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Arca: British Columbia's Collaborative Digital Repository Network

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Weigel, Brandon J., "Arca: British Columbia's Collaborative Digital Repository Network" (2016). *Northwest IR User Group*. 9.
https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/nwirug/2016/Presentations/9

![arca logo]

Discover BC's Digital Treasures

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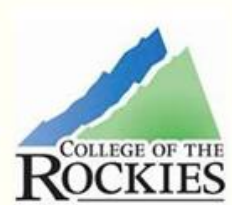
BCELN
BRITISH COLUMBIA
ELECTRONIC LIBRARY NETWORK

discovery garden
Managing Digital Content

CAMOSUN COLLEGE
CCspace

COLLEGE OF THE ROCKIES
COTRspace

DOUGLAS
DOOR

emily carr university of art + design
Emily Carr University
of Art + Design

JUSTICE INSTITUTE of BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Vault

Selkirk College
SCspace

THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY
TRUspace

TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY
TWUspace

UNBC
UNBC

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HarvestIR

http://arcabc.ca

Context

- BC ELN provides infrastructure and coordination for collaborative licensing and projects

- Tri-Council Mandate:
  - All government-funded research must be deposited in open-access repositories (effective May 2015)
  - Institutions need repositories to continue receiving grant funding

- BC Ministry of Advanced Education:
  - Strong interest in increasing collaboration among post-secondary libraries
  - Mandate to fund cost-saving shared services
  - Long-term interest in making BC research more visible and accessible

arca

How it works

- Consortial Governance
  - Advisory Committee sets policies for all participating institutions
  - Decisions that affect all sites are made together

- Third-party development, hosting, and maintenance
  - Support provided by discoverygarden, a Canadian Islandora service company

- Central coordination by BC ELN
  - Coordinating committees and working groups
  - Collecting service support fees
  - Working with the vendor on support and development needs
  - Providing training and front-line support
  - Maintaining the parent website, arcabc.ca

Why do it collaboratively?

- Lower staffing requirements
  - Administer a repository with 0.4 to ~0 FTE

- Greater discoverability
  - Each site's content is discoverable and aggregated at the provincial level

- Community of practice
  - Common policies = common standards = interoperability, and future potential
  - Shared expertise and problem-solving
  - Pooling resources to get more for less

- Affordable!
  - Arca sites pay < $6,000 per year
  - vs. ~$25,000 for some commercial products

Challenges/Opportunities

- Open-source software:
  - Amazingly flexible - can get nearly anything done (if you have staff/money)
  - BUT - originally built ad-hoc with little central coordination; not perfectly packaged

- Meeting diverse needs

- Saying no
  - If you can't say no, costs rise exponentially
  - Sometimes saying no gives better results anyway

- Storage limitations and costs
  - Privacy concerns are forefront in BC
  - Canadian hosting options are limited and expensive
  - Partnerships with other Canadian consortia will make this easier