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Dominican Scholar: Approaching 1 Million Downloads

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Dominican Scholar

Approaching 1 Million Downloads

By

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Introduction

Dominican Scholar (DS) is the institutional repository for Dominican University of California; it acts as an essential platform for:

- Advancing the Dominican Experience by collecting, preserving, and making accessible student signature work and faculty research, in order to maximize visibility and impact of the work created by our community.
- Sharing our scholarship freely, both locally and internationally, in order to equal access to information and to give back to the community.

DS started in September 2014 with 80 masters theses collected as electronic documents from 2012. As of September 10, 2020 it contains 3,786 masters, senior and honors theses, faculty authored articles, photographs, videos, and audio recordings that are publicly available. Those deposited items have been downloaded a total of 832,878 times.

Currently, DS experiences approximately 21,000 downloads per month giving us a current projection of 1 million downloads by the end of the 2020-21 Academic Year.

The Reach of Dominican Scholar

Scholarly and creative works in Dominican Scholar have been downloaded in 225 (Table 1) countries and protectorates (Figure 1) and at over 23,000 organizations (Table 2) including governmental organizations, private companies, and educational institutions.

The top 10 downloaded items (Table 3) are a mixture of graduate and undergraduate theses. This is unsurprising considering the majority of the content in DS is student generated scholarship. It is interesting to note that 6 of the top 10 items are undergraduate theses (from Education, Communication and Media Studies, and History majors), while, prior to 2020, graduate theses dominated the top ten downloads list.

Figure 1 Total downloads for Dominican Scholar between September 2014 and September 2020. Numbers indicate regional clusters.



Table 1 Top 5 Countries by number of total downloads

Country/Protectorate	Total Downloads
United States	341,650
Philippines	94,879
United Kingdom	46,500
India	26,669
Australia	25,606

Table 2 Examples of Organizations Interested in Scholarship outputted by Dominican University of California

Organization	Total Downloads
North Carolina Research and Education Network	1135
U.S Department of Education	504
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	345
County of Marin	239
Facebook Inc.	208
Orange County Department of Education	193
Various Institutions in the University of California System	1,337

Table 3 Top 10 downloaded items from Dominican Scholar

Title	Downloads
Impact of Reading Ability on Academic Performance at the Primary Level	51210
An Analysis of the Changing Competitive Landscape in the Hotel Industry Regarding Airbnb	35654
Analysis of Pre Test and Post Test Performance of Students in a Learning Center Model at the Elementary School Level	32882
The Inclusion of Students with Special Needs in the General Education Classroom	24926
The Marginalization and Stereotyping of Asians in American Film	20805
Interprofessional Collaboration Between Occupational Therapists and Nurses in an Acute Care Setting: An Exploratory Study	17945
21st Century Education: The Importance of the Humanities in Primary Education in the Age of STEM	17745
The Sustainable Future of the Modern Fashion Industry	16991
Roman Propaganda in the Age of Augustus	11936
Understanding YouTube Culture and How It Affects Today's Media	11750

Overview of the Collections

Masters Theses

The graduate master's theses account for about 11% of the total number of items in DS but they are responsible for 51% of the total number of downloads. The majority of Theses come from the Biological Sciences, Education and Occupational Therapy programs. Not only do these programs have the majority of graduate students in their programs but they also require that students deposit their theses in in DS.

Senior and Honors Theses

Undergraduate Senior and Honors Theses make up 6% of the total items in DS and account for 27% of the total number of downloads. Although we have far more undergraduate students we have far fewer manuscripts from them. Few Undergraduate programs require deposit of senior theses in DS; most programs suggest that students submit their papers while others are selective about which student papers are posted.

Student Research Posters

Student research posters only make up about 2% of the total times in DS but they have about 4% of the total number of downloads. Most posters have been recruited through the Scholarly and Creative Works conference. Posters are collected only through the good will of the students willing to post them online as there are no program requirements to upload research posters to DS. This is

unfortunate considering the amount of work put into creating the posters and the amount of information lost.

Faculty Scholarship

Faculty scholarship includes faculty-authored books, articles, conference presentations, and dissertations. This section will only focus on articles and conference presentations as the books are not full-text and the number of dissertations is negligible (6 total).

