ScholarWorks at WMU

By Maira Bundza, ScholarWorks Librarian

Imagine going to one website and accessing the scholarly, research, and creative works of Western Michigan University faculty, staff, and students! Not just a bibliography in a CV or an abstracting index, but links to actual full text documents. Not just from a few departments, but from all the colleges and all the departments. Under the auspices of the University Libraries, WMU has just opened such a site and such a scholarly repository—called ScholarWorks at WMU (http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/).

Because this repository has “gone live” only in the last few months, we don’t have something from every department, but do have eight out of the nine colleges represented. At the time of this writing—late December 2011—17 departments and six other units have posted entries and links with more “getting on board” every week.

The Challenge

The University Libraries has been collecting books and other publications of our faculty and students since we first opened our doors over a hundred years ago. Our Archives and Regional History Collections, a branch of Waldo, has acquired and indexed WMU’s official archives, papers, publications, and miscellaneous items since 1956. However, as needs and formats change, the Libraries must collect, preserve, archive, and manage today’s scholarly output in a digital format that makes access easy as well as essential.

As a catalyst to our efforts, the WMU Academic Strategic Plan of 2010, Strategy 5.5, instructs the University to: “establish an electronic repository for research and scholarly communication,” and assigned this task to the University Libraries. The Libraries’ administration researched options, and with funding from the Provost, established ScholarWorks at WMU on the Digital Commons platform, which is owned by Berkeley Electronic Press or bepress—http://www.bepress.com/.

ScholarWorks at WMU Emerges

The ScholarWorks Implementation Team in the library consists of Associate Deans Barbara Cockrell and Scott Garrison; ScholarWorks Librarian Maira Bundza; Manager Paul Howell, Digitization Center; Head Miranda Howard, Technical Services Department; and Director Sharon Carlson, University Archives and Regional History Collections. This team first established the overall goals of the WMU repository.

1. To increase the visibility of and access to WMU’s intellectual output worldwide
2. To collect WMU’s research, educational and creative scholarship in one place
3. To provide a way for WMU scholars to disseminate work while retaining copyright

4. To preserve and provide long term access with a static WMU URL

Although the University Libraries will administer the scholarly repository, departments will be able to control their own content and submit it to the repository themselves.

Since January 2011, the Libraries has been training faculty, staff and graduate students to administer parts of the repository and the Digital Commons platform. This education also involved a few select departments and units on campus who agreed to place materials into the repository.

We needed to build a foundation so when we announced ScholarWorks at WMU to the full campus in late 2011, all faculty, staff, and students could see examples of the types of scholarly contributions that can and should be included. Once started, the momentum has energized across campus. By Thanksgiving 2011, we had our first 1000 documents in the repository.

What’s There Already?

Faculty publications will be a major focus although there are some difficulties with previously published articles since most publishers do not allow someone to take the PDF form of his/her article and place it in a repository. Many publishers do allow pre or post-prints to be in the repository, i.e., the manuscript that was first sent in to the publisher, or the manuscript after editing. Fortunately, there are procedures to check ownership rights and faculty are encouraged not to sign away their rights in order to put their work in a repository. Moreover, faculty not only publish articles, but have conference presentations, reports, posters, project descriptions, images, performances, and other documentation of their work that they may have the rights to put in a repository. An example of a selection of a department’s work can be seen under the Library Faculty and Staff Publications in ScholarWorks.
Student work comes in many forms from dissertations and master’s theses to honors theses, capstone or senior projects, research posters, etc. This is one instance where we will not necessarily be putting up full text of all the work and making it available as open access to the world until we have permission from the students, and, in some cases, the faculty, to do so. The Lee Honors College has asked our Digitization Center to digitize all the past honors theses—about 2200 of them. Over 500 have been digitized and entered into ScholarWorks, but only the most recent, where the student had the opportunity to sign the permission form, are actually available full text. The Honors College will be contacting all alumni and asking for permission to make their honors theses available publicly. We will then be able to go into the system and turn “on” the full text. The chair of one of our departments had written an honors thesis at WMU some years ago, and he has given permission to make his public. Other repositories have reported that student work quality improves when students know their work not only will be reviewed by their professors, but also made public to the world, and especially to potential employers.

