



Institutional Repositories Position Statement

Adopted November 2003

The Canadian Association of Research Libraries supports the systematic archiving of, and access to digital research output of Canadian academic organizations into institutional repositories.

Canadian university campuses contain a rich and heterogeneous collection of locally-produced digital content such as article pre-prints and e-prints, as well as dissertations, theses, research reports, images, maps, audio and video files, research data, and instructional tools, etc. Because this digital content is dispersed, it is neither easily accessible, nor being systematically preserved as part of the official record of scholarly knowledge in Canada. As a result, much of the unique and valuable digital content created on Canadian campuses is being lost.

It is the intention of the members of the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) to implement institutional repositories as a coordinated and integrated strategy to aggregate the digital research output of their academic institutions. Institutional repositories (IRs) are digital collections that capture and preserve the intellectual output of a single or multi-university community. IRs expand access to research, reassert control over Canadian scholarship by the Canadian academic community, and provide a sustainable management system for digital content. IRs also promote the use of standards and best practices, guaranteeing the international interoperability of their content through OAI-compliance and metadata standards.

The benefits of adopting institutional repositories

- Institutional repositories increase the visibility of Canadian researchers and Canadian institutions. IRs aggregate the research output of a single institution, raising the profile and status of the research being conducted there.
- Institutional repositories increase the accessibility and impact of Canadian research both in Canada and internationally. IRs can elect to eliminate access restrictions and allow anyone with an Internet connection to access the content within.
- Institutional repositories preserve and maintain the research output of Canadian academic institutions in the long-term. As it is now, the majority of Canadian research is published outside of Canada. IRs capture, maintain and preserve research output as part of the official record of Canadian intellectual output.
- Institutional repositories increase the amount and diversity of scholarly output that is collected and preserved. Traditional collection activities have focused on “published” material; however, many academic digital objects exist outside of the traditional scholarly publishing system, and can be found on

departmental websites and personal computers. IRs represent a recognition of the importance of a broader range of scholarly material that are produced by Canadian academic researchers.

- Institutional repositories facilitate more timely access to research and scholarship. Traditional scholarly publishing methods often have lengthy lag times from submission to publication. IRs can reduce these lag times by capturing this material in a more timely fashion.

CARL is committed to working closely with learned societies, university presses, scholarly journals editors and other partners in the scholarly communication process. This position statement is intended to be implemented in accordance with publisher copyright agreements and university policies. Over 50% of all academic publishers currently allow authors to self-archive their article pre-prints in institutional repositories. The copyright for unpublished content resides entirely with the author and as such may be archived freely in institutional repositories.