

Access to Archival Content in Institutional Repositories

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Abstract: This year marks the fifth anniversary of the University of Minnesota's institutional repository, the University Digital Conservancy (UDC). Since January 2008, the IR has recorded 1.5 million downloads; more than 900,000 (63%) of which have come from University Archives related content. The success of making archival material available in the IR is the result of two decisions. First, the University Archives developed an in-house, low-cost rapid capture program to digitize University publications on a mass scale to populate the IR. This digitized content consists of nearly 1 million pages of full-text searchable publications, reports, planning documents, minutes, press releases, newsletters, and more from the past 150 years. Second, the Archives identified on campus partners who could add their born-digital institutional records directly to the IR. This distributed model serves as a means to capture born-digital records at the point of their creation. In addition, many of these born-digital records are paired with their analog predecessors converted to digital format through the rapid capture process, providing seamless access to digitized and born-digital content in one place. These actions have increased our functionality in managing and providing access to digital content, shifted many operating procedures and traditional archival management including reference services, acquisitions, and processing, and have made the University Archives an on campus partner able to provide solutions to existing needs. These demonstrated outcomes should prompt archivists to consider the rising expectations of online access to the content of archival materials finding that both external audiences and internal partners expect discovery and delivery to coincide.

About the author:

Erik Moore is Acting Head of the University of Minnesota Archives and Co-Director of the University Digital Conservancy. Moore leads the archival operations of the University's official collecting repository that maintains and provides access to 18,000 cubic feet of records originating from campus administrators, colleges, departments, and faculty. He has advanced degrees in Library & Information Science and Historical Studies.