation policy would be incorporated into the larger policy.

The access restrictions policy was in alignment with similar policies from other institutions, but it needed adjustments so that it reflected the language and access options available in the new platform. The withdrawal policy needed extensive revisions and will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

THE WITHDRAWAL POLICY: AN IN-DEPTH CASE STUDY

The CDR's content withdrawal policy ended up being one of the most extensively revised and edited policies and serves as a good example of the policy revision process. As the policy's title implies, it is concerned with the removal of content from the repository. To start with, I contemplated three essential questions:

- Under what circumstances would we consider the permanent removal of content from the repository?

- Who needs to approve the removal of content from the repository?

- Do approval needs change based on the type of work in question?

The original withdrawal policy only addressed withdrawal of content in the case of "alleged copyright or licensing infringement violations . . . or material that is deemed to be potentially libelous, plagiarized, or legally offensive."[i] However, there are several other types of withdrawal requests that such a policy could address, including:

- The depositor is leaving the university and would like to take their deposited content with them.

- The depositor no longer wishes for their deposited content to be available in the repository.

- The primary author of a paper has deposited a copy in the repository against the wishes of his or her coauthor.

To add complexity to the withdrawal process, the Repository Services Department had recently revised the CDR's research data services offerings and added a new ten-year review and removal process. Under the new process, datasets deposited in the CDR would undergo a review process after ten years. If the dataset review team and depositor agreed that the dataset was no longer useful, the data files will be removed from the repository, and a note will be added to the work's metadata as a tombstone.

Furthermore, the CDR team plans to mint DOIs (digital object identifiers) for all repository content at a future date. The decision was made to extend the use of tombstones to all works in order to accommodate DOI resolution, unless the content contained copyright violations or private information. Since these two new cases represented types of content withdrawal, they needed to be included in the revised withdrawal policy.

I also needed to consider differing collection policies for withdrawal of content in the revised withdrawal policy. Departments, schools, and programs which deposit their student papers in the CDR dictate their own withdrawal policies. If a student requests removal of their master's thesis, master's paper, dissertation, or undergraduate honors thesis, the CDR staff will refer the request back to the school or department which oversees the collection and abide by their decision. These exceptions had not previously been codified in a policy and needed to be incorporated.

To start, I reviewed the withdrawal policy to address obvious revisions. Since my position was newly created, the language of the policy needed to be updated to indicate that the person in my position would be managing the withdrawal process, rather than my predecessor. Additionally, the exceptions for departmental policies, tombstones, and the research data review process needed to be incorporated.

Additionally, I wanted to ensure that our withdrawal policy was comparable to the policies of repositories at other research institutions. Using the repository list and comparison spreadsheet described in the previous section, I listed all the repositories and broke down my assessment into six categories:

1. Does the library have an explicit withdrawal policy, or is the withdrawal of content part of another policy?

2. Does the library allow items to be withdrawn from its repository?

3. What are the reasons that content can be withdrawn?

4. Does the repository support tombstones?

5. If the repository supports tombstones, is the tombstone metadata searchable or harvestable?

6. Other considerations

Out of the thirty-one repositories surveyed, only one did not have an explicit public-facing withdrawal policy. Twenty-four out of the thirty remaining repositories had a withdrawal policy that was separate from other policies. The other six libraries combined the withdrawal of content with another policy such as addition of new content, updating content, or preservation. Twenty-two repositories allowed content to be withdrawn from the repository, but some placed restrictions on the circumstances under which this could happen. Some required a librarian to review requests; others would remove content simply upon the depositor's request. The other eight repositories did not allow the complete withdrawal of content, but would hide items from public view. The acceptable reasons for withdrawal included:

- Copyright violations and other legal issues

- Plagiarism

- Factual inaccuracies

- Compliance with journal publishers' policies

- Author request

From these findings, I determined that not only did our withdrawal policy need to be expanded to accommodate depositors' removal requests, but it also needed to account for factual inaccuracies. Additionally, although the CDR does accommodate takedown requests for content that violates journal publishers' policies, we had not yet formalized this in our policy.