Western Michigan University is known internationally for its annual International Congress on Medieval Studies. Congress organizers have been looking for a system to compile conference paper proposals, and the ScholarWorks platform has this feature. The Medieval Institute was also interested in making available the conference programs from all the previous congresses—46 of them—going back to 1962. They had digital copies from the most recent years, but the rest needed to be digitized by our Digitization Center before they could be put up on the site.

ScholarWorks has the capability to support online journals—not only displaying the finished journal online, but facilitating the submission, review and subscription processes. Two journals are currently in ScholarWorks at WMU with another two to start asking for submissions in early 2012. Setting up a formal journal is a bit more complicated than all the other materials in ScholarWorks, so there is a one-time set-up fee of $1500.

Reading Horizons is a journal of literacy and language arts published quarterly since 1960 by the Dorothy J. McGinnis Reading Center & Clinic, College of Education & Human Development. The most recent years are now online, and we have digitized all the issues back to 1960 and will be placing all online in 2012. The journal hopes to go totally online with the next volume, giving it a couple of more issues in print to prepare everyone for the changeover.

The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy has been under discussion in the Department of Occupational Therapy, and it was fortuitous that the University purchased a platform that they can use as a vehicle for their journal since they now are ready to launch. The department recently received a $2 million gift to support its programs, and the new journal was announced at the same time as the donation.

Teaching/Writing will be a new journal for “writing teacher” education produced under the aegis of the English Department, which expects to publish its first issue early in 2012.

Green Manufacturing Research Journal, a project of Manufacturing Engineering Professor John Patten, was discussed first as possibly utilizing the full journal platform, but it was decided to create a page and upload articles as they become available. This basic approach has seen strong usage with a record of “some of the most accessed articles” in ScholarWorks—giving support to the flexibility of the platform to provide open access to our user communities.

ScholarWorks is a great place to put up departmental and other newsletters. These ephemeral publications often get lost both in print and on people’s computers. We have put up a complete set of Prism: Western Michigan University’s Newsletter for Academic Affairs from the Office of the Provost and Inquiry from the Office of the Vice President for Research. By the time you read this, all the issues of Gathering from the Friends of the University Libraries should also be available in ScholarWorks.

And More...

There is an image gallery function, where images can be uploaded into the repository and displayed as thumbnails or in a slide show. Currently we have history professor Kenneth Steuer uploading World War I POW camp images in an image gallery. Single images can be added to departmental or project Web pages in ScholarWorks to make them more visually appealing. We are adding the cover of each journal issue, when we upload journals.

Incidentally, an added benefit is that authors and administrators of particular pages can get reports of how many times people have looked at the cover page or citation information and how many times someone has downloaded the full text of a document.

Not to be confused with ScholarWorks at WMU, we also have a companion system called SelectedWorks, where faculty, staff and graduate students can create their own professional pages. These are online CV’s where citations can be listed for books and other materials that cannot be uploaded full text into ScholarWorks. But, if full text is available, we can link out to it. The advantage of SelectedWorks over other faculty websites is that this will keep count of how many times someone has accessed a particular document. The current WMU homepage has not been always easy to use, and many faculty do not have more than minimal information about themselves on their departmental pages. They will be able to link to their SelectedWorks page from their departmental page, and if they ever leave the University, they will be able to take this page with them, as it is not on a WMU site. To start a SelectedWorks page, one must go to http://works.bepress.com and instructions for starting and editing a page are on the ScholarWorks guide at http://libguides.wmich.edu/scholarworks/.

Only a Beginning...

This report is just a first look at ScholarWorks at WMU. There is every reason to anticipate that the WMU ScholarWorks repository will become a “Point of Pride,” a valuable resource—past, present and future—of the diverse, scholarly contributions of the many communities at Western Michigan University.

[For questions, please contact Maira Bundza at maira.bundza@wmich.edu or wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu]
You Asked, We Answered!

