ResearchGate vs. the Institutional Repository: Competition or Complement?

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ResearchGate vs. the Institutional Repository: Competition or Complement?

Julia Lovett & Andrée Rathemacher
University of Rhode Island

Rhode Island’s public research university

Land-grant and sea-grant institution

Research strengths (per Web of Science):

- Engineering
- Environmental sciences
- Chemistry
- Oceanography
- Marine freshwater biology
- Pharmacology
- Psychology
URI Open Access Policy

Passed by unanimous vote of Faculty Senate in March 2013

Permissions-based policy (Harvard-style)

“Green” Open Access

Applies to all faculty

Supported by manual workflow that relies on active faculty participation

Search alerts notify library staff of new articles by URI authors

Staff e-mail authors for manuscripts; deposit on authors’ behalf
Our study

Population study of full-time URI faculty (September 2016)

- Which faculty members have uploaded full-text articles to ResearchGate?
- Which faculty members have contributed articles to the URI OA Policy?

Web-based survey of full-time URI faculty (October 2016)

- Familiarity with both the OA Policy and ResearchGate
- Level of participation in both the OA Policy and ResearchGate
- Motivations, benefits, concerns
- If not participated in OA Policy or ResearchGate, why?
- Understanding of legality of sharing articles
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Discipline</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>OAP Articles (≥ 2013)</th>
<th>RG full-text articles uploaded by author (total)</th>
<th>RG full-text articles uploaded by author (≥ 2013)</th>
<th>RG profile?</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Population study results

- 47% of URI full-time faculty had profiles on ResearchGate.
- 34% of URI full-time faculty contributed full-text articles to ResearchGate.

BUT FOR COMPARISON…

- **ResearchGate**: # of faculty who provided full-texts of articles published *after March 2013*

vs.

- **Open Access Policy**: # of faculty who provided articles in compliance with policy (passed in March 2013)
Percent of faculty in population study contributing full-texts of articles to the URI OA Policy and ResearchGate (n=558)

Population study results

% of URI faculty contributing full-texts (articles published after March 2013) to ResearchGate and the Open Access Policy

- ResearchGate (RG): 20.3%
- Open Access Policy (OAP): 15.4%
Population study results

Percent of faculty in population study contributing full-texts of articles to the URI OA Policy, RG (articles published after March 2013), both, and neither (n=558)
Population study results

Percent of faculty in population study contributing full-texts of articles to the URI OA Policy, RG (articles published after March 2013), and both, by broad discipline (n=558)
Population study results

Percent of faculty in population study contributing full-texts of articles to the URI OA Policy, RG (articles published after March 2013), and both, by rank (n=558)
Survey results: Demographics

- 23 multiple-choice questions through SurveyMonkey
- Sent successfully to 710 full-time URI faculty (all ranks)
- 135 responses = 19% response rate
- Responses by College: relative to distribution of faculty,
  - Arts & Sciences under-represented while College of the Environment & Life Sciences over-represented (11-12%)
- Responses by Rank
  - Full professors over-represented by ~15%
  - Assistant Professors and Lecturers under-represented
- 51% of respondents complied with OA Policy (vs. 13-14% actual rate across URI)
Authors think ResearchGate offers more benefits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>DigitalCommons@URI</th>
<th>ResearchGate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connected with other researchers</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared my work more broadly</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased the visibility and impact of my work</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracked statistics on downloads of my work</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archived my work for the long term</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey: Benefits of having articles available in DigitalCommons@URI (n=68) and ResearchGate (n=55)
Authors dislike sharing manuscript versions:

- Preference for final published version of record
- Not wanting multiple versions of same work available
- Not wanting version with potential errors and typos to be publicly available
- Manuscript often messy => potentially misunderstandings by readers
- Manuscript does not share pagination of final version => difficult to cite
- Not having ready access to accepted manuscript version, especially when not corresponding author
- Time and effort to reassemble manuscript, e.g. reintegrating figures and tables into text
Authors are confused about copyright:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Open Access Policy</th>
<th>ResearchGate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal under copyright law</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violates the copyright of the publisher</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey: Opinion of legality of complying with the OA Policy (n=131) and posting article full-texts on ResearchGate (n=126)
Sharers gonna share...

Statistical analysis revealed that having shared research on one platform meant an author was more likely to have shared on the other.

“Sharing” by Ryan Roberts is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.
Conclusions:

- URI faculty who posted articles to RG *more* likely to have complied with OA Policy, not *less*.
- Only a minority of faculty are sharing their work through either service.

  => Academic social networks not a threat to OA.

  => We need to recruit more faculty to share their work in general.
Conclusions:

- Strong preference for sharing publisher PDF; aversion to sharing author manuscript versions.

  => Education and outreach to authors around options for legally sharing articles is needed.

  => Green OA through IRs will remain an activity of a minority of authors?

    => If so, supports efforts to hasten the transition to Gold OA publishing system.
Discussion questions:

=> Librarians: What are your experiences with faculty authors and academic social networks like ResearchGate and Academia.edu?

=> Why don’t more faculty share their work in general?

- Are there significant ways they are sharing besides IRs and ASNs?
- Will sharing by authors always be a minority activity?
- How can sharing be effectively incentivized?

=> Have others also experienced authors’ dislike for sharing their manuscript versions?

- If this is common, should we focus more on the transition to Gold OA, so that OA doesn’t depend so much on authors?
Questions?

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