

Chapter Title: [PART 1 Introduction]

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Part 1

CHOOSING A PLATFORM

Selecting a platform for an institutional repository requires a host of decisions that should be considered within the context of one's unique campus environment. In the following chapters we see the distillation of these considerations into three major themes: staffing, purpose, and goals. First, Hillary Corbett, Jimmy Ghaphery, Lauren Work, and Sam Byrd weigh the benefits and disadvantages of several popular repository platforms, as well as discuss the process of migration from one to another. Katherine McNeill then explores the data repository ecosystem while offering insights into the role of the repository in this diverse landscape. Finally, Kenning Arlitsch and colleagues delve into strategies to effectively enhance the findability of the content hosted on an institutional repository through search engine optimization.

Corbett and colleagues outline the wide array of repository platforms and the major considerations that go into choosing one over another. One of the key themes in this evaluation is the type of investment an institution is willing or able to make in a repository initiative. Several open source platforms are evaluated that allow for flexibility in their implementation, at the cost of staff time to develop, maintain, and update them. Conversely, hosted repository platforms may be launched with as little as .25 FTE, but come with more rigid structures and limits on customizability.

Prior to selecting an institutional repository, one must consider the type of repository it is intended to be. Major funding agencies are requiring researchers to manage, and often openly share their data at a rapidly

increasing rate. Is this a service an institutional repository initiative is intended to support? If so, should support come in the form of institutional repository infrastructure, or through ancillary services such as guiding researchers in the selection and deposit of materials in existing and external data-specific repositories? Katherine McNeill explores this nuanced and fluid ecosystem of repositories. Ultimately, she suggests a multifaceted approach of leveraging an institutional repository for research publications, while integrating them with datasets stored in a variety of external data-specific repositories.

Finally, what are the goals of a proposed institutional repository initiative? Is it enough for an IR to serve as an archive of the scholarly output of the institution, or does the repository initiative intend to disseminate that scholarly output broadly and openly? Kenning Arlitsch and colleagues argue in support of the latter: “discoverability of content through Internet search engines is paramount to the success and impact of institutional repositories.” The authors then outline a variety of search engine optimization techniques that librarians may apply to their institutional repositories in order to increase discoverability.

Ultimately, platform decisions for institutional repositories are highly dependent on individual institutional contexts. However, Part 1 offers a framework for selection built on the themes of the staffing, purpose, and goals of a repository initiative. This framework may then be built upon further after a careful survey of the needs, values, and culture of the institution, thus providing the first step toward a successful repository initiative.