

Chapter Title: [PART 4 Introduction]

Book Title: Making Institutional Repositories Work

Book Editor(s): Burton B. Callicott, David Scherer, Andrew Wesolek

Published by: Purdue University Press. (2016)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1wf4drg.20>

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



This book is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>. Funding is provided by Knowledge Unlatched.



JSTOR

*Purdue University Press* is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Making Institutional Repositories Work*

# Part 4

## MEASURING SUCCESS

Getting a full and accurate picture of the use of repositories is essential not only as a means for evaluating the success of a given repository, but as a means for propelling the evolution of scholarly communication. As Bruns and Inefuku state in their chapter, “Purposeful Metrics”: “In order for researchers, universities, and funding agencies to view institutional repositories as a central pillar of the OA movement, repository managers need to prove the value of their repositories.” When done strategically and convincingly, using metrics to prove the value of repositories can result in a positive feedback response loop that can dramatically change the way that information is shared and knowledge is built: the more stakeholders can see that repositories are being used, the more they will be encouraged to use them. When contributors to a repository get reports on all of the avenues that led others to their work and the locations across the world where their work has been accessed, discussed, and cited, they are more inclined to contribute and to encourage their colleagues to do the same. When administrators can see that work from their home institution is being downloaded, cited, and tweeted, they are going to be more likely to provide funding and encourage expansion of service.

What might at first seem like a fairly straightforward endeavor, measuring the success of repositories involves an ever widening and nuanced spectrum of factors that can enhance and leverage raw upload and download counts. The chapters in Part 4 outline the various dimensions of measurement that have proven to be effective as well as new forms of measurements

that are only beginning to take shape and resonate with various constituents. Bruns and Inefuku walk readers through the full range of metrics including various suites of performance indicators and even “empty” metrics that utilize a kind of proof by negation that can be used to spur contributions and use. When gathered honestly and systematically, this information can proactively shape the services and practices repositories can and should offer.

Because the concept is so new and the adoption of it has been so varied, the ways that social media have affected and influenced scholarly communication have only recently been studied and quantified. The practice of altmetrics—article-level metrics that can include social media—has begun to formalize and produce increasingly meaningful results that can be of use to scholars as well as administrators. In their chapter, “Social Media Metrics,” Holmberg, Haustein, and Beucke build on more traditional measurement methods and lay out the various ways that social media can be mined for data that can be correlated to ever refined spheres of influence. These data can reveal the way that a given item may have been circulated as well as the ways that repositories are affecting scholarly communication on a global scale.

Peer review may seem out of place in Part 4, which is largely about measuring use, but the ways that repositories are ushering in a new, more open and broad-based peer-review system can greatly affect repository traffic and impact. Due to the popularity of arXiv and the way that contributors receive feedback more immediately from a large pool of peers, published journal articles that had preprints posted in arXiv have received significantly higher numbers of citations than those of a similar type that were not initially posted in the repository. “The arXiv preprints, when published, have already amassed an advantage that non-arXiv articles can never recoup” (Gentil-Beccot, Mele, & Brooks, 2009, p. 7). The repercussions of arXiv and other subject repositories are being felt by institutional repositories. Callicott discusses the ways that IRs are playing a role in the first significant shift in peer review that has taken place since the advent of the scholarly journal. By providing new ways to publish and share what was considered marginal scholarship, IRs are driving interest in gray literature, often to the point that distinctions between “gray” and “white” are muddled. By reconceiving and democratizing the traditional peer-review system, IRs are bringing important work to light and increasing the scope of scholarly

discourse. Download counts and citations can serve as an ersatz peer review and demonstrate the value of an individual item as well as a new method of publication and discovery.

All of the measurements in the world are essentially ineffective and meaningless unless they are properly packaged, reported, and parsed for their appropriate audience. In the final chapter in Part 4, Buehler attempts to break down the measurements that are most important to the various constituents: scholars, deans, and administrators. Convincing administrators to champion an IR can have a ripple effect that involves not only IR-friendly policies but establishing a culture of open access and repository awareness. Making this connection with administrators and leaders and speaking the language of assessment and measures of success is essential for the continued growth and support of repositories.

## REFERENCE

Gentil-Beccot, A., Mele, S., & Brooks, T. (2009). *Behaviours in high-energy physics: How a community stopped worrying about journals and learned to love repositories*. arXiv:0906.5418