By Brad Dennis, Education Librarian

John Ruskin commented in 1866 “What we think, or what we know, or what we believe is, in the end, of little consequence. The only consequence is what we do.” All of us collect data, analyze data, make reports to others, and then begin the cycle again without acting upon our knowledge. Often, we fail to determine what could and should be done, come up with a plan to implement, and most importantly, take action. But, assessment on WMU campus has been elevated in recent years with the focus on accountability to those we serve. Specifically, the University Libraries has been asking those we serve (students, faculty, and staff) to rate the libraries and offer suggestions on how to improve the libraries, whether it is service, the environment, the collection, or access to the collection.

We Surveyed and Analyzed

In 2004, 2007, and 2010, the Western Michigan University Libraries administered the LibQUAL+™ assessment instrument for academic libraries. This widely-used and tested, standardized, web-based questionnaire is designed to measure patrons’ perceptions and expectations of library quality of service in three important areas or domains: (1) Affect of Service (customer service); (2) Information Control (library collections, resources, and access to resources); and (3) The Library as Place (physical environment). The questionnaire portion of the survey asks the respondent to answer 27 questions using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (low) to 5 (high). Respondents are asked to provide 3 responses to each of the 27 survey items: (1) the minimum level of service that the respondent would expect; (2) the desired level of service that respondent would like, and (3) the perceived level of service quality that the respondent believed the WMU Libraries currently provides.

The survey also includes an option for respondents to leave comments in a box with instructions to: “Please enter any comments about library service in the box below.” This open entry comment box was well used by the respondents. In 2004, 2007, and 2010, LibQUAL+™ provided the WMU University Libraries with the summary data set and preliminary analysis. The University Libraries LibQUAL+™ Task Force then analyzed the data and conducted content analysis of the open ended questions using Atlas.TI content analysis software. During each assessment cycle, the LibQUAL+™ Task Force reported several times to the University Libraries administration and staff to explain the survey and distribute findings in an effort to improve library performance.

The University Library Administrative Team and several committees and task forces used the qualitative and quantitative LibQUAL+™ data in order to determine how to provide better library service and a learning environment for all WMU students and faculty. The major goal was to influence improvements in all three domains: Affect of Service, Information Control, and Library as Place. This article is a report on what you (our WMU faculty, students, and community) value, what you asked for, and how the University Libraries implemented your requests in order to serve you, our patrons and users.

You Asked …

One very common feature of all academic libraries around the globe is an intense interest in access to information. In an increasingly online environment, access is especially important and your comments and ratings indicate that this is the most important area to concentrate our efforts. To this end, we have undertaken several measures to make information more accessible. Possibly most obvious to our users, we improved the University Library website several times between 2004 and 2010. Many of the improvements were made after the University Libraries conducted usability studies in an effort to determine what areas needed improvement and just where the “bottlenecks” to access existed. The Libraries also adopted new proxy server access so that faculty and students logging in from home or any off-campus location would not have to download software or change any settings in order to connect to library resources.

And We Answered …

Not so long ago, a student or faculty member would have to search multiple collections for journal titles in the catalog and then again in other related online connections for full-text articles online.

One of the greatest improvements that the Libraries has made since 2004 is the “Find It @ WMU” citation linking software followed by customization of that interface. This software searches all 400-plus databases and collections that the library owns in order to find full-text articles online. “Find It @ WMU” also indicates whether we have a paper copy of the subscription in the University Libraries. This puts the entire journal collection of articles at the patron’s fingertips by retrieving all full-text articles in the collection along with information regarding the location and holdings of all print journals. All of this searching is initiated at the point of need when a patron is searching any index or library search engine and selects the “Find It @ WMU” button in order to locate the article. Moreover, when neither online nor print copies are available, the user can immediately request, through our Resource Sharing office, a copy of the article via interlibrary loan. Requests for the text of the article or other items not available in our Libraries are often answered within a relatively short turnaround time, i.e., you have an electronic copy or the item physically in hand.

You Asked …

Another common request of all academic library users, including WMU faculty and students, is to increase the number of journal subscriptions with full-text online availability.

