

COLLECTING BIT BY BYTE

the challenges of faculty papers at Harvard and MIT in the digital age

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ABSTRACT

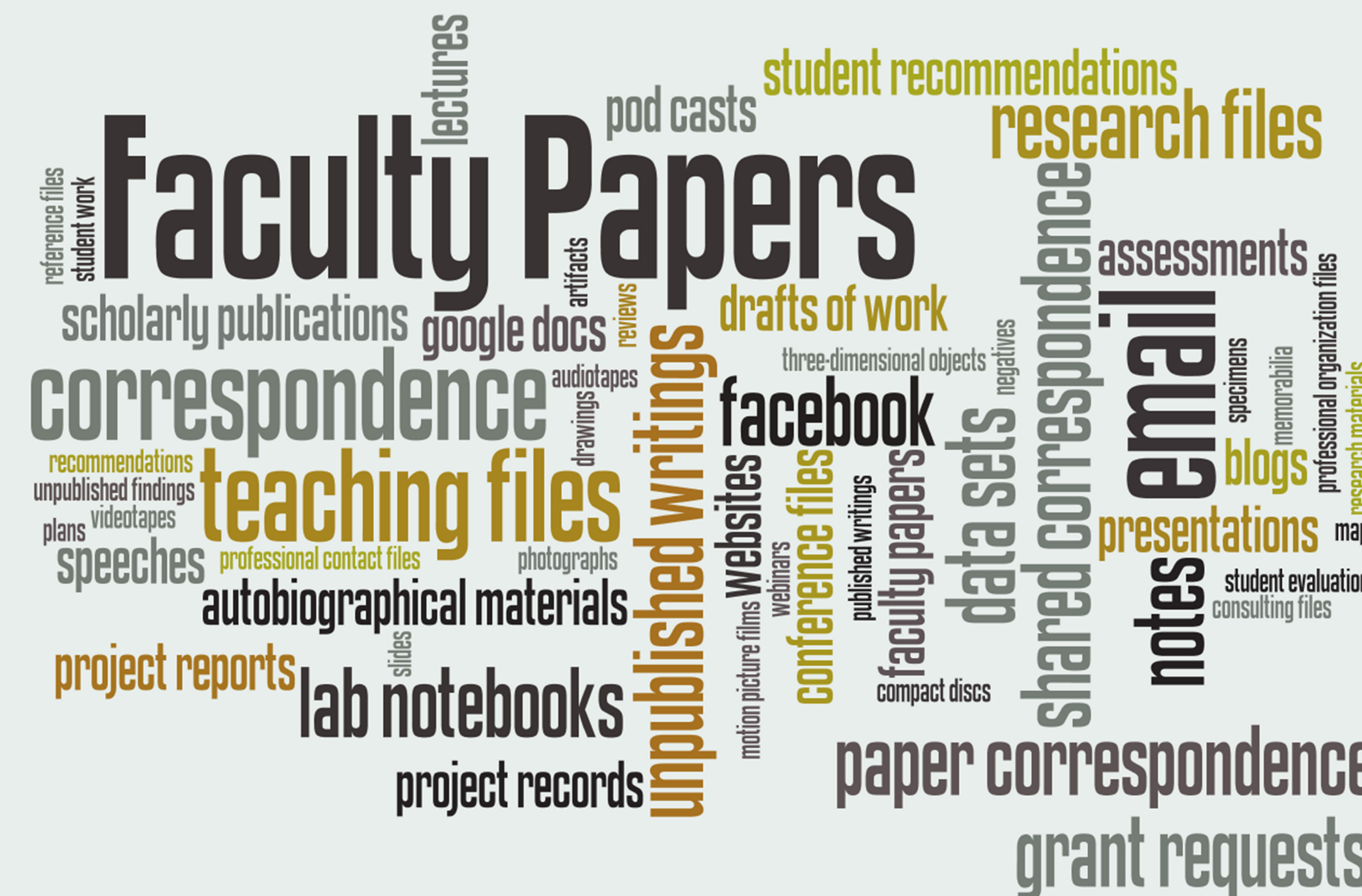
What are faculty papers? And what are the challenges of collecting these materials in the digital age? These questions formed the basis of an internship project during the fall 2011 semester, which was jointly supervised by Tom Rosko, Head, Institute Archives and Special Collections at MIT, and Megan Sniffin-Marinoff, University Archivist at the Harvard University Archives. My poster is the direct result of this project.

