Engaging Alumni

The How and Why of Author Outreach for Dissertation Scanning Projects

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What we'll cover

- History of theses and dissertations at UF
- Published vs. unpublished; what it means for copyright
- UF's Copyright decision – the why
- Outreach – the how
- New precedent for doctoral dissertations
- UF's revised policy and outreach strategies
- Future applications
- Brainstorm outreach plans
UF'S FIRSTS

- 1908 – First master's thesis
- 1934 – First doctoral dissertation

LIBRARY HOLDINGS

- 21,000 estimated master's theses
- 14,115 identified doctoral dissertations
- 1998-Spring 2018, 17,042 ETDs
Published vs. Unpublished
Pre-1978

Before Copyright Act of 1978

Published works eligible for federal copyright protection
- Required registration of copyright
- Require printed notice of copyright in work

Unpublished works subject to common law copyright protection
- No registration requirement
- No notice requirement
Whereas

- Dissertations had unclear publication status

and

- Theses and Dissertations are excluded from UF's "University-supported works" in Intellectual Property policy
  - Thus, any rights remain with author

UF chose an Opt-In digitization strategy for print dissertations
Outreach the "how"

- List of print dissertations from catalog
- Contact information from Alumni Association
- 3-point match
  - Last Name
  - First Name
  - Graduation Year

List of dissertations from library catalog (12,114)
List of PhD contact information from Alumni Association (16,078)

8,730
Outreach the "how"

- **Email**
  - First point of contact
  - Not always available

- **Letter**
  - Follow-up if no reply to email
  - First point of contact where no email address

- **Postcard**
  - Follow-up to letter if no reply
Opt-In Outreach to 5,805 Authors
Overall return rate: 70%

- Email - 853
- Email, then Letter - 694
- Letter - 2,312
- Letter, then Postcard - 86
- Email, Letter, then Postcard - 98
- Opt-Out - 42
- No Reply - 1,720
2011, Gail Clement and Melissa Levine publish article *Copyright and Publication Status of Pre-1978 Dissertations: A Content Analysis Approach*

- The gist is that pre-1978 dissertations are considered published for copyright purposes
  - Required registration of copyright
  - Require printed notice of copyright in work
New Outreach Strategies

- Treat opt-in "No Reply" authors as authors we've not yet contacted
  - 3 or 2 tier contact
  - 90-day deadline to reply
- Reasonable search to find contact info
  - Manual check of Alumni List
  - Directed internet searches
- Can't identify contact information
  - Public notice of intent to digitize
  - Website where authors can opt-out, or request link be sent once digitized
New Outreach Strategies

Determine Copyright

In Copyright

Contact info
- 3 or 2 tier contact
- 90-day response deadline

No contact info
- Reasonable search

In Public Domain

Can digitize without contact
- Public notice
Results of New Outreach Strategies

OPT-IN TO OPT-OUT OUTREACH
- Notification of new policy
  - 2457 authors
    - 640 responses 26%
      - 151 Opt-Out 24% of returns

Opt-Out Outreach Only
- New contacts, no previous outreach
  - 2994 authors
    - 1230 responses 41%
      - 105 Opt-Out 9% of returns
Future Applications

- Development
  - Libraries
  - University
- BiblioLabs
  - Opt-In Print on Demand service
- Master's theses project
- Usage statistics for authors
Do you have similar projects?

How do you handle outreach?
Brainstorm

- Audience
- Reason for contact
- Copyright considerations
- Contact information
- Staff to send and monitor emails
- Funds to send US Post
- Acceptable formats for replies
- Time frame for contact
- Deadlines
- Other uses for contact
Questions?

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This presentation can be found online at:  
http://ufdc.ufl.edu/IR00010610/00001