

Digital Archiving of Comps & Honors Papers

A report on progress from the Comps Archiving Team

Sep 18, 2009

Executive Summary.

Following the Jan 26, 2009 faculty approval of the *Policy on Digital Archiving of Comps and Honors Papers*, digital versions of 124 comps and works awarded prizes at Honors Convocation were received from 132 students representing 26 majors. These works have now been stored in a “dark” archive that is accessible only to Carleton faculty and institutional research & assessment staff. The initial procedures, discussions with faculty, and archived results highlighted a number of **issues** that need to be addressed prior to archiving 2009-10 student work.

- Policy does not state whether or not digital archiving of comps is mandatory.
- Current version of policy is not clear about exactly who can provide access to a particular piece of student work and to whom and for how long.
- Some faculty view digital archiving and/or putting work on e-reserves a form of publishing and therefore in potential conflict with possible future publishing in certain journals.
- Some faculty are concerned that student work archived under the current policy may be made public by the College in the future.
- Including Creative Commons license options on the submission form sends a confusing message regarding whether or not student work might be made publicly-accessible in the future.
- Digital archiving of student work is seen by some faculty and academic staff as a library project, rather than a College initiative. This perception may contribute to a feeling that digital archiving is not really important.

In addition to the development of an online submission process, the Comps Archiving Team **recommends** the following actions as critical to increasing future participation in archiving student work:

1. The **Library Committee, working with the Dean of the College staff**, should engage the academic department chairs in a discussion of the following issues in early fall 2009:
 - Clarify who can give copies of which comps to whom and under what conditions.
 - Reaffirm that student works archived under the current policy will never be made publicly available by Carleton.
 - State that dark archiving is not publishing – i.e. adding a paper to the dark archive will not preclude future publishing options.
 - Emphasize the role of academic department chairs/advisers in working with their students to digitally archive student work.
 - Request that all departments insure that their students’ work is archived centrally, in the College’s digital archive.
 - Encourage departments to add digital archiving to their comps completion processes.
2. With advice from, and the explicit support of the DOC, the **Comps Archiving Team** will arrange targeted conversations during mid-fall 2009 with department chairs (or “comps czars”) and appropriate others in those departments that did not have any student work submitted in 2008-09, to determine the reasons and how the college can provide support.
3. Eliminate the submission form info regarding Creative Commons licensing, which is not relevant for work that is not publicly accessible.

Seven sections follow: Background (p.2), How many & from whom? (p.2), Departments that submitted few or no comps & why (p.2), Issues/concerns expressed by faculty & others (p.3), Implementation details (p.6), Analysis/observations (p.7), and Conclusions & recommendations (p.8).

Background. After 18 months of discussion among faculty, librarians and administrators, and multiple attempts at an “approvable” policy statement, the faculty approved the *Policy on Digital Archiving of Comps and Honors Papers*, by a unanimous vote at the Jan 26, 2009 faculty meeting. The initial goal was to digitally archive “as close to 100%” of the 2008-09 comps and honors papers as possible.” The mid-year approval timing was such that some comps for 2008-09 had already been completed and others would be completed within a few months. Thus, there was neither enough time nor web development resources available to create a fully-online submission process. A hybrid submission process was developed and in Apr, eleven librarians and academic technologists tried to meet with representatives from each department to apprise them of the comps submission process, learn about their concerns, and offer to help. The first digital comps paper (in classical languages) was submitted on 4/24/09 with many more to follow over the next two months. A Comps Archiving Team was appointed to coordinate the evolution of the project from pilot to operational. Members are Carol Eyler (chair), Hsianghui Liu-Spencer, Tucker MacNeill, Ann Zawistoski, Andrea Phelps (later Fiona MacNeill), and Lew Weinberg.

This report summarizes the activities & results of comps submission/archiving from Feb-Aug 2009 and project future needs, including recommendations.

How Many & From Whom? As of 7/27/2009, **124 comps or prize-winning papers** or projects had been submitted for digital archiving. Eight of the comps submitted were also awarded prizes at Honors Convocation. Two additional pieces of prize-winning (non-comps) work were also submitted. “Submitted” means that both a completed & signed submission form and digital files/s were received. We didn’t get anything that was identified as an “honors paper.”

