
For Your Information

Cornell University Library Engages Institutions in Supporting arXiv

In a move to expand support for sustaining arXiv, Cornell University Library is broadening the funding base for the online scientific repository. Nearly 600,000 e-prints—research articles published online in physics, mathematics, statistics, computer science, and related disciplines—now reside in arXiv, which is an open-information source for hundreds of thousands of scientific researchers.

arXiv will remain free for readers and submitters, but the Library has established a voluntary, collaborative business model to engage institutions that benefit most from arXiv.

“Keeping an open-access resource like arXiv sustainable means not only covering its costs but also continuing to enhance its value, and that kind of financial commitment is beyond a single institution’s resources,” said Oya Rieger, Associate University Librarian for Information Technologies. “If a case can be made for any repository being community supported, arXiv has to be at the top of the list.”

The 200 institutions that use arXiv most heavily account for more than 75 percent of institutional downloads. Cornell is asking these institutions for financial support in the form of annual contributions, and most of the top twenty-five have already committed to helping arXiv.

Institutions that have already pledged support include: California Institute of Technology; University of California, Berkeley; University of Cambridge; CERN—European Organization for Nuclear Research (Switzerland); Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (France); Columbia University; DESY—Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron (Germany); Durham University (UK); Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich; Fermilab; Harvard University; University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Imperial College London; Los Alamos National Laboratory; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Max Planck Society (Germany); University of Michigan; University of Oxford;

University of Pennsylvania; Princeton University; SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory; Texas A&M University.

The proposed funding model is viewed as a short-term strategy, and the Library is actively seeking input on a long-term solution. Currently, Cornell University Library supports the operating costs of arXiv, which are comparable to the costs of the university’s collection budget for physics and astronomy. As one of the most influential innovations in scholarly communications since the advent of the Internet, arXiv’s original dissemination model represented the first significant means to provide expedited access to scientific research well ahead of formal publication.

Researchers upload their own articles to arXiv, and they are usually made available to the public the next day. arXiv, founded by physics professor Paul Ginsparg, has about 400,000 users and serves more than 2.5 million article downloads per month. Its 101,000 registered submitters live in nearly 200 countries.

For details about the operating principles of the new structure, visit the FAQ at <http://arxiv.org/help/support/faq>. For questions about supporting arXiv, contact consortia representatives or the arXiv office at Cornell University Library at support@arxiv.org.

—Cornell University Library news release