

Hello! I'm so pleased to be here -- thanks, Eric, for organizing the panel -- and to talk with you about our experiences getting an institutional repository off the ground at Boston University. In many ways, we're still working out the kinks, still not out of the start-up phase. On the other hand, we're learning a ton as we go.

**[click]** Let me tell you about our institutional setup, and how our repository started. We have over 30 thousand students and over 4 thousand faculty on two campuses. And organizationally, we're pretty de-centralized. The university administration has been working pretty hard in the last decade or so to defragment the university, particularly as regards communications among units. **[click]** And it's gotten a lot better. We're putting a lot of energy into thinking of BU as a coherent whole, and in that context, it makes sense to people when we talk about presenting a public research-portfolio face to the world.

**[click]** In late 2008 and early 2009, the Faculty Council and then the University Council voted to adopt an open access resolution. The catalysts for these votes were the same as everywhere else: scholarly publishing crisis, open access conversation in academe at large, concerns around making "our" research more accessible "and" more visible. And the resolution was a great thing, but it was without teeth. It said: we at BU think open access is a great thing. We should do it, and further, this institutional repository we're setting up in the libraries should be part of it.

The resolution was opt-in, not the Harvard-style opt-out, mostly because it was relatively early, we hadn't had time to see how the Harvard thing would play out... ultimately people didn't think opt-out would pass. **[click]** And so we set up the repository, it went live in October of 2009... and nothing much happened. Just like everywhere else, we built it and the faculty didn't come in droves to deposit their materials. There's just too much overhead for them to do it on their own: the gnarly permissions research, the actual deposit -- they just don't have the time or mental space for it.

We weren't surprised by this. The working group that got the repository set up, of which I was part, had given considerable thought to how we might engage the faculty. We had pretty much come to the conclusion that we would have to do most of the work. So we'd spent a couple of years' worth of student labor on combing departmental and school websites for CVs and making long lists of citations for each of the faculty. The idea was that we'd do the permissions research on those citations, deposit what we could, and then come to those faculty and say look, we've deposited X, Y and Z, and we've done our homework, do you have these other things for us?

But when the repository went live, there was nobody dedicated to that task. So then the position of institutional repository librarian was created, and in late 2010 I was hired into it (I'd been working at the BU Theology library before this.) **[click]** And then it was me and 4000 faculty. And even with six to eight bright students working for me at any given time, our idea of how all this was going to happen didn't work. The volume is too large. The permissions research takes a "long" time. It would take a lot to train my students to do the really time-consuming things properly, as permissions research involves a lot of judgment calls and direct publisher contact, so it was pretty much me doing them. And it often took several days to go through a single CV in-between the million other things I was doing. In such a setup, I'm a bottleneck.

So we're changing that paradigm, but before I tell you about it, let me give you some more organizational context. **[click]** My position was created as part of a larger reorg in the BU Libraries, and so I'm situated within the Digital Initiatives and Open Access division. Like most academic libraries, we've been re-orienting our work toward a "lot" more digital material than we'd been dealing with in the past. Cataloging got renamed Metadata and Cataloging Services, and reports to the head of DIOA. We are knee-deep in new-to-us software -- one package that acts as a web-based discovery layer on top of most of our services, and another one that runs most of our business processes.

And, with the creation of DIOA, we have taken the Faculty and University Councils' votes as a mandate for us to pursue open access work, including advocacy. We've done a few things on that front. **[click]** One is that BU is a member of HathiTrust, a partnership of over 60 major research and cultural institutions to preserve the cultural record -- and to share born- and made-digital materials among the partner institutions. HathiTrust is pursuing a number of interesting research and advocacy initiatives, and is -- perhaps ultimately fortunately for us -- involved in some copyright-related law suits that seem to be working out in favor of access to primary research materials.

**[click]** We've also undertaken the project of digitizing and making available BU's historic theses and dissertations, from the beginning through at least 1963, which amounts to over 12,000 works. In parallel with this, we're beginning to transition the university to electronic-only submission of "new" theses and dissertations, and our default policy on those is open access (unless individual works get embargoed). **[click]** And, we've been collaborating with BU's Information Services and Technology folks to offer a data management service, with an eye not only to preservation, but also to making research data available for distribution where that's possible.

**[click]** BU has also participated in the international Open Access Week event, this year was our third. The first couple of years were... less than successful. We announced some discussion-group-style events, to which few people came. We moved in at a prominent table in the Student Union for the week, had handout materials and a looping slide show, and talked to \*some\* people, but while some individual conversations were fantastic, we failed to engage our community on the scale we need. We even invited Peter Suber to speak, and advertised the heck out of that event, and the turnout was overwhelmingly librarians.

There are a few reasons why we weren't successful in reaching our community in the first couple of years. One is the mind-boggling extent of misconceptions still prevalent, about what open access actually is and why it's relevant to individual researchers. Another is that we hadn't hit on effective ways of reaching everyone we needed to reach. And also, the urgency of open access issues just hadn't permeated the collective consciousness enough. That takes time and non-trivial effort.

