

Insights into the Cultivation and Sustainability of Academic Library Digitization Programs: Success Factors and Challenge Threats

Research Summary

This poster presents a dual approach of case study and research survey to investigate the complex factors in sustaining long-term academic library digitization programs. Results from a Summer 2008, 26 question survey administered to all ARL libraries (response rate = 33%), combined with analysis of one library's efforts to revitalize their digitization program reveal several factors determining the success of digitization programs; including support from administration, development of staff skill sets, funding, and strategic planning.

Identified Trends

- Support staff training occurs frequently or occasionally: 100%
- Strong areas of local staff expertise: 88% metadata creation; 85% scan / processing
- Buy-in for collaborative digitization efforts rated "excellent" or "good": 81%
- Have management position dedicated to digitization: 79%
- Have system other than a university IR for digitization publishing: 73%
- Have documentation (mission statements, procedures): 68%
- Digitization program referenced in strategic plan: 63%
- Have a committee for prioritizing projects: 54%

Positive Factors Reported

- Good selection criteria
- Faculty collaborations
- Strong infrastructure
- Aggressive grant-writing and development of donors
- Creating documentation and developing policy/procedures
- Individual staff dedication
- Support of administration
- Support from curators and collection owners
- Remaining flexible and adapting to change
- Working on campus to support/promote open access

Strategies from Case Study

- Commit to staff engagement in decision-making
- Place digitization prominently in strategic plan
- Educate about and promote program to both external users and internally to staff
- Central project manager helps; clear roles and responsibilities and training for staff
- Build strategic partnerships wherever possible
- Work beyond a single grant for program sustainability
- Cultivate expertise/ enthusiasm to champion program



Promotional poster, 1903

Biggest Challenges: Funding, staffing, prioritization, workload and administrative support were mentioned as "biggest challenges".

Areas for Additional Research: How to define digitization success?

Contact:

cory.lampert@unlv.edu
jason.vaughan@unlv.edu

UNLV Libraries Digital Collections

<http://digital.library.unlv.edu>