“Overall, I think the library does well with the resources available. We still need more in the way of electronic journal subscriptions, but the database selection is very good, and the ILL is consistently outstanding — by far the best of the five institutions at which I have been on staff.” — 2007 History Faculty

“Overall, the services that the library provides are very learner-oriented. I particularly like the peer reviewed journal that you make available online — it’s very helpful! If I could offer any suggestions, I would ask that you try to make more journals available online. Otherwise, keep up the good work!” — 2007 Social Sciences / Psychology Graduate Student

“I know that the library just increased the full text online availability, and I greatly appreciate it. I hope we can expand our subscriptions. Knowing that we already have several, I find it frustrating to come across journals I cannot access which seem to have the perfect article but only an abstract available.” — 2010 Educational Leadership, Research & Technology Graduate Student

And We Answered …

In response to these and many similar requests, the University Libraries has steadily increased journal collections, especially electronic full-text online col-
collections. Other access improvements include an improved New Catalog to search for books and other materials and PowerSearch, an interdisciplinary library search engine that locates any and all types of material in the collections, e.g., print and eBooks, DVDs, newspapers, magazine and journal articles, dissertations, etc. using a single search box. Many of the new databases now use relevancy ranking with the option to limit by date. This is an approach similar to other search engines like Google and Yahoo. Every time WMU students take the LibQUAL survey, they have identified the survey statement “modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information” as one of their most important desires. In response, the University Libraries has installed workstations fully loaded with Microsoft Office software. However, in the first surveys, students were quick to point out a flaw: “It’s annoying to have a separate card to pay for copies. It would be easier if we could just use our Bronco ID for copies, especially since we have Bronco Bucks and get 500 copies at the computers (in the labs).” 2007 Education Undergraduate Student

And We Answered...

Beginning September, 2011, the University Libraries was pleased to announce quietly that this service need has been addressed and resolved. Students, faculty, and staff can now print from their University print accounts in the University Libraries. As a result, students [and faculty] have flooded the Libraries to work on and print their assignments. Moreover, the presence of helpful staff nearby means that more one-on-one assistance is available—and being used.

Other ongoing student service requests have also been addressed. Fines and fees have been lowered and the means to place hold requests for items on reserve and retrievals from storage have been introduced and improved. Other comments requesting a book retrieval and hold process were addressed.

“Where I recall a book, I can choose where I wish to pick it up, but for a book that hasn’t been checked out, I wish there would be something like “Book pick-up request.” The book I need is in Waldo, then [when] I put a request, the book could be delivered to Ed library for me to pick up.” 2007 Education Graduate Student

Patrons can now request books to be placed on hold for pick-up at any library branch location. This semester one of our most popular services, inter-library loan, has expanded to include book delivery through intercampus mail to faculty and staff. This responsive service is clearly and consistently valued by our users. In addition, the University Libraries has introduced additional service training for all library employees and training manuals have been created to help train new employees so that the user with concerns can be accommodated effectively and in a timely fashion.

You Asked...

Another consistent request has been for extended library hours: “Keep the library open late. We need to be able to work all night.” 2010 Psychology Graduate Student

This request and others like it have prompted the libraries to extend open hours at Waldo Library until 3 AM from Sunday through Thursday. Today’s library user is also accustomed to an atmosphere that includes comfortable seating and different study environments from quiet areas to team discussion areas. The University Libraries has added comfortable seating in lounge areas in Waldo Library and more comfortable seating has been planned for the Sangren Hall Education Library scheduled for completion in fall of 2012. Atmosphere is more important than we realized as shown in the following comments:

“I like the section in the basement [lower level] where you can eat, relax, and still study. There should be more areas like these because it helps me stay in this environment. Therefore, I can take a break and eat lunch and then get back to my studies. It helps a lot that I do not have to leave to eat. I can bring a lunch and eat it here. Before, I was not aware of this area, therefore I would not come to the library, but I do now!” 2010 Sociology Graduate Student

“Simply coming down to the library to sit in quietness to study has greatly affected my grades, mainly because there is nothing to get distracted in here with.” 2010 Engineering & Applied Sciences - Interdisciplinary 1st Year Undergraduate

Another research facilitator is the provision of the RefWorks citation management software that stores citations imported from databases and is capable of creating bibliographic references for the user that can be copied and pasted into word processing software like Microsoft Word. The citation style can be selected from major styles for any discipline (APA, MLA, etc.) The University Libraries also offers workshops on using the RefWorks and Write-N-Cite software that imports in-text citations and creates a reference list in the Word document as the user is composing his or her manuscript or paper.

