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Transcending Institutions and Borders: 21st Century Digital Scholarship at K-State

Rebel Cummings-Sauls
Kansas State University, rebelcs@ksu.edu

Rachel Miles
Kansas State University, ramiles@ksu.edu

Ryan Otto
Kansas State University, rwotto@ksu.edu

Charlene N. Simser
Kansas State University, csimser@ksu.edu

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Abstract

Digital scholarship of the 21st century transcends institutions and borders with its freedom from print and physical locations. This case study reviews aspects of establishing a sustainable digital scholarship center, supporting open access through the institutional repository (K-State Research Exchange - K-REx) and an open access publishing platform (New Prairie Press – NPP) along with other outreach efforts. The Center for the Advancement of Digital Scholarship (CADS) at K-State Libraries serves our campus community, but digital scholarship extends K-State's impact far beyond Manhattan, Kansas. Highlighting the scholarship at our campus is only one small piece of the landscape. Collaboration on campus with both faculty and students includes working with authors, editors, and site administrators; but our roles in educating, publishing, supporting, and managing open access, including data management, publishing funds and textbook initiatives, have broader implications. This paper illustrates strategies that support all types of digital scholarship and contends that single direct connections to K-State can translate into partnerships which have regional, national, and international reach.

Keywords

digital scholarship, open access, institutional repositories, library publishing, copyright, data, open textbooks, academic publishing

**Transcending Institutions and Borders:
21st Century Digital Scholarship at K-State**

Rebel Cummings-Sauls, Rachel Miles, Ryan Otto, Charlene N. Simser
Kansas State University Libraries

Digital scholarship of the 21st century transcends institutions and borders. This is true at Kansas State University as the Libraries' Center for the Advancement of Digital Scholarship (CADS) serves the campus community, but the impact of the digital scholarship it supports extends far beyond the city lines of Manhattan, Kansas. In this paper, various aspects of establishing a digital scholarship center will be discussed, including stories of times gone by, foundations and plans, victories, and the vast land beyond us.

Brief Background of Pre-Center

The services surrounding digital scholarship at K-State have evolved over time. Before 2010 our current service areas were divided under various departments and individuals. During 2010-2015 the digital collections (including production activities), K-State Research Exchange (K-REx, the institutional repository which houses faculty and student created digital scholarship), scholarly communications, open access, copyright, and publishing services of K-State Libraries were all moved under one department.

An assessment in a 2014 task force review report found that digital production activities and management of digital collections needed to be separated from the departments' other digital scholarship services; forming Digital Initiatives. Additionally, the task force recommendation brought data services, originally housed within Faculty and Graduate Services, together with the remaining digital scholarship services under a newly proposed center.

Various Aspects of Establishing a Digital Scholarship Center

Building on the success of previous scholarly communication and publication efforts at the Libraries, the center director, Rebel Cummings-Sauls, was charged to lead this reorganized center to a new level in the scholarly landscape of K-State and beyond. The center was officially established in January 2015.

Recognition and Physical Space

Name recognition was a strategic need and aligning that name with services would provide clarity and consistency with language used nationally to represent the scope of the work of the center. In the end, the name Center for the Advancement of Digital Scholarship (CADS) provided the best option.

A logo was developed and quick, initial promotional materials about the center were created. The logo provided an image for service association intended to lead to instant connection with our center. Marketing through digital displays, signs for events, directories (web and print), and building directional signage provided a visual presence for CADS within the library.

The center's team initiated and planned a physical move to a larger space that allows an open office layout and provides collaboration space at each desk, as well as additional collaborative space. The addition of a free-standing computer creates the beginnings of a Mini Lab.

Strategic Plan

Another major strategy deployed was an update to the center's overall strategic plan. The first step was pulling in goals from individual areas into a plan for the center. We confirmed current and future goals to provide benchmarks for assessment.

It was important to build the team aspect of the center because the staff of the new center had previously worked on their own or within separate areas of the library. We completed several tasks as a group to build consensus, a strong foundation, and bridges across areas of expertise. As a team we tied the center to the library and university mission to develop a vision and mission statement. These provided direction and a clear horizon for the team to strive towards.

