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# Pace Digital Commons in the Open Frontiers

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## Pace Digital Commons in the Open Frontiers

Rey Racelis, Associate University Librarian

Consider this: In the last four years since its inception, first as a pilot project and then as a regular service, the digital repository has recorded some 251,011 full text downloads. For the year 2007 alone, the documents deposited in the digital archives, otherwise known as Pace Digital Commons, had been accessed about 132,000 times (full text and cover page visits). Of this number, Google is the top discovery tool for the documents both as a general search engine and as a specialized indexing tool for the scholarly materials as in Google Scholar (**see section of the chart below**). United Kingdom (uk) tops the number of foreign visitors, followed by India (in) from

where, incidentally, also a number of publisher inquiries came this year. Canada (ca), Australia (au), Philippines (ph), Malaysia (my), Germany (de-Deutschland), China (cn) and South Africa (za) had also a number of visitors to the Pace digital repository site. The rest in the chart representing countries are France (fr), Italy (it), Singapore (sg) and Indonesia (id). In addition to Google, Ask.com and Yahoo are other search engines used by users to discover Pace documents within the internet. A number of users came from within the intranet, coming in as local users as can be identified from the site appserv.pace.edu.

(Continued on page 8)

<b>Google total</b>		<b>73383</b>
<b>www.google.com</b>	<a href="http://www.google.com">http://www.google.com</a>	47751
<b>scholar.google.com</b>	<a href="http://scholar.google.com">http://scholar.google.com</a>	7244
<b>www.google.co.uk</b>	<a href="http://www.google.co.uk">http://www.google.co.uk</a>	3221
<b>www.google.co.in</b>	<a href="http://www.google.co.in">http://www.google.co.in</a>	2221
<b>www.google.ca</b>	<a href="http://www.google.ca">http://www.google.ca</a>	1954
<b>search.yahoo.com</b>	<a href="http://search.yahoo.com">http://search.yahoo.com</a>	1709
<b>www.googlesyndicatedsearch.com</b>	<a href="http://www.googlesyndicatedsearch.com">http://www.googlesyndicatedsearch.com</a>	1633
<b>www.google.com.au</b>	<a href="http://www.google.com.au">http://www.google.com.au</a>	1195
<b>aolsearch.aol.com</b>	<a href="http://aolsearch.aol.com">http://aolsearch.aol.com</a>	1124
<b>www.google.com.ph</b>	<a href="http://www.google.com.ph">http://www.google.com.ph</a>	515
<b>www.ask.com</b>	<a href="http://www.ask.com">http://www.ask.com</a>	496
<b>www.google.com.my</b>	<a href="http://www.google.com.my">http://www.google.com.my</a>	476
<b>www.google.de</b>	<a href="http://www.google.de">http://www.google.de</a>	441
<b>search.aol.com</b>	<a href="http://search.aol.com">http://search.aol.com</a>	367
<b>www.google.cn</b>	<a href="http://www.google.cn">http://www.google.cn</a>	367
<b>law.bepress.com</b>	<a href="http://law.bepress.com">http://law.bepress.com</a>	360
<b>www.google.co.za</b>	<a href="http://www.google.co.za">http://www.google.co.za</a>	333
<b>appserv.pace.edu</b>	<a href="http://appserv.pace.edu">http://appserv.pace.edu</a>	331
<b>www.google.fr</b>	<a href="http://www.google.fr">http://www.google.fr</a>	314
<b>www.google.it</b>	<a href="http://www.google.it">http://www.google.it</a>	302
<b>www.google.com.sg</b>	<a href="http://www.google.com.sg">http://www.google.com.sg</a>	285
<b>www.google.co.id</b>	<a href="http://www.google.co.id">http://www.google.co.id</a>	262
<b>search.comcast.net</b>	<a href="http://search.comcast.net">http://search.comcast.net</a>	258
<b>www.answers.com</b>	<a href="http://www.answers.com">http://www.answers.com</a>	252

Data generated by Berkeley Electronic Press, service provider for Pace Digital Commons.

## Pace Digital Commons in the Open Frontiers (cont.)

Previously, the university or the library would be hard put in knowing how often or how frequently the digital documents available in various websites in the university are really being used by the public, and for that matter where the users of such materials are coming from.

Moreover, it would have required a general coordinator to gather all the data from the various sites in order to get a picture of how actively the documents are being used (read, consulted, viewed, browsed) by the “world out there”—the open frontier. Conversely, the users would have to know where to go within the university website in order to find the documents that might be of interest to them.

In an effort to address the need for a single place where library users can take a look at some of the research conducted by both faculty and students alike, the library has been quietly building up an archival repository of the digitized copies of selected works by faculty and students. The idea of creating a “one-stop” website to showcase these works aims to address those needs of library users as articulated at the reference desk: “I am enrolling in Prof. X’s class and I am interested in checking out some of his/her published works” or “Do you have examples of student research papers available here in the library?” Among members of the Honors College, the interest in checking out each other’s work is due more perhaps to plain curiosity and to some extent, also to get some ideas on the various topics which earlier honors students had previously submitted. In the larger context, the repository also tries to address the interest in finding out the areas of research that our Pace faculty, staff, and students delve into.