The number of articles and conference presentations represents about 10% of the total collection but account for approximately 7% of the total number of downloads. Regular faculty contributions come from a small number of people while the majority of materials are collected randomly as the Scholarly Communications Librarian can reach out to faculty. This will be discussed more in the *Opportunities for Improvement* section below.

New and Notable Collections

[The Cynthia Stokes Brown Collection](#)

Cynthia Stokes Brown served as history and education professor at Dominican from 1982 to 2001. She was a published author and an early adopter/creator of the of the Big History discipline. After her death in 2017, a series of oral histories was recorded with Dr. Brown and edited by various faculty and then posted in DS. The University Archives are currently processing Dr. Brown's personal papers and will digitize them for deposit in DS. (<https://scholar.dominican.edu/cynthia-stokes-brown-collection/>)

[Honors Global and Multi-cultural Experience 2019 – Arcosanti](#)

The 2019 Honors and Global and Multi-cultural Experience traveled to the Blue Sky Center (a rural business incubator) in the Southern Californian desert and Arcosanti, a proof-of-concept for sustainable design in Arizona. The trip was documented by faculty and students and the photos were posted in DS to document the experience and to demonstrate some of the unique learning experiences and opportunities of our students. (<https://scholar.dominican.edu/honors-global-and-multicultural-experience-2019-arcosanti/>)

[Public History Websites](#)

In 2017 the Public History classes began to create websites as culmination of the students' work on local history projects. By adding links to these sites in DS we've created an index to the sites. Thus a visitor to DS can easily discover all of the projects in a single space. It also acts as a record of the program's work over time demonstrating the students' contribution to documenting local history. In so

doing DS also actively supports the work of public history in preserving state, local, and campus memory. (<https://scholar.dominican.edu/public-history-websites/>)

[Thematic Collections](#)

DS now has enough items in it to show trends in students' research. An easy way to highlight those trends is to create collections of themed materials in order to highlight the research and to make the materials more useful. Some of the first collections include titles such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; The San Francisco Bay Area, and Neurodevelopmental Disorders.

(<https://scholar.dominican.edu/thematic-research>)

[Yearbooks](#)

In fall 2020, the University's scanned yearbooks were added to DS. The scanned yearbooks span the years 1916 to 1999 (with some gaps). This collection is expected to be highly used by alumni. The content of the yearbooks reflect its time and place in history and thus reflect different societal norms which the University no longer tolerates (for instance the representation of marginalized populations). Therefore, to address these divergences the library has added to the cover page of each book stating the University has moved to a more inclusive state of mind. (<https://scholar.dominican.edu/dominican-university-of-california-yearbooks/>).

End-user Feedback

In 2018, a link to a survey asking, "How has this paper benefited you?" was added to the cover pages of papers downloaded from DS. In that time 36 responses have been received from high school and college students, researchers, and professionals from around the world. Responses include:

- "To do research for my own. It is for my design class" (College student, Guatemala)
- "Currently, I am using this paper as a research portion of my Masters in special education. I also teach professional development in my district, focusing specifically on trauma and trauma informed teaching practices. I also teach Right Response in my district." (Secondary special education teacher, Washington State)
- "It will help me make an evidence-based case for utilizing music to benefit students' learning. I am also a poor substitute teacher." (Substitute Teacher, Oklahoma)
- "Using the recommendations in it to help write the San Rafael General Plan 2040 Environmental Justice Element" (Planning Consultant, Berkeley, CA)

- “There is very little information on this topic, this paper created amazing insight. Thank you for making it public access!” (College Student, Florida)
- “Providing detailed contextual knowledge for A-Level English Literature Coursework” (High School Student, Ireland)

Email Requests

Each year, we receive emails from end-users asking to contact student authors. (Note: Author’s email addresses are not released, but we do contact the author and pass along the request with the requestor’s contact information.) Examples of requests/comments include:

- An Occupational Therapist in Brazil wanting to translate student produced handouts for her professional practice.
- Members of the Architectural Body Research Foundation wanting ask the author about their work titled *Lacuna: Transcendence of the Human Body through the Space Between*
- A Doctoral student wanting to ask the student author about their Scholarly and Creative Works Conference presentation: *Fear of Missing Out in Relationship to Emotional Stability and Social Media Use*.
- A researcher wanting permission to reuse a research instrument developed for Education master’s thesis titled: *Impact of Reading Ability on Academic Performance at the Primary Level*.
- A Vietnamese teacher wanting to translate a Humanities and Cultural Studies senior thesis titled: *21st Century Education: The Importance of the Humanities in Primary Education in the Age of STEM*