My research looks at:

- The current status of faculty papers collecting at Harvard and MIT,
- Challenges of policies within each institution,
- Faculty who have multiple roles across disciplines and institutions, as well as internationally
- Overlap with "library" activities (e.g., institutional repositories, scholarly communication, datasets, etc.), and
- Technological ramifications of born-digital and hybrid collections,

Ultimately, the project addresses broad challenges raised by the current boundaries and definitions of "faculty," "faculty papers," and "institutional records," particularly in the sciences.

WHAT ARE FACULTY PAPERS?



METHODS

Identified the challenges

- Changing formats; interdisciplinary fields; faculty who change institutions; faculty who hold additional positions (as professionals within a field, and/or within the institution); volume; scientific data.

Assessed the landscape

- Conducted a literature review.
- Reviewed collections
- Reviewed existing collaborations

Met with archival stakeholders

- Attended meetings with members of MIT and Harvard's staff
Elizabeth Andrews - Archivist for Collections and Associate Head, MIT
Ewa Basinska - Collections and Records Management Archivist, MIT
Kathryn Bowers - Collections Services Archivist, HUA
Virginia Hunt - Associate University Archivist for Collection Development, HUA
Skip Kendall - Senior Electronic Records Analyst/Archivist, HUA
Mikki Simon Macdonald - Metadata Archivist, MIT
Robin McElheny - Associate University Archivist for Collections and Public Services, HUA
Barbara Meloni - Public Services Archivist, HUA
Nora Murphy - Archivist for Reference, Outreach and Instruction, MIT
Tom Rosko - Institute Archivist and Head, MIT
Megan Sniffin-Marinoff - University Archivist, HUA

Assessed institutions existing digital solutions

HARVARD

- The Digital Repository Service (DRS)
 - Containing over 400 TB of content, provides access and long-term preservation services for permanently valuable content with custodial stewardship by Harvard Organizational units.
- WAX & EASI
 - Web content curated by archivists, with close to 1 TB of content (fed into DRS).
- Digital Access to Scholarship at Harvard (DASH)
 - Contains over 5,000 items and provides storage and access to any content authored by a member of the Harvard community.
- IQSS Dataverse Network and the Murray Research Archive
 - Provides access and preservation services for primarily social science research data; over 100 TB of content.