Beyond showcasing works, the repository, popularly referred to as the Digital Commons, really is a tool to preserve in digital format the various digital artifacts that are being produced nowadays in many university campuses. Many of these digital materials are being produced with no standardized way of compiling, preserving, and indexing them. At times they are produced and remain undiscovered because they remain in a sort of digital flotsam due to lack of a proper venue where they can be highlighted, or where, in the company of similar works, they can be made to appeal to a bigger audience. In most cases, there are disparate departmental sites which may have a quonset area where faculty or student publications are listed and accessible digitally but are often buried several layers below the surface of a departmental or institutional website. These

are then institutional resources that sometimes remain undiscovered, or get bypassed by researchers and yet, local and native resources as they are, they have value that go beyond what is available generally in libraries or university bookstores. In fact, as institutional resources, they are paramount sources of information from local experts who can easily be reached, communicated with, and consulted personally for follow-up research. They are the intellectual, sometimes artistic, products of local faculty, resident specialists, or the university students themselves for that matter. It used to be that they were not also readily available outside of the immediate university community where some counterpart printed copies of their work may probably be languishing, undiscovered, in some shelves in the library.

In an effort therefore to capture these invaluable resources, and organize them in such a way as they can easily be found, the Pace University Library has created the Pace Digital Commons (<http://digitalcommons.pace.edu>). The contents are assigned proper metadata tagging (a kind of online classification) and a recommended form of citation is also given. There are departments that have just started participating and there are others that are way ahead on the game. Below are some of the more popular series within the repository site:

The School of Law, both faculty and students, is a very active user of this service: <http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/law/>. The Lubin School of Business has also a significant number of faculty working papers available: <http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/lubin/>. The Ivan G. Seidenberg School of Computer Science and Information Systems has also select and representative works in the collection: [http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/csis\\_tech\\_reports/](http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/csis_tech_reports/). To get an idea, however, of the varied interests, the high level of research skills, and the writing styles of our students, one only needs to visit the Honors College Theses section: [http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/honorscollege\\_theses/](http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/honorscollege_theses/) to see how interesting, serious and professionally promising the research is that has been done by many of our Honors Students. Incidentally, this is also one of the most active areas in the number of users accessing and checking out the content: 19,159 full text downloads in 2007.

## Pace Digital Commons in the Open Frontiers (cont.)

In some other universities and colleges, the public relations or marketing departments normally use such repositories as showcases of institutional expertise and constituents' intellectual output. The repositories can be used to further *advertise* some of the interesting research going on within their respective institutions and consequently, their academic strengths.

Furthermore, digital repositories are nowadays used by institutions as a tool to disseminate the results of grant funded studies and research in compliance with normal requirements of granting bodies to disseminate results to the widest possible audience.

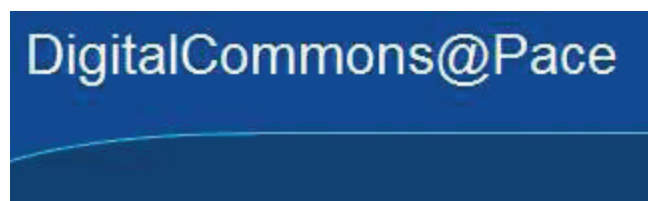
There are 2 others series within the site that are popular although the nature of their access and content is controlled. The section of doctoral dissertations is has controlled access. It is only available to members of the university community and so one needs to be authenticated with a portal id to get in: <http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/dissertations/>. Corollary to this, printed copies of the same dissertations are available in the library that can be accessed and checked out by members of the university community. The Eugene Lang Fellows series showcases the research partnership between a mentor and a student (Faculty-Student Fellows). These are studies conducted by students under the close guidance of and collaboration with faculty mentors. No full text reports of their studies are available but a fairly comprehensive abstract and general summary are available. The documents in this series are the exact digital copies of the printed reports submitted to the office overseeing the fellowship. So far the most recent documents for this series submitted to the digital commons are from 2006: [http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/lang\\_research/](http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/lang_research/).

Interestingly, data on access can also be generated not only for a group but for individual documents. It is suggested that faculty members may even include this data on access when they do their annual performance review, as this can substantiate to some extent the readership or usage of their publications. A number of faculty members have actually availed themselves of this service. Records of access, as in full text downloads, can be provided per document.

To insure that the documents posted in the digital repository are all properly indexed and are included in

databanks of specialized search engines devoted to harvesting data of academic import, the Pace Digital Commons is registered with OAISTER (University of Michigan), OpenDOAR (Directory of Open Access Repositories, University of Nottingham, UK) and ROAR (Registry of Open Access Repositories, University of Southampton, UK). Because of its compliance in the use of metadata and XML (extensible markup language) standards, documents hosted in the repositories such as Pace's Digital Commons are easily discovered by search engines such as Google. In the event of generated postings, many of the Digital Commons contents come up on top of the generated list.

Beyond the intent of preserving and showcasing the intellectual pursuits of a given university community, digital repositories,—most of which provide open access except for designated collections that institutions decide to provide controlled access—also aim to further the collaborations among researchers and other academic institutions. In a flat world (cf. Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), where territorial boundaries do not limit the flow of information from country to country, scholars will be able to network better and share their works in a more accessible and fluid manner which tends to promote better collaboration, and greater strides in pursuing research that can be built upon by accretion of the many. The digital commons, of which Pace has one, is intended to contribute to this enterprise.



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