- **132 students** submitted work for archiving
 - 119 students submitted individual work
 - 16 students submitted group work (5 comps)
 - 4 students submitted 2 comps for double majors (1 student submitted both an individual & a group comps)
 - 2 students submitted prize-winning work that was not a comps project
 - Most were 2009 graduates; however, several students will graduate next year.
- **26 majors were represented by the comps submitted**
 - Highest representation: political science (PS 10, PS/IR 14), psychology (18), & geology (15)
 - Geology was the only department submitting 100% of their comps
- **5 different file types were represented**
 - 93% of the comps submitted were text-only
 - 9 works included or were only: websites (1), PowerPoint (4), audio (2), video (2)
 - We expect that the number of videos and PowerPoints will increase in 2009-10.

Due to the variety of comps options (papers, presentations, exams, etc.) offered across the departments, it is impossible to know how many archivable comps were done this year. Thus, we cannot know what percentage of the whole was actually submitted. However, the 132 students who submitted work for archiving represent 26% of the 508 seniors who were expected to graduate in 2009.

Departments that Submitted Few or No Comps & Why. Based on our meetings and conversations with departmental reps, we have some information about why certain departments did not have some or all of their students submit comps for digital archiving.

- **Art history:** Comps consists of a slide presentation & talk. Because some of the 2008-09 comps were completed in Fall 2008, before procedures were in place to videotape them, the department felt that it wasn’t fair to change the expectation for the other 2008-09 students. They have indicated that they will have PEPS tape the presentations in the future and submit the videos & slide programs for archiving.

- **Biology:** Because the comps policy was approved mid-year, they didn't want to add it to their expectations of students for 2008-09. They have indicated that they will submit papers and presentations for archiving in 2009-10, under the direction of Mark McKone.
- **Chemistry:** Unclear why none were submitted, after meeting with Steve Drew, phone conversations & successful testing of ways to maintain PPT animations.
- **Computer science:** Received 5 group comps on CDROMs from Mike Tie. However, only one of the groups completed a submission form.
- **Economics:** Nothing archived, possibly due to incomplete communication. Reps met with dept assistant, Susan Quay, but were unable to meet with dept chair, Mike Hemesath.
- **Music:** Susan Beeby gave students instructions for submitting their comps for archiving; however, we only received one completed submission.
- **Political science:** About half were not submitted, reportedly due to student concerns about whether their work might be made publicly-accessible in the future.
- **Psychology:** Concerns that archiving might be considered "publication" by potential future publishers – e.g. APA. However, most psychology comps were archived; only 3 were not.
- **Sociology and anthropology:** Despite repeated communications, library liaison & academic technologist were unable to meet with departmental reps.
- **Studio art:** There is currently no process to document the integrative work done by studio art majors. Faculty are considering how they might incorporate documentation into their comps completion procedures.

Issues/Concerns Expressed by Faculty & Others. The primary concerns expressed by faculty fell into several major categories. These issues came up in our meetings with departmental representatives, and via email and phone conversations. [Comps Archiving Team responses in purple.]

Access to the Archived Comps

(This category showed up the most often, with a number of departments and people expressing concern over the fact that any member of the faculty can grant access to any of the comps.)

1. Allowing any member of the faculty to provide access to any comps to any student. Could you make it so that the adviser is the one who has to give permission – or allow advisers to note which papers need adviser vs. any faculty permission? *[This concern was noted during at least three different interviews.]*
 - Specifically, there is a concern about faculty advisers not having control over who is accessing their students' papers. While a student may give his/her permission to archive their paper, in some cases, those papers also represent work that was done in the adviser's lab, or research done with that adviser, and as such, the adviser may have reason to restrict who has access to the paper. However, in the current policy, any member of the faculty can give permission for any paper to be accessed.
 - **Suggestion from PSYC:** *Create a second form for faculty where they are given a list of their advisees and can choose which students to "override" or flag. In other words, we would get the papers and permissions from students, and then ask the faculty if any of those papers should be either withdrawn altogether from the archive, or have a flag that indicates that the adviser's permission is required for access to that paper, rather than the permission of any member of the faculty. [Seems more efficient for departments/advisers to make these decisions before students submit work for archiving.]*
2. What is the possibility of outside access to digital comps? *[The likelihood for direct access into the archive by an unauthorized person seems low, since a Carleton username & password must "match" the list of authorized persons in the archival system. However, if an authorized person makes a digital copy and posts it somewhere that is accessible to others, particularly via the web, then the security of content has been breached.]*

