The Advice Not Taken*

How one repository found its own path

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* with apologies to Robert Frost
Where is Nebraska?

1.8 million population
Economy based on corn, cattle, & soybeans
Leads US in irrigated farmland & beef carcasses
Our University

- Established 1869
- 6 blocks from state capitol
- 24,500 students, 1650 faculty, 3700 staff
- Degrees awarded: 3700 BA, 800 master’s, 300 PhDs
- **Annual budget:** $1.2 billion (or € 900 million)
- **Research budget:** $250 million (or € 180 million)
- **Library budget:** $15 million (or € 11 million)
- Institutional repository started in 2005
“Expert” Advice

1. Use open source software
2. Expect faculty to self-archive
3. Seek campus “mandate” or deposit policy
4. Promote author-rights addendum
5. Provide funds for gold OA fees
6. Participate in Open Access events
7. Promote Creative Commons licenses
8. Require peer review for original publishing
9. Assign all possible identifiers

We have followed none of this advice.
I could go through each one and explain why, but I only have 7 minutes.

Instead, I will describe the road we have taken, and where it has led us:

1. Provide services
2. Make it easy
3. Give immediate feedback
4. Maximize content upload
5. The IR belongs to the depositors
1. Services provided:

- permissions & copyright clearance
- hunting & gathering
- scanning
- typesetting
- metadata-ing
- uploading & posting
- usage reporting
- promoting
- POD publishing

“Beyond Mediated Deposit”
2. Participation made easy

“Send us your vita, and let us do the rest.”
3. Immediate Feedback

Dear Author,

Your Author Dashboard shows you had 6,318 new downloads in the past month of your 245 papers in Digital Commons. This brings your total readership to 325,604.

Your Monthly Readership Report Highlight

*The Journal of Major George Washington (1754)*

- **339** Total downloads
- **28** Downloads from search term *journal of major washington*

[Visit My Dashboard](#)
4. Maximize Content Upload

This may seem obvious, but it bears emphasizing: *If you are not posting documents, you are not approaching the goal → 100% of scholarship freely accessible online.*

This is ultimately how the struggle to free scholarly communications will be won.

Our mission: Shovel as much free content as possible onto the Internet.
5. The IR belongs to the faculty

• Not to the library or the university or the public.

• All policies and rules derive from this principle.

• We are not gatekeepers, arbiters, enforcers, approvers, censors, regulators, or judges.

• Our function: disseminate faculty content, as widely as possible, e.g. →

2 hours = 3486 downloads, Monday, April 27, 2014
Have we been successful?

2nd-largest institutional repository in United States (after Michigan’s “Deep Blue”)

71,000 full-text documents

- 58,000 free access
- 13,000 campus-only ETDs

24 million downloads since 2005

- 6 million in past year, or 500,000/month
- to more than 210 countries

In recognition, I have awarded us this trophy.
We are the university’s most visited subdomain

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<th>Subdomain</th>
<th>Percent of Visitors</th>
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<tr>
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Our content ranks above Elsevier’s in Google search results

UNL DigitalCommons version of article

Elsevier version of same article

(Because we get more traffic than the subscription and paywall sites.)
We have more faculty participation than we can handle

Our staff:
2 librarians, full time
2 or 3 work-study student assistants

Faculty repeat participation rate: 99%

Candy Hermosillo is a sophomore from Cozad, Nebraska (pop. 3977). I said I would make her famous.

If we can get one article from Professor X, there is a 99% chance he will come back with more.
We typeset our author versions to match the pagination and layout of the publisher versions.

