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ANN ARBOR, Mich. — **OAster Reaches 10 Million Records.**

<http://www.oaister.org/>

We live in an information-driven world—one in which access to good information defines success. OAster's growth to 10 million records takes us one step closer to that goal.

Developed at the University of Michigan's Library, OAster is a collection of digital scholarly resources. OAster is also a service that continually gathers these digital resources to remain complete and fresh. As global digital repositories grow, so do OAster's holdings.

Popular search engines don't have the holdings OAster does. They crawl web pages and index the words on those pages. It's an outstanding technique for fast, broad information from public websites. But scholarly information, the kind researchers use to enrich their work, is generally hidden from these search engines.

OAster retrieves these otherwise elusive resources by tapping directly into the collections of a variety of institutions using harvesting technology based on the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) Protocol for Metadata Harvesting. These can be images, academic papers, movies and audio files, technical reports, books, as well as preprints (unpublished works that have not yet been peer reviewed). By aggregating these resources, OAster makes it possible to search across all of them and return the results of a thorough investigation of complete, up-to-date resources.

Ann Devenish, Publication Services Project Manager at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute notes that, *"Harvesting by OAster is a primary 'selling point' when we talk to scientists and researchers about the visibility, accessibility, and impact of their contributions in an institutional repository. From their own experiences they know that a search using one of the popular search engines can bring back thousands (if not, millions) of results which will require careful and time-consuming screening, with no guarantee that they will ever get to the content they seek. A search of OAster, across hundreds of open and scholarly archives and millions of records, brings back results with the key metadata elements that allow for quick identification of, and easy navigation to, the content they seek."*

OAster is good news for the digital archives that contribute material to open-access repositories. *"[OAster has demonstrated that]...OAI interoperability can scale. This is good news for the technology, since the proliferation is bound to continue and even accelerate,"* says Peter Suber, author of the SPARC Open Access Newsletter. As open-access repositories proliferate, they will be supported by a single, well-managed, comprehensive, and useful tool.

Scholars will find that searching in OAster can provide better results than searching in web search engines. Roy Tennant, User Services Architect at the California Digital Library, offers an example: *"In OAster I searched 'roma' and 'world war,' then sorted by weighted relevance. The first hit nailed my topic—the persecution of the Roma in World War II. Trying 'roma world war' in Google fails miserably because Google apparently searches 'Rome' as well as 'Roma.' The ranking then makes anything about the Roma people drop significantly, and there is nothing in the first few screens of results that includes the word in the title, unlike the OAster hit."*

OAster currently harvests 730 repositories from 49 countries on 6 continents. In three years, it has more than quadrupled in size and increased from 6.2 million to 10 million in the past year. OAster is a project of the University of Michigan Digital Library Production Service.

For more information about University of Michigan's OAster Project, visit <http://www.oaister.org/>, or contact Kat Hagedorn at khage@umich.edu.