3. Of particular concern is the fact that anyone with permission from a faculty member would then have access to the electronic version, which is much easier to distribute. *[Current expectations for access are that the faculty member (or designee) would make a copy for the requesting student – either printed or digital. They would not give a student direct access to the archived version. Presumably, a printed copy would less likely to be distributed, either accidentally or intentionally, than a digital copy.]*
4. There is also concern that student work might be made available on the eReserves system where it is more available to anyone who might have (or have figured out) the password for eReserves.
 - **Suggestion from PSYC:** *Remove the option to put the papers on e-Reserves and instead make them available as paper reserves if a faculty member wanted to make them available for students to look at as examples of comps materials. [Each faculty member wanting to put student work on reserve can decide whether to use eReserves or paper reserves.]*
5. The possibility of unintended access (2.&4.) is a problem because some of the psychology senior theses are later submitted to the APA for publication. The APA requires that all authors affirm that the work is "an original work of authorship that has not been previously published." (APA Publication Rights Form, Section 1.A http://www.apa.org/journals/authors/publication_rights_form.pdf). *[Ann Zawistoski spoke with APA about this question and received this email response on 4-8-09 -- "APA does allow authors to archive their work in their home institutions' repositories, so this digitization project would not be a barrier to publication in our journals." Annie Hill, Senior Editorial Supervisor, APA Journals Program]*
6. What is the time frame for granting access? If a faculty member grants access, is that a one-time thing only, or can you give permission to allow groups (say a class of juniors) access to the comps for a specific length of time. If access is for a limited time, how is that enforced? Are they given a hard copy that they have to return? Do they sign something saying that they'll destroy the copies they're given so that they don't end up being distributed further? *[Currently, there is no stated time frame for access to a particular student work. We welcome faculty input on what would work best for them and their students.]*
7. Could departmental assistants also grant access? *[Yes, if the chair gives them permission & their logins are added to the list of authorized users.]*
8. Some faculty members are uncomfortable acting as the "firewall" for allowing access. *[We invite members of the faculty to suggest alternate ways of approving/providing access to student work in the archive.]*
9. Can a faculty member provide access to **anyone** who asks to see a student work – e.g. someone unaffiliated with Carleton, alumni, the student author him/herself? *[The policy as approved by the faculty, states that "Mechanisms will be available for faculty to provide **current students** with access to comps held in the archive."]*
10. Concerns that some students may not want their comps listed in Bridge *[Bridge was recommended by the Digital Archiving Group (DAG) to be the best way to make the existence of comps known. Students on ECC were vocal about their desire that students be able to learn about what kinds of comps have been done in the past.]*

Concerns if the Comps Archive is Made More Accessible in the Future

*[The Comps Archiving Team believes that these concerns are largely of concern **only** if the comps were made publicly accessible in the future. Although the current policy precludes public access, we wanted to include these faculty concerns here.]*

11. What are the risks of plagiarism? *[This could be risks of other students plagiarizing Carleton student work, as well as the risk of our students publishing plagiarized material; see number 12. below.]*
12. Should comps be published if sources are not properly cited? *[Comps are being archived, not published. If the faculty have accepted/approved/passed the work, it should be archived.]*

13. If faculty miss a poorly cited source or an instance of plagiarism, and that is found by someone else, will the faculty be responsible?
14. If archive is opened up in the future, getting permissions to use copyrighted material can be prohibitively difficult / expensive for students.

Process Questions/Concerns

15. Who communicates with the students about submitting their work for digital archiving? How will students know that it's time to begin the process? *[We think it makes the most sense for departments and advisers to convey their expectations for comps completion, including digital archiving, to their students directly.]*
16. How do we encourage students to submit their comps? – e.g. physics students were told by their department to go to the comps archiving website to fill out and sign the submission form for digital archiving. It appears that 15 of 25 chose not to have their comps digitally archived. *[Ideal situation would be for each department to add digital archiving to their list of comps completion steps.]*
17. If PEPS is already recording productions, how do we make sure they are archived (theater & dance)? *[The submission process asks for file names & formats. PEPS can make an extra copy for archiving when requested.]*
18. How will groups coordinate getting the submissions / permissions from all of the group members after their project is over? *[This didn't seem to be a problem for the five group comps submitted this year; these students have been working together for an appreciable period of time; this is just part of their completion process.]*
19. How to deal with distinction in the case of group comps where distinction is given only to individuals – e.g. in Computer Science? *[Submission form allows for this to be noted & it will be reflected in metadata.]*
20. Concern was that students who decide that they do not want to give permission for their comps to be archived will feel pressure (whether intentional or not) from the library to do so, and may be harassed by either the library or the department assistant to comply with the policy.
 - **Suggestion from PSYC:** *Phrase the section of the student FAQ that discusses whether the comps are mandatory differently. Phrase it as an opportunity to help the college and to have their work archived, but make it clear that it is not a requirement. [We will try to do this when revising the FAQ for Students. The most effective motivation will likely come from students' advisers, departmental faculty, and assistants.]*