Twenty-five out of the 30 repositories surveyed use tombstones to indicate the removal of content, and 23 of those libraries indicate the reason for removal on the tombstone. The repository team had intended to include tombstones in the new platform in order to accommodate the removal of research data under our expanded research data services. Furthermore, we are

planning to mint DOIs for all repository content and needed to determine how best to accommodate use cases where a DOI resolves to a removed object. Therefore, it seemed best to extend tombstone use to the entire repository. The institutional use cases provided a good framework, and I added a description of a tombstone and the reasoning behind their use to the withdrawal policy.

After incorporating institutional-specific use cases, new service points, and elements gathered from the institutional comparison into one policy, I reflected back on the three essential questions that I had asked myself at the start of the exercise. The new withdrawal policy clarified the circumstances under which we would consider the permanent removal of repository content. It also expounded on the roles needed to approve the removal of repository content by including explicit departmental roles. Finally, it addressed the differing approval needs based on whether or not the work was owned by a department or by the CDR.

IDENTIFYING ADDITIONAL POLICY AREAS

After assessing our internal policies, I looked at additional policies of peer institutions in order to determine the gaps in the CDR's policies. I wanted to learn what types of policies other institutions had implemented and what those policies contained.

Specifically, I was looking for policies which were relevant to institutional repositories, were feasible to implement with a small staff, and did not contain elements that were already covered by the CDR's existing policies, or by the UNC's library-wide or university-wide policies. After a review of peer policies, I targeted four areas for more detailed investigation:

- *Assessment*: Policies in this category addressed the processes by which material in the repository could be made accessible to users with disabilities.

- *Privacy*: Policies in this category addressed the safekeeping of personal data submitted to the repository.

- *Roles and responsibilities*: Policies in this category addressed the responsibilities of various users of the repository, including depositors, collection owners, and repository administrators.

- *Succession planning*: Policies in this category addressed plans for content if the repository were to no longer be supported by the university.

As before, I briefly looked at existing policies from other institutions in order to determine what elements I wanted to include. This proved fruitful, since I determined that the content in a succession planning policy would already be covered by a brief statement in the preservation policy. Since the preservation policy is being incorporated into an overarching digital preservation policy, I would review the revised policy for succession planning language once it was approved and then add additional language to the withdrawal policy if necessary.

Additionally, I reviewed existing language from UNC Libraries' policies to determine if the policy area was already covered and if the language could apply to an institutional repository use case. The proposed accessibility and privacy policies were identical to policies already created by UNC Libraries, and so a separate institutional repository-specific policy was unnecessary. However, these policies were not visible within the repository interface, so it was likely that users did not realize that they also applied to the institutional repository. Therefore, I asked for links to these policies to be added to the repository's footer so that the connection was more explicit.

I did decide, however, that it would be useful to create a roles and responsibilities policy. Departments and collection owners have certain responsibilities for their content within the

repository, such as setting withdrawal policies and approving content modifications, and I felt that it would be useful to have a document on the policies page delineating those responsibilities. This would help me onboard new collection owners and would give existing collection owners a document to refer to when they have questions. I looked at example policies from other institutions, using the same process I had used for the existing policies. I also added these new policies to the comparison spreadsheet and followed the same process as the existing policy assessment to gather their elements in one place.

The new policy covered:

- The responsibilities of collection owners, including following CDR and university policies and obtaining consent to deposit from content creators

- The responsibilities of the CDR, including the access and preservation of content, as well as system maintenance and upgrade tasks

- The rights of the university, specifically to set policies that might affect the CDR

The new rights and responsibilities policy will be posted publicly after the new repository platform launches, alongside the other revised policies.

APPROVAL AND GO-LIVE

The UNC Libraries' internal policy approval process was relatively straightforward. After I finished a draft of each policy, I sent it to the head of Repository Services for review, specifically to double-check that the guidelines I proposed were within the scope of the overall repository program and to confirm their feasibility with our current staffing levels. After the head of Repository Services approved the policy, it was then forwarded to the Open Access Implementation Team, which included the scholarly communications officer and the open access librarian. Since the CDR is a key part of the open-access policy implementation, the Open

Access Implementation Team was a key stakeholder group, and I felt that it was best to keep them apprised of the changes I was considering. And if the policy contained major policy revisions, it was sent to additional libraries stakeholder groups for review. For example, the preservation policy was sent to the Digital Preservation Stewardship Committee. Since most of the policies contained only minor revisions or reflected policy changes that had previously been approved, they did not need to be reviewed by additional stakeholder groups. After revisions and final approvals, the policies will be posted on the CDR's documentation site. There will be a delay in posting the policies until after the new repository platform is launched so as to not confuse users.

