FCLA Support Services for Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETDs)

Technical support for ETDs can be thought of as a two-phase process: front end and back end. On the front end, the University must have some automated system that will let students submit their accepted ETDs and create metadata about them. On the back end, there must be systems to provide end-user access to the ETDs, manage access controls, and provide long-term archiving. FCLA provides support services for the back end processes only.

What the University must do

University support for ETDs is usually a collaboration between the Library, the Graduate School, and Computing Services. In addition to systems support, the University will need to provide guidelines, training and instructional support for students creating ETDs; develop policies (including acceptable file formats); and establish procedures and forms.

Each University must establish its own front end system for creating ETDs and metadata. This is usually the responsibility of the Graduate School. Some schools use the free "ETD-db" software available from Virginia Tech for this purpose. Whatever software is used, it must record metadata in a database so that it can later be exported in XML. Relevant metadata includes at a minimum the student's (author's) name, department and degree, the title and abstract of the ETD, and any restrictions on use. Committee members, subject keywords and other data can also be supplied.

Once the ETD is created, the school can send an ETD "package" to FCLA. The package contains the ETD itself and relevant metadata in METS format. METS is a standard XML schema commonly used by libraries. It is the University's responsiblity to converting the metadata from whatever format it is stored in to METS. However, FCLA provides a format specification and will work with staff at the university to help them create and test their METS files.

ETD packages are transferred to FCLA by FTP, usually in batches (all the ETDs for one graduation date).

What FCLA will do

FCLA provides the following services:

Catalog Record Creation: FCLA programs will create a MARC record from metadata in the METS file and put this directly into the library's NOTIS catalog. (Aleph sites get a flat file suitable for loading into Aleph.) The record can be suppressed from public view by default until the library's catalogers review and approve the record. FCLA will work

with library catalogers to customize the imprint, notes, classification and other fields specifically for the library.

Online Storage: FCLA will make the ETD available online. The catalog record will contain a URL pointing to the online ETD.

Access Control: FCLA will manage access controls for ETDs that are restricted in whole or in part. Access can be limited for a specified period of time to institutional use only, or no access. FCLA removes access controls when the time period expires.

Preservation Archiving: The university Library can arrange for ETDs to be preserved in the FCLA Digital Archive.   When it goes into production this November, the FCLA Digital Archive will be one of a very small number of functional preservation repositories in the country.

UMI Submission: The university can continue to handle its own UMI submissions, or it can have FCLA FTP the ETDs to UMI. In either case, however, the institution must do its own UMI paperwork for the submissions.

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