Services

Roles within the center were developed, weighing current loads vs. possible future demands, staffing levels, and impact each service might have on our university to identify areas for cross training. CADS software resources (e.g., DSpace, Adobe, and MiniTab) were reviewed, identifying outdated resources which were then updated. Some of these items were easy, while others, like our upgrade to DSpace 5 for K-REx, took approximately one year.

An initial environmental scan of campus through web searches, previous marketing/promotion, and personal interviews (including with library department heads) was conducted to determine if there were competing or complimentary digital scholarship resources outside of the library on campus. This revealed additional alliances where we could build services across units.

Collaboration – Engagement and Outreach

Small direct connections can translate into partnerships which have regional, national, and international reach. The platforms that our center maintain naturally support collaboration between Kansas State University researchers and outside partners.

Copyright

In 2011 CADS began providing non-legal guidance to the campus community and witnessed a small, yet steady, demand. Since 2015 our focus has been on creating stronger partnerships, including with University General Counsel and the Honor and Integrity program. These meetings have opened lines of communication between our units, provided shared information resulting in higher quality services, sparked a project of discovery, and increased our referrals between units.

Hosting events, like the Plagiarism Education Week 2015 webinars, provides educational opportunities to campus and is an example of our reach beyond K-State. During one webinar, the WikiEd director spoke about faculty on campus using WikiEd in education and course teaching. Some K-State faculty already use this service, but this event encouraged others to try. We provide documentation to faculty for ways to incorporate these services into their classrooms. Works completed by the students and made available on WikiEd have national and international reach.

Providing education to our authors on their copyrights and how to retain these rights (even when submitting to a traditional, commercial publisher) will ultimately make a greater impact on our ability to provide content beyond paywalls. Additionally, educating faculty and students on exceptions to copyright, such as fair use and Creative Commons licensing, is imperative. Learning such skills encourages faculty and students to become more creative and wise in their use of others' works. Authors and editors of content published through the center are encouraged to add Creative Commons licenses to their works. This means K-State output will have initial and everlasting influence through possible re-use and derivatives where permissible, thus extending the national and international impact of research and scholarly and creative activities at K-State.

Data

The convergence of the technological and public access mandate trends from funding agencies such as the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, offers a substantial opportunity for libraries to offer services that would allow them to closely integrate themselves in their university's research lifecycle in new ways. The main focus of discussions at K-State has been how can we, as a library, provide and add value to the wider K-State community. Four areas that have risen to the top of the list as the center has reviewed options: data services, data management, data curation, and where does our center fit in with these efforts.

In Fall 2015 we began meeting with representatives of K-State's supercomputing cluster, Beocat. Beocat's role on campus is the processing of live data. However, they have been increasingly relied upon to provide data storage to K-State's researchers. Currently, our center is able to provide open access to data sets when they are 2Gbs or less in size. Close communication between our two units was not only seen as a priority but as essential.

Educating K-State's faculty and students is where CADS is putting most of its energy when it comes to data, especially educating graduate students through workshops, one-on-one consultations with students & faculty, providing educational material through LibGuides, and by hosting special events. Some of the biggest events hosted in the last year have been offering a web presentation from a representative from the White House Office of Science & Technology (OSTP) and conference call events in regards to public access policy mandates, from the US Department of Agriculture.

Open Access

K-State Research Exchange (K-REx)

K-REx is Kansas State University's open access institutional repository and is one of our center's most important tools in opening digital scholarship and content created at K-State to the world. The repository houses three main types of content: 1) Electronic Theses & Dissertations (ETDRs); 2) collections comprised of digitized born analog content which may be unpublished and/or historical documents, books, articles and photographs; and, 3) digital scholarship (content from university faculty, staff, and/or students), which may include journal articles, videos, teaching tools, data sets and much more.

K-State Open Access Publishing Fund (KOAPF)

In 2012 the K-State publishing fund was launched to assist K-State researchers wishing to publish their articles in open access journals. An award up to $3000 dollars per fiscal year could be awarded to cover publication costs of accepted articles in qualifying open access journals. The office of the Provost, senior vice-president, K-State Libraries, and the Office of Research and Sponsored programs all contributed to fund the initiative.