On to 2013...

As the Libraries responded to the LibQual surveys on three different occasions, it was obvious that the user respondents were positive about the success of the Libraries’ improvement efforts. A review of our data shows the steady increase of the perceived quality level of the University Libraries for all groups (faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students) between the years of 2004, 2007, and 2010.

The lowest scores were in the information control domain, actually falling below their minimum expectations in 2004 for faculty users in the Information Control Domain. We then compared our 2010 results with those in the past years to the results of peer institutions and found that our users, especially faculty, assessed our information control as highly valued. The University Libraries received minimal negative responses to questions and respondents rated our collections, service, and space closer to the desired expectations than the ratings that peer institutions received.

The WMU Libraries will again participate in administering LibQUAL+TM in the spring of 2013. Every response to the assessment that is described above has brought a good response even as we fine-tune our actions. The Libraries’ administration, faculty, and staff anticipate that the University Libraries will again experience an increase in the mean of all three domains for all three user groups. Based on the comments already received, it appears that the University Libraries has made significant contributions to making information more accessible, improving access to research, and thus contributing to student learning and faculty research and teaching at WMU. We cannot say it more eloquently than one of our alumni:

“The library system at WMU is phenomenal! I completed my comprehensive examinations using library resources and successfully defended my doctoral dissertation and will be graduating May 1, 2010. I used the interlibrary loan quite often and the materials that I ordered were always prompt, often the next business day. The majority of my searches were conducted online from a remote source and I was always able to gain access to the information that I needed. The different search engines (e.g., PsychINFO, ERIC) are invaluable and the online library is extremely user friendly. I have no suggestions for the library because all of my needs were amply met through the Education Library in Sangren Hall, Waldo Library, and online access to journal articles and information. One last issue, thank you sooooo much for the Find it @ WMU feature. I was able to gain access to many of the journal articles that I needed by using that option. My doctorate is accomplished because of an excellent library system here at WMU.” 2010 Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology Doctoral Student

[For questions, please contact Brad Dennis at brad.dennis@wmich.edu.]
Building a Legacy

By Sharon Carlson,
Director, WMU Archives & Regional History Collections

For over fifty years, the Western Michigan University Archives and Regional History Collections has been committed to building an historical collection of manuscripts, printed works, newspapers, photographs, maps, oral histories and other materials documenting the history of the University and southwestern Michigan. The origins of the Archives date back to the summer of 1956 when WMU President Paul Sangren asked Dr. James Knauss, the retired chair and faculty member of the history department to sort and arrange the papers of Dwight B. Waldo, WMU’s first president, and those of Ernest Burnham, who headed the rural Education Department during WMU’s early years. In 1959, Dr. Alan Brown, a faculty member in the History Department, was chosen to take over the archival program on a part-time basis. The next year an archival committee headed by Dr. Willis Dunbar was established and it recommended enlarging the program to include regional materials. In 1962, the Michigan Historical Commission designated the Western Michigan University as a depository for public records of twelve counties in southwestern Michigan. The joint mission to preserve both WMU archives AND the regional history of southwest Michigan catalyzed a tremendous growth in the depth and breadth of the unit.

Over the decades, parts of the Archives and Regional History Collections have been physically stored in several locations. The first location was probably a closet in Sangren Hall. This makes sense given that Sangren was also the location of the History Department, but the closet was quickly outgrown. By the 1960s, Dr. Katharine Stokes, head of the Library, provided space for the collections, but this space was supplemented by storage across the campus and it did not offer a place for the public. When Waldo Library was remodeled and expanded in 1967, the Archives and Regional History Collections moved to more spacious quarters in the lower level of the building. The area had access to an auditorium and public working areas near the Collections.