Other Concerns/Questions

21. Will non-passing comps be archived? *[No; only the final (completed, passed) version of comps should be archived.]*
22. Are there any mechanisms in place to encourage or enforce student compliance? *[No College-wide mechanisms, at present; this is something each department should address.]*
23. Students were concerned that they were supposed to obtain copyright for the figures used in their comps. *[This confusion stemmed from an early version (no longer used) of the submission form.]*
24. How useful is this digital archiving if it is not mandatory? *[Good question!]*
25. Can we submit past comps? *[Some departments have digital versions of previous comps that they would like to archive. So far, our answer has been that we cannot archive work without the student author's permission. However, one could logically ask "why not," since the assumption is that this work will never be made publicly accessible.]*

Implementation Details

Preparation. Although much research, investigation & thought about archiving student work had already taken place, once the policy was approved in Jan 2009 activities moved into high gear regarding infrastructure development & communication with academic departments. These activities fell into several categories:

1. Communication

- Emails from DOC Scott Bierman to department chairs
- Meetings with academic department reps conducted by academic technologists & librarians
- Fielded calls from faculty & departmental reps regarding details of policy & process
- FAQs for faculty and students – updated frequently as we got questions & feedback
- In Aug 2009, revised information in Department Chair Handbook, to clarify role of departments/advisers in working with their students to digitally archive student work.
- On 9-10-09 Carol Eyer & Sam Demas met with Bev Nagel & Nathan Grawe to discuss results of the 2008-09 archiving and needs for further communication and clarification with academic departments going into 2009-10.

2. Documentation

- Policy & other information added to Dept Chair Handbook
- Webpage established for access to key documents, linked to from multiple places
 - https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/library/help/help/digital_comps/
 - Submission forms (individual & group)
 - FAQs,
 - Submission instructions,
 - Videos on creating PDF
- Spreadsheet for tracking comps received

3. Procedures/Technical

- Folder for dropping digital files
- Decisions about acceptable file types
- Discussions about what data to capture in submission forms
- Draft submission forms were revised & vetted tested by a few students
- Permission for College to archive
- Copyright assurances, including Creative Commons license options
- Spreadsheet of seniors from Registrar used as basis for tracking comps received.

Submission Forms. Crafting a submission form that met multiple expressed needs was a challenge and all the resulting forms represented compromises. The primary issues were:

1. How to express the ways in which the College might use this work in the future, while complying with the current policy which states that access will be limited to Carleton faculty & institutional research & assessment;
 2. Whether or not to ask if the student had included material, for which someone else held the copyright;
 3. Whether or not to include information about Creative Commons licensing options, without implying that the archived work might be made more publicly-available in the future.
- Individual submission form went through at least three major revisions, in response to departmental concerns/needs (e.g. added Advisers/s)
 - Version referring them just to CC license site
 - Version asking questions about use of copyrighted material
 - Version w/o copyright questions
 - Version listing all CC options
 - Version adding space for adviser/s
 - Group submission form was developed once we realized there was a need; however, neglected to ask for each students' grad year on this form

- An early version of the individual form did not allow enough space for certain data elements and was corrected as soon as we learned of the problems.
- Discovered that filling in the form on a Mac worked best using AcrobatPro and added that info to the FAQ for students
- Although the forms could easily be filled out on a computer, 37% were submitted hand-written
 - In some cases, we know that departmental assistants printed out copies of forms for students to fill in. Some of these were early versions which didn't ask for adviser; so we had to request that info from departments, after the fact
 - We don't know much about any difficulties students may have encountered with filling in the forms on their computer
- We hope that the issues we had this year will be alleviated by having an all-online submission process for 2009-10, including digital signatures.

Submission Methods

- Most forms & files were submitted by students directly, following the instructions. The file often preceded delivery of the form, which sometimes meant that email reminders were needed.
- A few departments coordinated the process and submitted all forms & files at one time.
- A few works were submitted on portable media – e.g. CD-ROM or DVD
- As of Aug 2009, Matt Bockol is developing an all-online submission process, to be ready for testing by mid-Fall Term 2009 (Oct 12-16).