Experimental confirmation that avian plumage traits function as multiple status signals in winter contexts
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Abstract: Status signals are thought to reduce costs of overt conflict over resources by advertising social status or an individual’s ability to win contests. While most studies have focused on single badges of status, recent empirical work has shown that multiple status signals may exist. To provide robust evidence for multiple badges of status, an experimental manipulation is required to decouple signals from one another and from other traits linked to fighting ability. Such experimental evidence is lacking for most studies of multiple status signals to date. We recently found that plumage traits in golden-crowned sparrows, Zonotrichia atricapilla, were correlated with social dominance in encounters between unfamiliar individuals. To confirm that each plumage patch functioned as an independent status signal, we experimentally augmented the size of the gold crown patch and the black crown patch of the nominate subspecies Z. a. atricapilla. In the baseline condition, we observed intraspecific competition for mates in three male zebra finches. In the experimental condition, we made the two plumage patches larger, and then measured the dominance and the mate choice of the males. The relative differences in crown sizes between manipulated and unmanipulated individuals in a dyad and interaction to crown sizes of the manipulated bird led to escalation in gold trials, but these same factors were not significant for black trials. This study provides experimental evidence for multiple status signals (both black and gold crown patches influence social status per se and do so independently of each other crown patch).

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Physical conflict over limited resources can be costly in terms of both time and health. These costs can favor the evolution of signals that can resolve conflicts without physical aggression, namely, “status signals” or “badges of status” (Bischoff, 1975, 1977; Maynard Smith & Harper, 2003). Numerous studies identify traits that function as status signals, in both breeding and nonbreeding contexts, and for a wide diversity of taxonomic groups (Senar, 1996, 2006; Whiting et al., 2005; Tibberts & Safian, 2006). Nearly all studies of status signals to date have focused on investigating a single trait or badge that indicates dominance in a given species (Senar 2006; Tibberts & Safian 2009). Physical conflict over limited resources can be costly in terms of both time and health. These costs can favor the evolution of signals that can resolve conflicts without physical aggression, namely, “status signals” or “badges of status” (Bischoff, 1975, 1977; Maynard Smith & Harper, 2003). Numerous studies identify traits that function as status signals, in both breeding and nonbreeding contexts, and for a wide diversity of taxonomic groups (Senar, 1996, 2006; Whiting et al., 2005; Tibberts & Safian, 2006). Nearly all studies of status signals to date have focused on investigating a single trait or badge that indicates dominance in a given species (Senar 2006; Tibberts & Safian 2009).
Exploit the “Public Domain”

• Works by United States government employees are not subject to copyright.

• Our university has research programs with USDA, USGS, USF&WS, NOAA, NASA, NIH, CDC, which we actively harvest and re-post.

• Many publishers improperly attach copyright notices to such works. These are erroneous and without force.
“State Sovereign Immunity”

• Under the 11th Amendment (1795) to the US Constitution, states (and their agencies, such as our university) are immune from being sued for damages in federal court.

• We do not abuse this, but it serves as a safety net in case of unintentional violation.
My perspective

The faculty work with us because they want to, not because it is mandated or required.

(Though I still deeply admire and respect all Dr. Harnad’s efforts on behalf of Green OA.)
The “Rant” portion:

• Author rights addenda are legally sound and effective for faculty.

• Self-archiving is a realistic goal and produces unproblematic content.

• Campus mandates are worth the time and effort invested.

• Creative Commons licenses are good for everyone and everything.

• Gold OA frees authors and libraries from profit-seeking hegemony.

• Proposed OA standards don’t marginalize innovative publishing.
The “Ecosystem” metaphor is fundamentally misleading

• It “naturalizes” a system that is artificial, man-made, and economic.

• The struggle over **scholarly communications** is about access to the means of production, the accumulation of capital, and the alienation of the products of labor. It is best described by Marx, not Darwin.
“Open Access” is alienating its allies

• I no longer promote “open access” because that movement has thrown the repositories “under the bus.”

• Their definition of open access excludes most Green OA. It requires assignment of rights that are not ours to convey.
Two forces are at work:

The explosion of creative energy and disruptive innovation, unleashed by technologies of the digital era.

The effort to catalog, classify, regulate, label, organize, and rationalize that explosion.

Does this organizing make it easier for corporate powers to control the output?
Our role as Repositorians ...

• To give scholars and researchers control over the intellectual property they create.

• Not to regulate or stipulate or legislate what they do with it.
Thank you

proyster@unl.edu

http://digitalcommons.unl.edu