10 strategies to expand your institution’s global research visibility with a next-generation IR
This short paper explores 10 themes of next generation repositories, elevating what is possible, and giving competitive advantage to forward-thinking institutions who are ready to take the next step in their IR strategy.

Since the concept was first launched in 2003, over 5,200 institutions worldwide have adopted an Institutional Repository (IR) to store and manage all their academic research and archival content, publish and manage journals, and more.

In November 2017, the global Confederation of Open Access Repositories (COAR) published the report, Behaviours and Technical Recommendations of the COAR Next Generation Repositories Working Group¹. This sets out a framework positioning IRs as the foundation for a distributed, globally networked infrastructure for scholarly communication, publishing and knowledge sharing.

Technological advances have driven significant progress in the institutional repository (IR) space over the last 15 years, bringing new opportunities for universities to extend the reach of their research output and expertise. The COAR report on Next Generation Repositories (2017) presents the future as an IR that can offer more. This modern IR will use the latest technology and keep up with emerging trends in academia to create a future-proofed platform that optimizes the whole of your institution’s research visibility.

¹Source: www.coar-repositories.org
1. Invest in your IR with discoverability front of mind

Today’s researchers regularly use the internet to find scholarly materials, making it vital that your repository’s content is optimized for discoverability by search engines. This focused purpose expands your reach and gets your institution’s research in front of the right eyes. Through Digital Commons, you instantly benefit from our ongoing Search Engine Optimization (SEO) efforts to bring your scholarship to the forefront of Google, Google Scholar and other search engine results. Discoverability is the most important factor to expose your research to a new and broad audience. Next generation IRs give you the power to bring millions of readers from around the world to your university’s unique materials.
2. Design at scale because you may grow faster than you thought

At scale means that you will be able to confidently say yes to all research projects looking for more visibility. A fully-hosted, cloud-based IR solution will be scalable so that you are never overcompensated when committing to support the research dissemination needs of your campus. From the latest research papers and journal issues, to infinite years of archival content, you’ll have access from anywhere — on or off campus — and instant scalability when you use the cloud. Digital Commons gives you an unparalleled ability to safely preserve all of your institution’s output, whatever file size or format, at no additional cost. Without the need to run a server, you’ll cut down on infrastructure costs and IT support; and it’s all done with one annual, renewable license to reduce your total cost-of-ownership (TCO).

3. Serve as a single home for the full spectrum of content that faculty create

The modern IR is no longer limited to just the published papers of faculty. From born-digital research materials, multimedia projects and working papers, to arts and humanities projects and performances, and emerging applied technology, faculty need help organizing, sharing and documenting the full spectrum of their work. Digital Commons makes sure that all of your faculty’s works are discoverable online and in one place. A modern IR will also provide research distribution services to support faculty from every corner of your institution. If you’re confused about how your IR could support a particular group of faculty, you should consider whether or not you have the right platform that allows you to offer the full suite of services necessary to house the range of work being produced.

4. Connect your IR program to your institution’s strategic goals

An institutional repository serves a unique purpose inside your institution, and it’s important to align it with what matters most to your university. Is it to boost brand and reputation, highlight exceptional student learning opportunities, open new pathways into emerging research projects and funding opportunities, serve the community and the world, or something else entirely? Formulating a clear direction will allow you to build a strategy that fully incorporates your IR to achieve the goals you’ve set. Digital Commons helps institutions to create this strategic roadmap — and a dedicated team of experts and consultants are ready to help you organize your platform to best highlight what’s unique about your institution.
5. Access real-time metrics and data visualizations to shape future strategy

Showing your institution’s influence is vital to increasing it. This can give you a financial case to take to decision-makers as they decide which departments and projects to subsidize. Seeing who is reading your institution’s research, and from where, brings opportunities for new projects to secure funding. It can also open new relationships between institutions as correlations turn into collaborations. Digital Commons offers an integrated dashboard and impact suite, which shows your institution’s global influence in real-time through beautifully realized data visualizations. Digital Commons’ own algorithm combats inflated download counts, providing an accurate picture of readership activity. These unrivaled tools clearly illustrate your institution’s strengths, open more doors to potential collaborations and show your researchers the influence their work has on the world.

6. Be discovered alongside the research of the best universities in the world

Any IR risks being an isolated island of content. Only by connecting your university’s research with the research output from other institutions can your faculty’s scholarship be discovered and appreciated. The Digital Commons Network means your faculty’s openly published works can get discovered alongside the openly accessible works of their peers, ensuring the outputs are understood accurately within the context of the worldwide movements in their disciplines.

7. Use your IR to showcase not just the content but the authors themselves

A modern IR includes an element that promotes the people who make your institution unique: faculty, students and other authors who want to see themselves reflected in the IR. The Expert Gallery Suite is designed to showcase your people and their expertise as individuals.
8. Stay ahead of international standards

It is critical not to be caught off guard and unable to respond to changing information standards and requirements, such as GDPR. Will your IR be compliant with the next generation of standards for counting readership downloads of full text? Respecting the standards of the open access community gives you access to the research output of other institutions, as they benefit from your own output. Interoperability is key to the success of your IR, ensuring that content stays portable and compatible with on-campus systems, as well as complying with OAI data harvesting, improving your SEO capabilities. Digital Commons is fully registered with OAI-PMH, and you too can be a committed community member.

9. Rely on dedicated experts to support your IR goals along with the platform

The modern IR is supported not just by a team of technical experts, and not just by a team of product experts either. A modern IR is supported by an integrated team of scholarly communication experts who leverage their experience of working with hundreds of institutions worldwide in order to share best practices and models, and to support your successful IR program. Unlimited support means that with Digital Commons, you can say yes to your faculty, knowing our experts will be there to support your scholarly communication activities no matter how big or daunting the undertaking.

10. Tap into the power of publishing

A truly next generation repository means the ability to launch and manage a successful campus publishing program. Commercial publishing houses are often reluctant to publish material in highly specialized or emerging fields, leaving it to the university to create their own journals. Unlike any other IR, Digital Commons includes professional journal publishing workflows to smoothly handle all aspects of publishing, such as peer review, issue management and more. This added functionality offers a scalable and comprehensive solution to raise the profile of all your campus-published journals, giving you even more visibility on the global stage. And in today’s world, journal publishing isn’t just for faculty: increasingly, universities are giving students the tools to edit and publish their own peer-reviewed journals, which gives them robust preparation for future careers as researchers.
Digital Commons™

The next generation of institutional repositories has arrived. For more information on how you can transform the output of your institution, visit www.elsevier.com/solutions/digital-commons

If you would be interested in a virtual tour of the Digital Commons platform, request a consultation