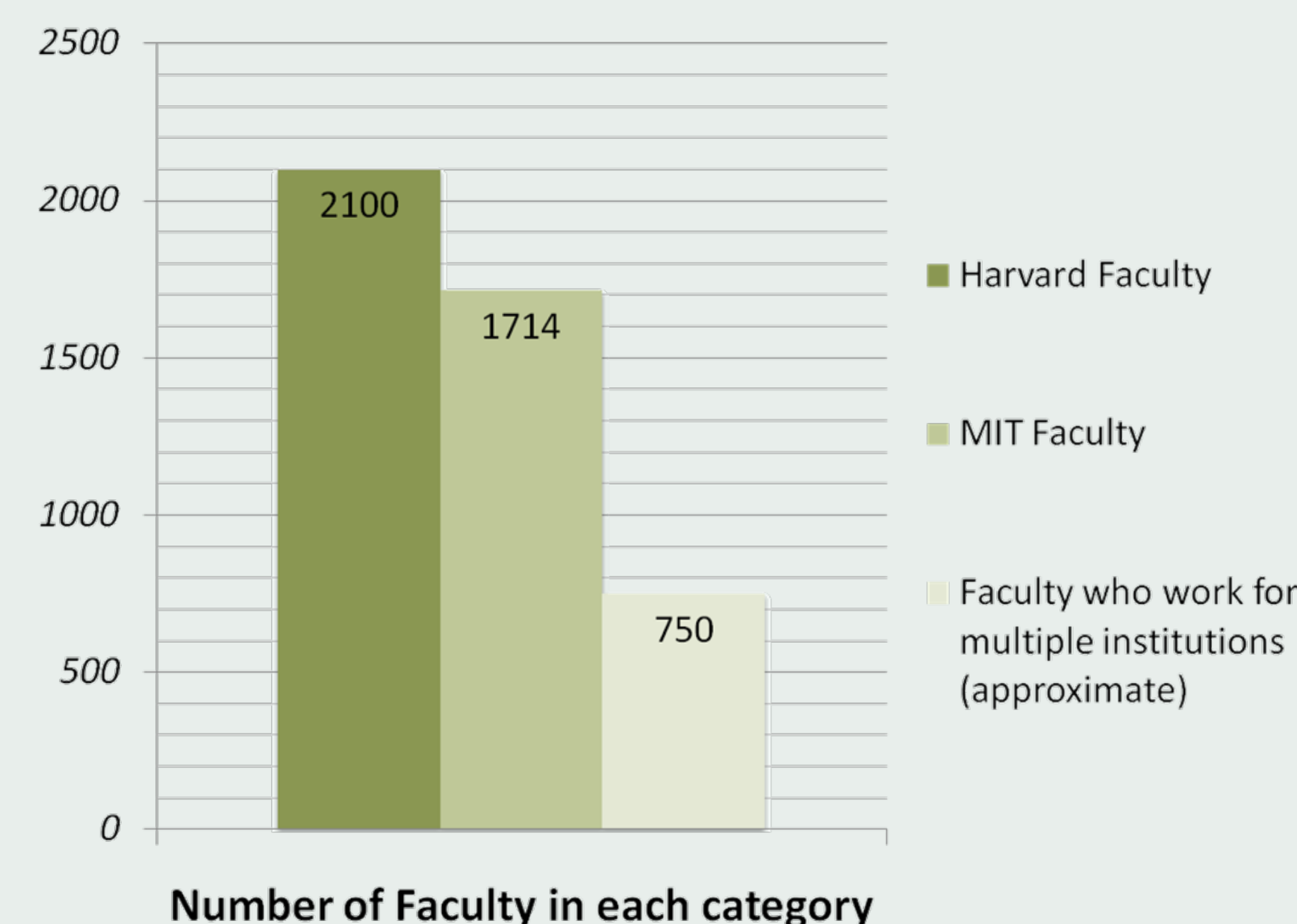
MIT (both based on the DSpace platform, contains 2+TB of data and 100,000+ files)

- DSpace@MIT
 - Selected research and teaching output of MIT faculty.
- Dome
 - Curated digital library collections.

RESULTS

3 core problems were identified:

- Inability to define the collecting category
 - Faculty papers are no longer just *paper*.
 - Recent technological advances have made the delineation and boundaries of faculty papers significantly harder to identify.
- Growing numbers of collaborative relationships in academia
 - Collaboration presents challenges with regard to the multiple definitions of faculty affiliations and roles as they more and more frequently work across disciplines and institutions, as well as internationally.
 - Ownership of and responsibility for materials resulting from a collaboration are not always clear.
- Long-term storage and preservation of all formats not available
 - A number of content -and format- specific repositories have been created. These systems are not complete and do not address the full gamut of issues surrounding the acquisition, appraisal, preservation and disposition of digital materials.
 - Materials in "new" digital formats are not being collected with the same regularity as analog materials, thus leading to a potential loss of rich historic data.



Next steps:

On May 2, 2011, the Library Lab board at Harvard's Office for Scholarly Research funded a project to create a prototype rescue repository at Harvard and, in collaboration with MIT, conduct an in depth study of faculty papers, which are expected to be deposited to a rescue repository, as well as hold a series of related policy discussions.

<http://osc.hul.harvard.edu/liblab/proj/zone-1>



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