

# Creating a Digital Solution to Preserve Institutional Memory

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## Background

In a research environment, dissemination of new knowledge is an imperative. Science itself is advanced by increased access to scholarly work. However, under the current model of research dissemination, publications can only be seen by the few people who subscribe to the journal. This limits the impact of research and its ability to influence subsequent work. Creation of a central online location to manage, preserve and maintain intellectual and historical output of an institution addresses dissemination, long-term preservation and thus sustainability of institutional knowledge.

## Barriers

Several barriers exist to effectively preserving scholarly output:

- Lack of centralized location for research creates inconsistencies in care and access to items
- Faculty and researchers unnecessarily transfer copyright to the publisher at the time of publication, making their own research unavailable for dissemination to students and colleagues
- Journal costs outpace budgets making it difficult to collect all resources authored by faculty
- Electronic journal content is licensed rather than sold, so institutions no longer own retrospective copies but instead pay for access to those items

## DigitalCommons@CalPoly

The screenshot shows the homepage of DigitalCommons@CalPoly. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, About, FAQ, and My Account. Below this is the Cal Poly logo and the DigitalCommons@CalPoly branding. The main content area features a search bar with a 'Search' button and a dropdown menu for 'in this repository'. There are also links for 'Browse Research and Scholarship' with sub-links for 'Colleges, departments and administrative units', 'SelectedWorks Gallery (personal researcher pages)', and 'Journals and peer-reviewed series'. A 'Paper of the Day' section highlights 'Sustainable Environmental Design Education (SEDE): A Curriculum Model for Architects and Landscape Architects' by Margot McDonald, Polly Cooper, et al. Other sections include 'At a Glance' with 'Top 10 Downloads All time' and 'Recent Additions 20 most recent additions'. A sidebar on the right contains 'LIBRARY SERVICES ROBERT E. KENNEDY LIBRARY', a search bar, and a 'Browse' menu with options for Collections, Disciplines, and Authors. An 'Author Corner' section includes links for 'Author FAQ' and 'Submit Research'.

<http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu>

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## Implementation

The DigitalCommons@CalPoly is a central online location to promote discovery, research, cross-disciplinary collaboration and support for instruction by collecting, preserving and providing access to scholarly, intellectual and creative work generated by Cal Poly faculty, students and administrative units.

The institutional repository system utilizes standards-based Berkeley Electronic Press software. This system is specifically designed for interoperability (OAI), reusability (persistent URLs), sustainability (Dublin Core standards & platform independent software) and scalability (accommodates growth over time).

## Preliminary Findings

- Preservation of institutional memory has universal campus appeal
- Faculty are keenly interested in preserving student work
- Faculty often do not have copies of their past scholarship
- Great potential for implementation of author copyright retention
- Majority of publishers allow published faculty work to be made available in the institutional repository

## Next Steps

The DigitalCommons@CalPoly will continue service to faculty while extending access to content from campus-sponsored conferences, administrative units and journals.