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The problem, it seems, is that we in academic library land are increasingly finding that our “stuff” is not where our students are at. That is, as shown by the **2005 OCLC Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources** study, and echoed in more recent reports, our students come to the library for information only when coerced by their teachers or the goddess of information, **Google** fails (or her international sisters like **Baidu** in China). The **OCLC** study indicated that while 84% of college students started their search for electronic information with a search engine, only 1% started with a Library Website. The perception is, that we, like the shops in towns across the world that are made redundant by one-stop-meets-all-needs stores like America’s **Wal-Mart**, or the **French Carrefour**, both of which mega-store chains abound here in China, will soon be bypassed and forgotten.

The solution, it seems, is that unless we are willing to wait like the buggies and their whips to be replaced by cars, we need to get our stuff out in the face of our users. The **Phrase Finder** <http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/202800.html> suggests the phrase “in your face” originated in basketball where one player scores a basket in the face of the opponent in a “bold or aggressive manner.” For us, we need to boldly and aggressively get our stuff out on the Web where are students are, and put it “in their face.”

**Lorcan Dempsey** spoke of this need at two conferences recently held here in Hong Kong. To reduce his message to the need for librarians to get their stuff out in the face of their users is grossly unfair, but it is the feeling that I came away with and this has instilled in me a conviction that we at my library need to take action.<sup>1</sup> Our need to change the nature of how we communicate what we have to our readers was further emphasized by **Vanderbilt’s Marshall Breeding** who gave a presentation on the new generation of library OPAC’s at our **Annual Library Leadership Institute**.<sup>2</sup> He began by describing the cosmetic attempts by OPAC vendors to help readers find what they want in a single search, but concluded that there was “widespread dissatisfaction with most of the current OPACs.” He shared lots of interesting information about replacement OPAC front ends like **Endecca** and **AquaBrower** and the fairly similar work being done by **OCLC**, **Ex Libris**, and **Innovative**.

How to get our stuff out in the face of our users is complicated. We can, for example, go out to Websites like **Wikipedia** and make sure our “stuff” is referred to there. At **HKU** we have been digitizing Hong Kong government documents and laws. We might, therefore, consider going on the Web to resources like

**Wikipedia** and add links to our Hong Kong and other special collections materials. Another approach is to make our library Websites more like the search engines, to Web 2.0’ize them, to lure readers away from **Google**, so that our students can access the best of both worlds — at the same time access the Web’s resources and access the millions of dollars worth of books we have acquired over the years and the electronic resources and books that we continue to acquire. Finally, the approach that I want to spend the rest of my space here talking about is to load up our home grown “stuff” in an institutional repository within the overall Open Access environment in order to make it accessible to our own students and readers across the globe.

On May 17 and 18 my library, together with the support of the other **JULAC** academic libraries of Hong Kong <http://www.julac.org/>, sponsored the **Promoting 21st Century Scholarly Communication: The Role of Institutional Repositories in the Open Access Movement**. We began the meeting by noting that the methods employed for scholars to communicate with each other are changing, that these new ways coexist with the old ones. Our speakers then helped us understand what Open Access is all about, the funding agency policies designed to encourage scholars to share their research findings on the open Web, what universities are doing around the world to showcase the intellectual output of their students and faculty, the need for data archives as well as narrative materials, and descriptions of what is happening to implement open access and to create institutional repositories both here in Hong Kong, and more widely in China.

At the conclusion of the conference we established some official goals to be pursued by our eight universities:

1. Insure that the intellectual contributions of Hong Kong scholars are made widely and openly available to members of our own and world communities. That is, as stated in the Bethesda Statement on Open Access Principles, that authors and copyright holders “grant(s) to all users a free, irrevocable, worldwide, perpetual right of access to, and a license to copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works, in any digital medium for any responsible purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship” (<http://www.biomedcentral.com/openaccess/bethesda/>). These contributions can include peer reviewed articles; books and chapters in books; conference presentations, technical reports, patents,

theses, or any other document or object deemed valuable by authors and their institutions.

2. To make this possible, employ institutional repositories to preserve in perpetuity the scholarly contributions of all Hong Kong authors.
3. Retain those elements in the scholarly communication process that add value, such as peer review, and augment the process with new open access elements.
4. Work with all stakeholders to ensure that Web-based scholarly communication is sustainable, that is, insofar as is possible, the needs of authors, readers, and those involved in the publication and dissemination of information are mutually met.
5. Insure that the rights of authors are protected, including the right to share the fruits of their labors with others and the right to expect that when their works are referred to, there will be proper attribution.

Establishing goals and achieving them are of course two different matters. Over the course of the next six months we will establish a working party to work with public and private funding agencies in Hong Kong as well as with those promoting research at each of our universities to see that actions are implemented to turn the goals into reality. 🐼



## Endnotes

1. **Dempsey, Lorcan.** (2007, April 12). *Environment and People*. Presentation given at the **2007 The Academic Librarian: Dinosaur or Phoenix, the Chinese University of Hong Kong**. Power Point retrieved June 4, 2007 from <http://www.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/conference/aldp2007/programme/index.htm>.
2. **Dempsey, Lorcan.** (2007, April 13). *Thinking About Collections. Fiesole Retreat, the University of Hong Kong*. Power Point retrieved June 4, 2007 from [http://digital.casalini.it/retreat/retreat\\_2007.html](http://digital.casalini.it/retreat/retreat_2007.html).
2. **Breeding, Marshall.** (2007 May 13). *The New Generation of Library OPACs at the 5th Annual Library Leadership Institute, Redefining Libraries: Web 2.0 and Other Challenges for Library Leaders* from [http://lib.hku.hk/leadership/2007\\_ppt/Topic%206%20Library%20OPAC.ppt](http://lib.hku.hk/leadership/2007_ppt/Topic%206%20Library%20OPAC.ppt).