Putting Works & Metadata in CONTENTdm

- In Jul 2009, the tracking spreadsheet was augmented with all of the metadata needed to describe the works in both Cdm and Bridge.
- In Aug 2009, Hsianghui Liu-Spencer tested the loading of files & metadata into Cdm. Members of the Comps Archiving Team reviewed the test records, made suggestions for improvement of metadata and the browsing display, and decided to store text files as PDFs rather than as compound objects.
- On Sep 2, Matt Bockol installed the newest version of Cdm – CONTENTdm 5, which will make loading new files far simpler.

Next Steps & Target Dates

- Most of this work will be done by members of the Comps Archiving Team & Matt Bockol.
- Decisions still need to be made about how/where to archive files that may be too large to store on Cdm – e.g. videos, websites, etc.
- **Sep 18-23:** Enable all Carleton faculty to access the dark archive of comps, honors papers & prizes on Cdm.
- **Sep 23:** We expect that all student work that is a single PDF file will be in CONTENTdm by Sep 23. Work with multiple/other file types may take a bit longer.
- **Sep 24:** Comps Archiving Team representatives will meet with Library Committee to discuss comps archiving progress, needs and recommendations.
- **Sep 29:** Post new information/instructions on the website regarding faculty access to archived comps.
- **Sep 28-30:** The Comps Archiving Team will consult with the College's Copyright Committee regarding appropriate wording for the student submission agreement and will incorporate that into the metadata and the online submission form.
- **Oct 5:** start contacting targeted departments (those whose students submitted few or no comps in 2008-09) for meetings regarding archiving student work and how Team can help.
- **Oct 16:** Online submission form will be ready for testing by mid-Fall Term 2009 (Oct 12-16)
- **Oct 26:** Online submission form will be ready for dissemination, along with updated instructions and FAQs.
- **Nov 4:** Possible meeting with ASAP to apprise them of new comps submission procedures.
- **Nov 13:** After all the 2008-09 student works are in Cdm, then metadata will be added to Bridge for each title.

Analysis/Observations.

- Despite the mid-year start-up, a decent number of comps were submitted for digital archiving in 2008-09, the inaugural year.
- 100% of work receiving prizes at Honors Convo 2009 was archived, due to Liz Ciner's and Carol Eyster's personal communications with the students who won prizes.
- We did not receive any work that was identified as an "honors paper." We do not know why.
- The hybrid submission process, requiring a printed form with a signature was clunky. This will be addressed with an all-online submission process for 2009-10.
- Possibly due to the somewhat rushed mid-year start, changes in metadata requested, and lack of consistent information communicated to all faculty and students at one time, there was confusion on a number of questions – most notably, whether digital archiving was required, who would be able to provide access to which works and for whom in the future, and whether works archived now might be made more widely-available in the future. These uncertainties affected the decisions of some students and some departments.
- We don't know why certain departments did not have any students submitting work for digital archiving – e.g. was there no archivable work done? Did these departments or students make a conscious choice not to archive? Or was this just not on their radar?
- Digital archiving of student work is still seen by some faculty and academic staff as a library project, rather than a college initiative.
- Current version of policy is unclear regarding who can provide access to a particular piece of student work and to whom.
- Including Creative Commons license options on the submission form sends a confusing message regarding whether or not student work might be made publicly-accessible in the future.
- Some faculty seem to consider digital archiving and/or putting work on e-reserves a form of publishing, and therefore in potential conflict with possible future publishing in certain journals.
- Some faculty are concerned that comps archived under the current policy may be made public by the College in the future. Earlier drafts of the comps archiving policy included provisions for making selected student work publicly accessible, in the context of "showcasing undergraduate scholarship." We believe that the discussions around these early drafts may have led to persistent concerns about possible public access in the future.

Conclusions and Recommendations. Despite a mid-year start and widely-varying awareness, by academic departments and students alike, regarding the college's goals for archiving student work, a significant number of works were submitted for digital archiving. The process was not always smooth and we are working on ways to make it much easier in 2009-10. We learned a lot from the spring 2009 meetings we had with departmental representatives -- information that we have brought forward in this report. It quickly became obvious that a lack of clarity on a number of important points was leading some faculty and students to question whether college-wide digital archiving of student work was in their best interests. We believe that resolving these questions and communicating any changes to the faculty, as early as possible in fall term 2009, will result in a higher degree of participation in digital archiving of student work in 2009-10.

In addition to the development of an online submission process, the Comps Archiving Team **recommends** the following actions as critical to increasing future participation in archiving student work:

1. The **Library Committee, working with the Dean of the College staff**, should engage the academic department chairs in a discussion of the following issues in early fall 2009:
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