By the late 1980s, WMU’s entire campus was in the midst of many physical changes, and the College of Business, situated on the East Campus, was poised to move into new quarters on the main campus. Waldo Library was filled to capacity and no longer had adequate space for students or its regular collections. With the new construction and expansion of Waldo Library, the Archives and Regional History Collections moved to what was identified as a “temporary” location in East Hall in early 1990. The former business library (Western’s original library building) on the East Campus soon reverted to use as overflow storage for the University Libraries. The Business Library, as a separate branch of the University Libraries, disappeared as it was integrated into the Waldo collections.

While the East Campus location provided opportunities for growth and elevated the collections to the status of branch library, maintaining collections under poor conditions and providing appropriate workspace for employees and amenities for researchers has been challenging. East Hall had been deteriorating for years and the “temporary” relocation suggested that no major repairs could or would be supported. Some 15 years later, it is evident there is a need for a new building to sustain the growing operations of the Archives and Regional History Collections and provide climate-controlled, secure storage for collections.

As the years passed, the University and Libraries administration has explored several existing building options on and off campus, but in all instances, the buildings proved inadequate because of the requirements for weight bearing floor capacities or the exorbitant cost to install the proper environmental controls in an existing, aging building. Removing lead paint and asbestos also increased the cost of using an existing building and many of the buildings considered did not have sufficient space for future growth. A 2008 study of McCracken Hall was appealing in that it would relocate the Archives in closer proximity to Waldo Library but the cost exceeded 30 million dollars. With an estimated budget of $11 million, new construction is the least expensive and most efficient option. It will also result in a building that is more energy efficient thereby costing less to operate in the long run.

In March 2012, 100 faculty, students, and community members gathered for a Town Hall Meeting at the Fetzer Center to view the preliminary designs for a new building. The designs resulted from nearly two years of meetings with WMU Campus Facilities staff and the architects from the SHW Group. Archival and shelving consultants were also part of the process. Presentations were made by the architects of the SHW Group and staff of WMU Campus Facilities and the University Libraries. Audience members posed several questions and gathered to speak with the presenters.

The proposed building is planned to house (1) the archival collections, (2) materials currently in the libraries overflow collection and (3) some volumes presently located in Waldo Library. It features an atrium with display cases, a dedicated classroom, a group study room, reading room, special rooms for document and collection conservation activities, and a storage area for manuscripts. One of the most striking features of the building will not be in the public area. The majority of the materials will be stored using a system of 30-foot high shelves, accessible by a lift. This will allow for a smaller building footprint and maximize the HVAC systems to provide the optimal building envelope to maintain strict environmental controls.

The key site under consideration is near the College of Health and Human Services on Oakland Drive. The location is important because

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the building needs to be accessible for students traveling by foot, bus, or car. The materials housed in the Archives support the research and teaching mission of Western Michigan University, and last year, nearly 1000 students took part in class sessions. The range of classes using the collections is impressive and includes first year experience, film, nursing, communications, English, and, of course, history students.

The facility also needs to be easy for the public researchers to find and have adequate parking. Public researchers range from community researchers studying buildings or genealogy to traveling scholars. Among the collections that draw international researchers is the French-Michilimackinac Research and Translation Project, the largest collection in the United States of microfilmed French documents about the history of European settlement in the Great Lakes and North America. Researchers have also traveled to consult the vast array of paper company records, which include materials from the Kalamazoo Paper Company, Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Company, and Watervliet Paper Company. In recent years, The Upjohn Company records have added a unique set of historical and international pharmaceutical data. The WMU collections have been the basis for a number of publications, and since 1990, more than 30 books from university and private presses have relied on the resources of the WMU Archives and Regional History Collections.

The long-awaited and much needed building will be constructed with private monies including grants, gifts, and private donations. The state funding formula is different for buildings that are not primarily classrooms so WMU will be reaching out to the Michigan and regional communities and benefactors who have helped this University to become not only a regional but a national treasure for Michigan education and research. This building, when completed, will mark our commitment to the Legacy Collections that have been entrusted to us. Our motto might well be that WMU and our supporters will sustain this window to the past with an investment in the future.