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## Going in Reverse to Go Forward: Institutional Repositories and The New York Public Library, Summary of a Presentation by Stewart Bodner and Eric Neubacher

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## Going in Reverse to Go Forward: Institutional Repositories and The New York Public Library, Stewart Bodner, New York Public Library and Eric Neubacher, Baruch College, CUNY

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Stewart Bodner opened his talk giving background information on institutional repositories (IR). He also spoke of the idea of NYPL as “an institution that collects for the historical record.” His quote from former director James Wood Henderson reminds us that the ideal research library should not select its collection based on “what the librarian or the contemporary public regards as good or important,” but rather it should “record life as it passes, its evil, vulgarity and triviality, as well as its more agreeable aspects.”

Institutional repositories have fit well into an academic schemata, but can the public library have a role in building an IR? Although the NYPL does not have a faculty, a student body, a controlled population, or a source of dissertations, theses, papers, prep-prints, courseware, or syllabi, as Bodner points out, it does have at nearly two centuries of its own annual reports, memoranda, handwritten notes, construction documents, papers, brochures, descriptive materials for many neighborhood libraries, original audio and video recordings including public programs and oral histories in many formats; and official publications of the Library and 500,000 digital images.

The challenges to the establishment of Institutional Repositories at the NYPL are the need to get funding, the need for director-level decision-making, the resolution of rights and access issues, the need to preserve confidentiality, the development and use of opaque terminology, the development of standards, and the maintenance and migration of data.

Employing qualified and appropriate staff will place the biggest demand on financial resources. A key element to the development of the IR is the support at the director's level, especially for the decision-making process. Since the IR will contain documents that govern the library, explain the processes by which the library conducts its business, and describe governance matters as well as the public records of the corporation access issues, a cross-section of individuals must evaluate the content and clear it through various levels. This involves matters of security and confidentiality.

Vocabulary must be used that will allow all of those participating to understand the fundamental issues tied to the development of the repository. The development of standards, especially with regard to metadata, is essential to the creation of reasonable access points for researchers. Libraries also need to think long-term to develop life-cycle management systems for maintenance and migration of data. We

must develop advocacy efforts to fund pilot projects so we can determine some of the outcomes as we employ IR models. Bodner's final point is that in order to succeed, libraries must cooperate with each other. "We must give something of ourselves to achieve the synergy that Institutional Repositories offer."