LESSONS LEARNED

Overall, the experience of revising the Content Depository Repository's policies was informative and instructive. The process familiarized me with both UNC's own processes and the best practices from other repositories. As I was new to both the repository world and UNC, it was especially valuable knowledge to obtain. During the revision process, I uncovered the following lessons.

Coordination Is Tricky, but Very Important

One of the most difficult aspects of this project was coordination, specifically between the two repository platforms and with other departments. Because the new CDR platform had not yet been launched, I was writing policies for a platform that was not being used and whose features and functionality could still be changed, which might necessitate further documentation revisions. Additionally, I needed to coordinate with the existing repository to launch the documentation and policies with the new platform and move the documentation for the existing platform to another, unspecified place. However, the documentation for the existing repository

was still being used, and I didn't want to update documentation for the new platform before it launched in order to avoid confusion. Therefore, careful consideration of the launch of the new documentation and policies needed to accompany discussions about the CDR platform's launch.

Another problematic aspect of coordination related to the digital preservation policy. Since the digital preservation staff was writing a policy at the same time that I was, we were duplicating work. Had I coordinated with them earlier, this duplication of effort could have been avoided and we could have started drafting the larger UNC Libraries' digital preservation policy sooner. However, I felt that the process and research on preservation practices provided me with a baseline understanding of the best practices for other repositories and helped me determine where our institutional repository preservation policies fell short.

Adapt from Peer Institutions' Policies When Possible

I also learned that looking at peer institutions' policies can be extremely helpful, when they are available. It is useful to see what other institutions are doing in order to gain ideas for new services and to benchmark existing services. I did find that some institutions do have overlap in their policies, particularly when they are using the same platform. This trend was especially apparent in institutions using Digital Commons.

One snag in reviewing peer policies is that some of UNC's direct peers did not post their policies publicly, and so there was no point of comparison. Therefore, I had to rely on reviewing policies from institutions that were not as close to UNC's. While this was still useful, I needed to adjust my assessment to account for differences in demographics, mission, and staffing more than I might otherwise have needed to.

Be Realistic

Although adapting policies from peer institutions can be extremely useful as a baseline, it is important to be realistic about their feasibility for your library in terms of the services that the policies govern. For example, as much as I would love to offer more high-touch services, I am only one person and cannot feasibly do the work of several specialists well. Our repository is fortunate in that we have access to developers who can readily deploy changes that would be needed to comply with a policy. I need to be mindful that it is not worth offering a service if it cannot be implemented well. Peer institutions may have more resources and more staff, and it is not shameful to recognize this and scale down our offerings accordingly.

CONCLUSION

Policies form a strong foundation for institutional repository services. They dictate who can deposit content, what types of content can be deposited, and what actions will be performed on the content. Adapting policies from peer institutions can be a good way to benchmark one's own repository's content and services, but it is important to be realistic about the feasibility of duplicating them wholesale.

APPENDIX: POLICIES SURVEYED

Policies from the following repositories were assessed for this project:

University of Alaska

University of Alberta

American University

Brown University

Carnegie-Mellon University

University of Chicago

Claremont Colleges

University of Colorado − Boulder

University of Connecticut

Cornell University

Florida International University

Fresno State University

Georgia Tech University

Indiana University−Purdue University Indianapolis

Loyola Marymount University

Loyola University − Chicago

University of Michigan

University of Minnesota

University of Montana

University of Nebraska – Omaha

Northwestern University

Ohio State University

Pennsylvania State University

University of Pittsburgh

Purdue University

Southern Illinois University

Stony Brook University

University of Toronto

University of Vermont

Wake Forest University

University of Washington

NOTE

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[i]. Carolina Digital Repository, "Policies and Guidelines,"
https://blogs.lib.unc.edu/cdr/index.php/about/policies-guidelines/.