Thinking of the conference theme "Open Access, Open Borders," we look beyond our natural focus on the content creators who come from K-State and into the creation of scholarship by a team of collaborators, often from different institutions. Publications funded through the KOAPF not only increase the impact of work being done at our university by removing pay-walls to content, but also benefit those authors who publish with K-State authors. Out of the 55 accepted applications from June 30, 2014 to April 21, 2016, 77 authors from 19 states and 10 countries published with K-State authors and had their works made open access because of the fund.

Open/Alternative Textbook Initiative

With an initial award of $35,000 from the Student Government Association and the Libraries providing $15,000 in funding, this initiative was introduced in 2015. Students' roles expanded to marketing and outreach: they funded and created an Initiative Highlight Video and a Donor Video. The President and Provost, strong partners from the beginning, helped secure donor contributions for a third year of funding. Department heads of faculty teaching highest enrolled courses were approached to discover if they would apply or what influenced their decision not to apply. Courses with 100 or more students enrolled for the 2016-17 academic year will be used to target applicants in the next round of funding.

This initiative has already saved K-State students over one million dollars, and the option to publish the textbooks through the center's press, introduced in 2016, provides award winners an international platform for discovery and use of their work by any person or classroom in the world.

New Prairie Press (NPP)

The Libraries' strategic goals in open access initiatives offer K-State faculty, students, and staff a place to edit and/or publish peer-reviewed content in an environment that increases the visibility and impact of their research. In addition to nine journals, seven monographs (including two open textbooks), and three special publications, NPP publishes full text proceedings from six annual conferences. Three of these spring from the Libraries' connections with state and international organizations: one from the Kansas Library Association College and University Libraries Section (CULS); a second through the University of Latvia, *The Baltic International Yearbook of Cognition, Logic and Communication*; and, the third, from the Library Publishing Coalition, where we host audio and video content from the *Library Publishing Forum Recorded Sessions*.

The NPP coordinator works closely with 27 national and international journal editors, their editorial boards, or designated site administrators who, in turn, work with authors and presenters from across the world. Their reach shows in real-time statistics, where, for example, for a recent one month period we can report almost 20,000 downloads from over 2,100 institutions in 167 countries.

Editors are encouraged to seek national and international members for their editorial boards and to solicit articles from authors worldwide, noting these are two requirements for a journal to get an impact factor. Similar conditions must be met to be awarded the Directory of Open Access Journal (DOAJ) "seal" under their new guidelines.

Other CADS Engagements

Participation on a scholarly communications core competencies task force for NASIG and service on the board and committees for the Library Publishing Coalition (LPC) allows library and CADS team members to influence and collaborate at national and international levels on standards and best practices. Resources from these groups assist others around the world. For example, NASIG's report will benefit educators and employers, providing educators with information for a basis for developing curriculum with a specialized focus, and offering

employers a basis for describing these specialized positions and with criteria upon which to evaluate the performance of those who hold them.

During the American Association of University Presses (AAUP) 2015 meeting, that organization's struggle with open access publishing – something libraries have been dealing with for a number of years – was highlighted. This experience, along with others, led to a cross-pollination grant between AAUP and LPC for 2016 and reinforces CADS' own commitment to work with the University Press of Kansas.

Events

Sponsoring events that educate our K-State community ultimately leads to impact beyond the university by connecting faculty, staff, and students with representatives from national organizations. For example, in addition to the speaker CADS hosted from the White House OSTP in a discussion on federal mandates; we brought the director of Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) on campus to discuss open access; we invited students in to hear a University of Michigan graduate student talk about engaging in and exploring open access; and we hosted Open Textbook Network (OTN) workshops. That event was funded through a provost award which also provided the Libraries' membership in OTN. Those we reach here work with co-authors and educators nationwide. The lessons they took away will better prepare them for their next digital scholarship creation and hopefully find them ready to embrace open access.

