

# Policy Decision Tree for Academic Digital Collections

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**Abstract.** We present the results of a questionnaire survey for the access and reproduction policies of 67 digital collections in 34 libraries (national, academic, public, special etc) from 13 countries. We examine and analyze the above policies in relation to specific factors, such as, the acquisition method, copyright ownership, library type (national, academic, etc.), content creation (digitized, born-digital) and content type (audio, video, etc.); how these factors affect the policies of the examined digital collections. Responses were received from a range of library sectors but by far the best responses came from academic libraries, in which we focus. We extract policy (access, reproduction) rules and alternatives according to these factors that lead to a policy decision tree on digital information management for academic libraries. The resulting decision tree is based on a policy model; the model and tree are divided into two parts: for digitized and born-digital content.

## 1 Introduction

We propose a *policy decision tree* that contains flexible alternative access and reproduction policy solutions for *digital information management in academic libraries*. The *decision tree* is based on a conceptual policy model for digital information management, which is an evolvement and extension of our previous theoretical access and reproduction *policy model for university digital collections* [2]. The resulted *decision tree* may constitute a *map* or *guide* or *policy pathfinder*, for decision-makers and library managers in forming the policies (i.e. access, reproduction) and managing academic libraries' digital content.

## 2 Findings

We present the most important findings that were derived from the questionnaire survey and its data statistical analysis on collection level:

- The factors that mainly affect the access and reproduction policies are the acquisition method, the copyright ownership and the content creation type.
- Factors that affect less the previous policies are the content and library type.

- The content creation type is independent from the library type.
- The library type diversifies the access policy structures (i.e. *off-campus*, *offsite*).
- Digital contents' acquisition method, especially in born-digital, diversifies access.
- Users' access diversification applies when other owners have the copyright.
- The libraries provide full off-campus onsite access for their own digital content, in which they have or administer the copyright.
- For the licensed content, and mostly for the born-digital, the libraries negotiate with the providers and they ensure *remote* access for their off-campus onsite users.
- When other owners have the digital contents' copyright, they restrict the full off-campus onsite access and they provide it in a limited sense.
- The libraries provide full offsite access for the digitized: *library* content, *free third-party*, *public domain* and *licensed* content; for the born-digital, they forbid it.
- In licensed content case, the provision of *limited* offsite access is widely used.
- The fact of copyright, especially when belongs to other owners, determines the kind of the (remote) offsite access (i.e. *full*, *limited*, or *not* provided).
- The user access rights' *clustering*<sup>1</sup> depends on digital contents' acquisition method.
- For the *library*, *free third-party* and *public domain* digitized content, users' access clustering is not applied.
- In the case of licensed digitized content, either *no*, or *common* clustering is applied.
- For the purchased digital content, *common* clustering is applied.
- Common clustering applies in born-digital content case, independent of the acquisition method used. Especially for the purchased content, except the *common*, *additional* clustering is also applied.
- When the copyright belongs to other owners, usually common clustering is applied or rarely additional clustering may applied.
- The users' clustering is related with the, a) access diversification between onsite and offsite users, b) offsite, c) off-campus onsite and d) on-campus onsite access.
- *Limited on-campus onsite access means additional clustering*.
- The private reproduction is usually free, independent of library type, acquisition method and copyright ownership.
- Libraries prefer providing their content with free private reproduction, either with a *credit* (mention) to the source, or by applying fair use provisions, but usually without enforcing written permission and/or fee, or any other additional restriction.
- The commercial reproduction is usually not authorized; it is mainly permitted from other library types (i.e. profitable private libraries).
- In most of the cases where the commercial reproduction is permitted, written permission and/or fee are required.
- The copyright owner gives, except few cases, the written permission and takes the fee for the commercial reproduction.
- The written permission is not always accompanied by fee payment.

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<sup>1</sup> In this research, we categorize (*cluster*) the users according to their access rights. The *clustering* may have the values: *no*, meaning that onsite and offsite users have the same access rights; *common*, meaning that there is diversified access between onsite and offsite users and/or between onsite users (on and off-campus); and *additional*, meaning that there is diversified access between on-campus onsite users, even if inside library premises.

### 3 Proposed Policy Decision Tree for Digital Information Management in Academic Libraries: Rules and Alternatives

The rules and their alternatives that derived from the above findings result in a flexible (access and reproduction) *policy decision tree*, which is the *core* and *proposal* of this research. The *decision tree* is a *policy route map*, which offers alternative, flexible and effective access and reproduction policy solutions, according to the factors that apply on its case. It may have implications in building tools for making decision regarding policies and for managing the digital information.