So this year, we switched things up. **[click]** We arranged with BU's VP and Associate Provost for Research to dedicate one of his series of Town Hall Meetings, aimed at faculty, to open access. That worked much better. The clout of the official communications helped, no doubt, as did the fact that the Town Hall series was already established. We got a few dozen people in the audience, and more importantly, the \*right\* people were there. After the presentation we had a lively and engaged discussion, during which it came out that we didn't have an opt-out policy like Harvard has, and some faculty members asked, well, why not? It would only make sense, wouldn't it? And our university librarian said, ahha, now that you've said this at a meeting, I can go to the appropriate committees with this and start working on it.

Whether anything will come of this, I don't personally know. But that presentation was a \*huge\* success in terms of getting people to actually engage with issues, and also in terms of reaching not only the people who showed up but colleagues \*they\* talked to afterwards.

Since then, I've been to a couple of faculty meetings and talked up the repository. And instead of inviting people to give me their entire CVs to work on, I've said: give us your 3-5 best citations, the stuff you'd most like to see out there. I'll do the permissions research, and will ask you for specific versions of those articles, whether author's originals, author's final drafts, or publisher's versions. You give me those, and I'll deposit them.

This has been working a lot better. It's manageable, a project that's finished soon after it began. It sets up a precedent for the faculty member of pleasant and easy interaction with the repository, and drastically increases the likelihood that they'll give me their future work. And, of course, makes them likelier to encourage colleagues to follow suit.

**[click]** So: in our case, what's working is breadth, not depth. In this more delimited context, I'm finding faculty allies in every department I talk to. I hope that this approach will finally get the repository past the very effort-intensive start-up hump, and kick it into a more steady growth roll.

But this doesn't grow the repository \*quickly\*. So in parallel with article-hunting, we're pursuing some projects with which we hope to increase the repository's visibility, and faculty interest in it as a venue for disseminating their research \*and\* as their university's research \*portfolio\*.

So far we've had five such projects. **[click]** In one, we worked with Fallou Ngom, an anthropology professor who had gotten a grant from the British Library Endangered Archives Programme to go to Senegal and digitize some Ajami Wolofal manuscripts that are literally rotting from mold in private homes. A copy of those materials, including the very high-resolution originals, lives in the repository now.

**[click]** Another project we're doing is with Barbara Rotger, the head of our Gastronomy department, and her collections of American recipe boxes dating from the mid-19th century to late 20th. There's some fascinating stuff there, both recipes and otherwise. That's all been digitized and will go into the repository any day now, and after that she's thinking of curating a digital exhibit of a subset.

**[click]** Then, I've already mentioned, we're digitizing pre-1964 BU theses and dissertations. We've scanned just over a thousand of the more than 12,000 we'll be scanning.

We're also on the lookout for publications by BU centers and institutes that are defunct, which might disappear if nobody archives them. **[click]** We archived the entire 20-year run of a *Perspective*, a publication by Institute for the Study of Conflict, Ideology and Policy tracing the first 20 years of post-USSR politics in Russia and the former Soviet republics, with articles by some major journalistic heavyweights from both sides of the ocean.

**[click]** And finally, we're going through a collection of research notes donated to us by a retiring husband-and-wife team of law professors, Bob and Ann

Seidman, who had fascinating careers teaching, writing books and consulting on legislative matters in numerous African and Asian countries. We're digitizing a portion of that, and will make it available in the repository.

**[click]** All of these are very important resources for future research, yes, but many are also objects of significant human interest. We are thinking strategically about them as instruments of drumming up interest in the repository itself.

**[click]** Great, so we're off the ground. Sort of. Ultimately, given the size and age of our institution, we're growing very slowly, and momentum still feels tenuous. What would make us grow more quickly, or at least steady the momentum? For one thing, I'm harboring dreams of added staffing. That's hard to justify even for an excellent cause in the current economy, but we're working on it. Certainly outreach would be easier.

Another dream is for BU to go opt-out. That would completely change the nature of our work, and certainly require more staffing, and those decisions are above my pay grade. But I can hope, and work toward this by continuing OA advocacy with faculty \*and\* librarians. This \*only\* works on a small scale, but that's ok, I've got time, and the more open access permeates the collective consciousness, the better the chances of the huge academic culture shift that, let's be honest, we're actually working on.

Other things that will help catalyze this shift, I think: more projects that are both interesting \*and\* academically useful; and increased agility on the part of the libraries. Increased ability to provide advice on copyright-related issues, and also expertise on the creation of digital research resources using materials from the repository. This requires reconceptualizing the BU Libraries as more active participants in university research, and that's so attractive and exciting to us that we've given presentations on it. The repository is certainly part of the larger picture, and we're doing what we can to cultivate and tend it.

**[click]** Thank you so much.