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<http://blog.melchua.com/2012/02/08/continuing-adventures-in-open-access-learning-from-debbie/>

May 3, 2012

February 8, 2012 – 1:00 pm

[Debbie Chachra](#) was brave enough to volunteer as the first faculty subject for my [“let’s get everyone’s stuff open access! project on Olin’s institutional repository!”](#) Thank you, Debbie. I finally got all her journal publications from her time at Olin into the repository; it took about an hour per publication. (Now that I understand how to work the software better, it’s down to 15min/publication. Still labor-intensive, though.)

This means all the works are *listed* online – but not everything is open access and *available* online. I’ve been doing some copyright checking, and things fall into 3 categories:

Category 1: The publisher already makes the full text of your paper available freely online (i.e. “they are already open access, so let’s just link to them”). We’re done, no action needed.

Category 2: The publisher doesn’t have your paper freely accessible online, but is ok with you putting it up there yourself. Specifically, these publishers allow us to upload postprints (the edited document after reviewer comments – what it looked like before they formatted it with all the journal branding) without asking for further permission. I asked Debbie to send me postprint pdfs for these; once I have them, I’ll upload them, and that’ll be done too.

Category 3: Some publishers don’t grant you anything at all, so need to specifically request permission to make anything available to anyone. So I’ve asked Debbie to decide what version she wants to try to open up (preprint, postprint, etc) and send that version to me so I can prepare a letter to the publisher asking for permissions just for that specific document. As soon as they say ‘yes,’ we’ll be able to post that too; it’s just that the road is a bit longer.

Some things I’m learning as I go through this process:

- I want to set myself up for open access and download/citation metrics *now*, as a grad student, before I even *have* journal publications – I want my publications list to be completely up-to-date and fully instrumented for “impact measurements” at any given moment.
- I am now proactive about copyright assignment, open licensing, etc. for *everything* scholarly I do. I was pretty proactive before, but this... goes to a different level.
- I am looking at the few scholarly things I’ve done in the past – conference papers, panels, presentations – and trying to get retroactive permission for that stuff to be posted, while everything’s still fresh in my mind.

It’s like scholarly housekeeping. I tell myself it’ll make a giant difference when I go up to defend my dissertation someday, years down the road – and when (and if) I apply for postdocs and faculty positions, and when... the list goes on and on. I gotta keep this somewhere, and it’s best to start when your career is young.