Community Engagement and Social Justice (equity and access to information)

Distribution of Information as Community Engagement

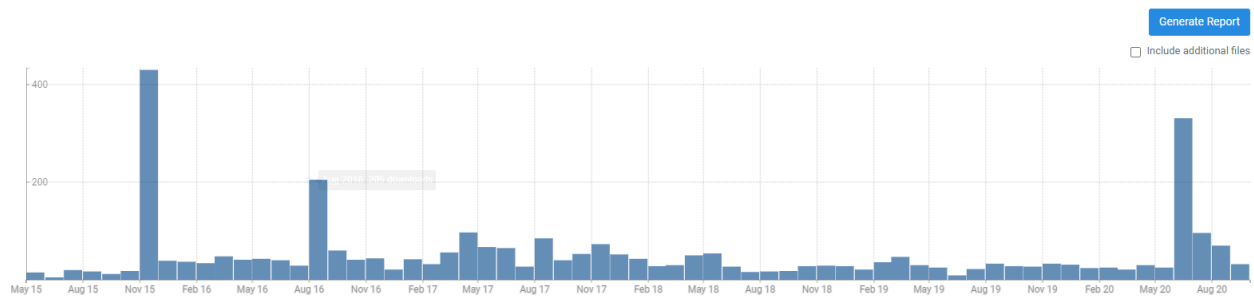
Dominican strongly embraces Community Engagement as a mode of learning for our students and as significant way to give back to our larger community. Our marketing materials describe Community-based research as “research conducted with established partners in diverse fields. Partner organizations benefit from students’ work gathering and analyzing data for select projects, and students build critical skills” (Dominican University of California, n.d.).

DS plays a crucial role here insofar as it maximizes the visibility and impact this important research work. By documenting, preserving, and distributing these research results DS itself acts as a crucial form of Community Engagement, not only on locally but globally. DS provides an essential platform for students to “join the scholarly conversation” in a meaningful way as it simultaneously advances the larger community engagement goals of our institution.

Example 1. On the Divide: Examining Residential Segregation in Marin County, California

The Senior Thesis by Felicia Burgess titled: *On the Divide: Examining Residential Segregation in Marin County, California* has been downloaded 3, 523 times since it was deposited in 2015. Of those 3,523 downloads, over 1,600 were in the local Bay Area (108 times alone by the County of Marin) and downloads have been consistent over that time (Figure 2).

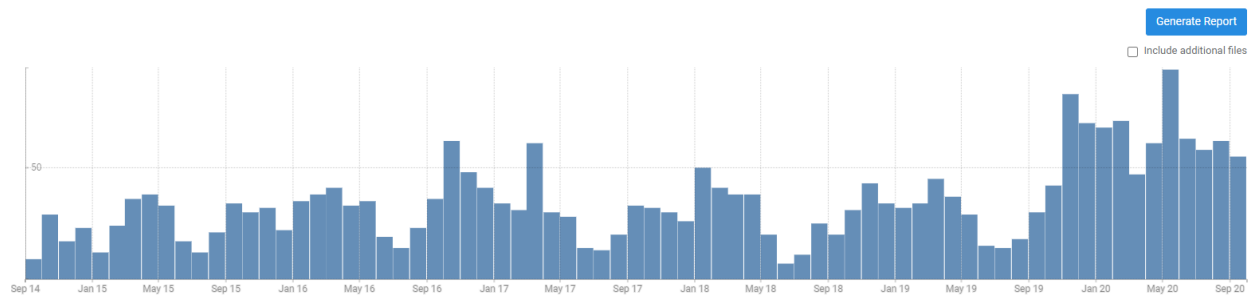
Figure 2 Downloads over time of *On the Divide: Examining Residential Segregation in Marin County, California*



Example 2. Human Trafficking and Sexual Slavery: A Local Epidemic

Human Trafficking and Sexual Slavery: A Local Epidemic by Sierra Marie Tomsy was deposited in 2014 and since that time has been downloaded 2,552 times with increasing frequency over time (Figure 3). Sierra’s paper continually gives information to the local community (and the global community) on a dark but needed topic of discussion.