Successes

As CADS moves towards the latter half of its second year, can we identify what is working and assess the impact of that work across borders? Will that give CADS a roadmap for the future? We see signs of our local impact through recognition within the annual university progress report. Partnerships – both local and national – that have been created and maintained show and provide success. Open access projects have the potential for expansive, global reach. We are certain articles awarded with K-State Open Access Publishing funds and authors funded by our Open Textbook Initiative will have impact. As reporting methods improve, we will be able to point to download statistics, citations, altmetrics, and other reports to corroborate our beliefs that "open" provides accessibility and visibility to knowledge.

Book reviews are another indicator of success. NPP secured its first reviews from national subject experts for its scholarly monographs publishing initiative and now has workflows in place to manage that process when queries regarding new

submissions come in. Soliciting national or international topical experts for reviews lends credibility to the work as well as to the Press.

NPP began publishing open textbooks in 2014 and added two more in 2015. Our outreach efforts and our authors' word-of-mouth have led to additional inquiries about publishing with us, which also applies to journal and conference publishing. As of June 2016, we are in various stages of adding three new journals, three conference events, and two monographs.

Other signs of NPP success include Forbes Magazine citing an article from the *Journal of Financial Therapy*, and its editor being interviewed by Fox Business News. Another article from that same journal on financial stress among college students has the highest download count from over 800 institutions in 130 countries.

Success can also be counted in the number of faculty who tell us how excited they are to see monthly usage reports and the readership map on their author or editor dashboards. Whether they are an NPP author, editor, or site admin, they realize how far their reach extends by publishing in an open access publication. Some of our sites have their own email lists, Facebook pages, and twitter feeds and use those to tout their impact. We have felt success when they use these channels to show their appreciation of our services.

Success is also reflected in new inquiries we receive about creating open/alternative textbooks, copyright concerns, archiving with K-REx, or publishing with NPP, or responses to both casual and formal conversations at campus events and local and national meetings.

Possible Scenarios for the Future

Local and regional partnerships will provide numerous opportunities to extend and show the impact of research and scholarship at K-State. We anticipate collaborating in shared space, for example, with the establishment of a Digital Humanities Center on campus. After one successful symposium, we look forward to hosting a second on NPP in 2017. Future plans also include partnering with BeoCat and other universities and industries across state lines in a consortial data hub, where K-State would partner to be a spoke of a larger, regional hub. And discussions with the University of Kansas and Wichita State University may lead to support for open access monographs by providing a platform to the university press for back- or out of print content that they would like to make openly available.

CADS has already made policy and procedural changes that will guarantee NPP journals are listed in the DOAJ once newer journals establish a track record. Ensuring our journals are recognized as quality publications is a must. Educating our editors about best practices will provide the journals the chance to be awarded the DOAJ Seal lending them another form of international recognition.

A proactive approach to copyright services through outreach efforts and promotion of the services offered will identify CADS as a central contact for copyright and author rights issues responsible for planning and implementing copyright initiatives, workshops, seminars, and events. Redesigning the copyright website is one of the major goals for preventing plagiarism, as it will provide students with a valuable resource for understanding the laws and ethics surrounding copyright and plagiarism without overburdening them with information. This relates directly to a joint project with the Honor and Integrity System that will focus on checking on plagiarism in ETDRs from previous years.

The CADS director is currently writing an OA textbook on tips and tricks for ejournal publishing. CADS will participate in consortial efforts to create best practices and standards and contribute to national efforts to provide open and easy to locate digital scholarship.

CADS will actively promote use of regional, national, and international content within the public domain, with creative commons licensing, or with a fair-use evaluation. Through use and engagement of free, open, or permissible content we open our faculty, staff, and students to authors and creators beyond our campus community.

A for-credit course for graduate students on open access activities is on CADS 2025 strategic goals. We aim to see CADS established as the primary consultants on open access topics and through collaboration with campus partners, further explore an open access policy or resolution.

Summary

Establishing a digital scholarship center requires a team effort. The progress made by CADS and the accomplishments discussed in this paper are only possible because of individuals and partners across our library, campus, and nation. Stakeholders have contributed in various ways. The center's impact and value will only flourish with their continued support and contributions.

The landscape may shift beneath us and the need for flexibility to adapt will be ever-constant for the plans and foundations of the center to grow. The land beyond us is vast and holds nothing but opportunity—opportunity, which we hope to exceed. By opening access and borders we can do just that.

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