The *decision tree* refers to the digital information life cycle focusing on its *creation* (digitized, born-digital), *acquisition* and *availability* (i.e. access, reproduction) – without excluding its *maintenance* (preservation). It simplifies and unifies already used practices, and converts them to efficient policy rules. Additionally, it offers new, flexible, extensible and innovative policy alternatives (*routes, paths*).

The *decision tree* is divided into two *parts*, for the *digitized* and for the *born-digital* content separately, which are not included due to format constraints. However, the *decision tree parts* are incorporated in TR200701 technical report, available at <http://dlib.ionio.gr/en/lab/treports.htm>.

#### 3.1 Policy Decision Tree for Academic Libraries' Digitized Content

We analyze some representative examples of alternative proposed *policy routes*. Academic libraries may follow four available alternative options for their digitized content acquisition: *library*, *third-party*, *public domain* and *licensed* content. When *library content* is involved, the library digitizes the content available on its collections, in which it has or administers the copyright. The access is full and free for all users. Private and commercial reproduction should be permitted to all users with a credit to the *source* (i.e. content *creator*, provider) and with written permission from and fees paid to the library respectively.

When the library digitizes *third-party* content, the *library* administers the copyright, or *other owners* hold it, or *library and other owners* mutually administer (share) it, or finally, it may vary from item-to-item. When the library administers the copyright two access alternatives are proposed: full for all users, or full for *onsite* (on and off-campus) only and *no* (forbidden) for offsite. The *private* reproduction should be permitted with a *credit* (mention) to the source or by applying *fair use* doctrine. The commercial reproduction has two alternatives; its provision with written permission from and fees paid to the library, or its examination on *case-by-case* basis.

When other owners hold the third party digitized contents' copyright, the access should be provided to onsite users only; and not to offsite. In this case, only onsite users have the content reproducing privilege, with a credit to the source for private, and with written permission, given by the owner, for commercial reproduction.

Variant and alternative access and reproduction policy routes are proposed when the third-party digitized contents' copyright is *shared* among library and other owners or varies from item-to-item. For instance, in case of copyright sharing, the access is *full* for onsite and it is *limited* or *not provided* for offsite users. Finally, the *licensed* or *public domain* digitized content has other alternative policy proposals.

### 3.2 Policy Decision Tree for Academic Libraries' Born-Digital Content

Examples of alternative proposed policy routes are analyzed. Academic libraries may follow four proposing alternatives for their born-digital content acquisition: *license*, *purchase*, *voluntary deposit* and *library* content. When occurs to purchased born-digital content, *other owners* hold the copyright or *library* and *other owners* mutually administer it, or finally, it *varies on item* basis.

When *other owners* hold the copyright, the proposing access policy *path* is full on-campus, limited off-campus and *no* offsite. The private reproduction should be permitted with a credit to the source or under fair use provisions, and the commercial should not be authorized. Two additional alternative reproduction policy paths may be considered, when library and other owners mutually administer the copyright; the *case-by-case* examination (private and commercial) and the provision of commercial reproduction with written permission from and fees paid to the owners.

When the copyright *varies* from item-to-item (encountered in *purchased* born-digital content), three proposing alternative access policy paths may be selected: a) *full on-campus*, *some off-campus* and *no offsite*, b) *full on and off-campus*, *some offsite* (i.e. fig. 1), and c) *full onsite and offsite*. Proposing paths for reproduction are its provision by mentioning (*credit*) the source or by applying fair use doctrine (*for private*), and its forbiddance (*for commercial*).

Academic libraries may alternatively select the *voluntary deposit* method for their born-digital content acquisition; having in mind that other owners control the copyright and normally impose policy (i.e. on *access*) restrictions. The proposing restrictive access (i.e. *full on-campus*, *limited off-campus*, *no offsite*) and reproduction (i.e. *permitted for onsite users only*) paths follow the logic of satisfying the content creators, and in accordance, ensuring the born-digital contents' voluntary deposit, viability and preservation.

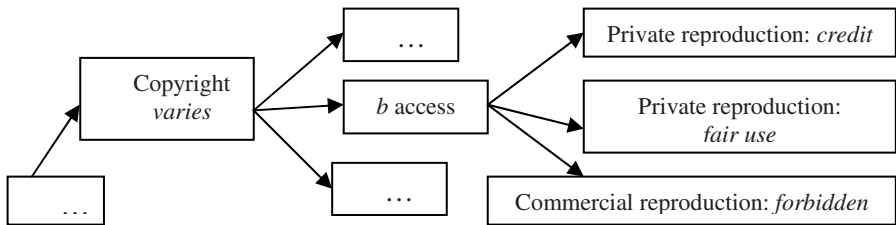


Fig. 1. Policy path examples of the decision tree for academic libraries' born-digital content

### References

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