Figure 3 Downloads over time of *Human Trafficking and Sexual Slavery: A Local Epidemic*



Distribution of Information as Social Justice

Equitable access to information is essential to increasing social justice. In their book, *Digital Capital*, Park (2017) states: "Information is the key to how the digital society adds value and redistributes power. In a connected world, information gains power through permanent storage and wide distribution." By posting full-text copies of our faculty-authored articles, and student-authored theses (and other papers) we are distributing information; and in making it available for free we are empowering populations that might not be able to afford it otherwise.

Approximately 25% of the downloads from DS go to countries that are classified by the World Bank as either 'Low-income' or 'Low-middle-income', or what we often refer to as "developing nations." Full access to the journals in which many of our faculty publish can be expensive and may be inaccessible to individuals and institutions because of cost. Even at Dominican we rely on others to post Open Access versions of their articles because we wouldn't be able to afford them otherwise. By posting the full spectrum of our scholarship, we are creating access to information and empowering people.

Opportunities for Improvement

Senior Theses

Currently, only a handful of undergraduate programs either require or strongly encourage their seniors to deposit copies of their culminating theses in DS. Granted, some programs don't produce senior theses or their students are doing original research with their instructor's data which they don't want released publicly (either in the manuscript or in the publicly viewable abstract). However, considering the benefits to the students and the community, we can do more work with programs to encourage the posting of student scholarship.

Varied Student Work and Collections

The vast majority of scholarship in DS are Senior Theses and Master's Theses. Still, more can be done. For instance, we would like to collect more Service Learning papers and projects, photo galleries of students studying abroad or taking part in Honor's trips, and similar Dominican community work. The possibilities are endless; it is only a matter of finding the work and encouraging participation.

Faculty Publications

Faculty are constantly producing scholarship in the form of articles, books/book chapters, research posters and conference presentations. Faculty work in DS is in the minority and yet it has a huge potential to make an impact for those who don't have access to journals or cannot attend

conferences. We need to do more to encourage faculty to include their work which in turn will not only make the information more accessible but also provide more attention to their department for recruitment and collaborative opportunities.

Gray Literature

DS has enormous potential to publish the University's gray literature, i.e. reports, studies, white papers and other documents produced by the University that would necessarily be considered traditional academic or commercial publications.

Collected Statistics

DS collects usage statistics so that we can track the impact of our scholarship. Statistics include: number of downloads, locations of downloads, number of citations, number of news mentions, social media mentions, and much more. There may be uses of this data for marketing, impact reports, promotion and tenure, recruitment, and advancement. We need to find out what information is needed/wanted by the campus departments and then leverage it for the benefit of Dominican and its community members.

Next Steps

Increased Partnership with the University Archives

Now that the Archbishop Alemany Library has filled the position of University Archivist we plan to add more digital collections to DS. This will make heavily used materials (e.g. photographs) more accessible.

Citations with Full-text

We are currently exploring the idea of adding citations of faculty publications, print master's theses and print senior theses into DS. Although, these items are not full text, they would show the full breadth of scholarship created by the Dominican community and possibly encourage the deposit of full text materials.

Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs)

DOIs are permanent links that are attached to digital items; they act as digital footprints. Each DOI is unique and can identify a digital object through its lifetime as well as provide authenticity and better citation counts to items in DS. For the past year, we have been assigning DOIs to our master's theses and the plan is to extend that to Senior Theses, Honors Theses, Research Posters, and any object added to DS.

Conclusion

After 6 years Dominican Scholar is approaching 1 million downloads of our student and faculty scholarship. In addition to the learning process, our students are given purpose in creating their work; they are publishing and sharing their newly acquired knowledge with the community. Additionally, the students gain the satisfaction and pride of knowing that their hard work is being read and put to use.

Faculty research is being unlocked from journals and becoming accessible to a wider audience while at the same creating opportunities for collaboration and showcasing the scholarship coming out of the University.

DS has enormous potential for growth by including more: student work; faculty publications and presentations; University produced products; and digitized collections from University Archives. Not only would we Dominican's scholarship be more accessible, DS would also become more useful to the University as a tool for assessment, recruitment, alumni relations, and marketing. While the University's website is a good tool **tell** people what we do, Dominican Scholar is a tool to **show** people what we do.

References

Modes of Community Engagement. (n.d.). Dominican University of California.

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