The Internet and the abundance of low-cost publishing technologies have made online publishing and the exchange of scholarly information easier than ever, while intensifying some crucial issues in scholarly communication. Skyrocketing journal prices, the explosion of new scholarly publications, a complicated and restrictive rights management climate, and concerns about long-term preservation of ‘born-digital’ material—these are among the challenges faced by academic institutions charged with preserving and providing access to the scholarly record.

One response is the development of institutional repositories to capture and make accessible the research output of an institution’s faculty. KU ScholarWorks, launched in 2005 and now populated with more than 1,000 entries, is a local example. Another emerging strategy is library-based support for new models of scholarly publishing.

A new partnership between the KU-sponsored journal, Biodiversity Informatics (BI), and Information Services’ Digital Initiatives program illustrates the new roles for scholarly publishers, libraries and IT in digital publishing.

BI is an electronic journal focusing on the emerging field of biodiversity informatics—the creation, integration, analysis, and understanding of information regarding biological diversity. Because there is no print version of the journal (nor printing or shipping costs), editors are free to publish as few or as many papers as meet their quality standards, and can publish articles continuously as they become ready throughout the year. As an open access (continued on page 2)
Institutional Collaboration

KU’s Biodiversity Informatics Journal and Digital Initiatives Partner to Create A New Model of Scholarly Publishing (cont. from page 1)

journal, there are no subscription payments or permissions issues to manage. Authors retain the copyright to their work, and BI is freely available online to anyone with Internet access, thus maximizing its potential reach and impact.

BI was launched three years ago by A. Townsend Peterson, curator of ornithology at the Natural History Museum and professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Jorge Soberón and David Vieglais, senior scientists in the Biodiversity Research Center, and several other colleagues at KU and the University of Colorado.

Partnering with Digital Initiatives means that the journal can leverage the technical expertise and network infrastructure managed by Information Services to achieve a more stable, long-term technical environment for the journal. This helps ensure the long-term accessibility of the content, gives journal articles a permanent location on the Web that can be used for reliable citations, and frees journal staff from worrying about technical issues—allowing them to focus on what they are most interested in—developing and publishing content.

The Digital Initiatives program will continue to gather information about the scope of publishing activity occurring on campus, engage interested faculty editors on scholarly communication issues, identify potential campus partners interested in electronic publishing, and develop ways in which Information Services can support such efforts.

BI is published using Open Journal Systems (OJS), an open source journal management and publishing system developed by the Canadian-based Public Knowledge Project as part of its efforts to expand and improve access to research. OJS is currently used by over 800 journals worldwide, and provides comprehensive support for publishing electronic journals, including online submission of manuscripts, management of the peer-review process, and final publication of articles, all in a single electronic environment.

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—Brian Rosenblum, scholarly digital initiatives librarian, contributed to this article.

Relevant Links

KU Digital Initiatives Electronic Publishing Pilot Project
http://kudiglib.ku.edu/~diglib/projects/epublishing.shtml

KU ScholarWorks
https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/dspace/

Biodiversity Informatics
http://jbi.nhm.ku.edu/index.php/jbi/index

Open Journal Systems
http://pkp.sfu.ca/?q=ojs