

arXiv Update - January 2014



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The content on this wiki page has been moved to <https://confluence.cornell.edu/x/bKZRF>.

This page is no longer kept up to date.

After three years of planning, we've started implementing the new arXiv membership model in January 2013. We are pleased to report that we currently have 173 members representing 22 countries.

To help with arXiv's support and governance, the membership program aims to engage libraries and research laboratories worldwide that represent arXiv's heaviest institutional users. Each member institution pledges a five-year initial funding commitment to support arXiv. arXiv's sustainability plan is founded on and presents a business model for generating revenues. Cornell University Library (CUL), the Simons Foundation, and a global collective of institutional members support arXiv financially. The financial model for 2013-2017 entails three sources of revenues:

- CUL provides a cash subsidy of \$75,000 per year in support of arXiv's operational costs and an in-kind contribution of all indirect costs, which currently represents 37% of total operating expenses.
- The Simons Foundation contributes \$50,000 per year in recognition of CUL's stewardship of arXiv. In addition, the Foundation matches \$300,000 per year of the funds generated through arXiv membership fees.
- Each member institution pledges a five-year funding commitment to support arXiv. Based on institutional usage ranking, the annual fees are set in four tiers from \$1,500-\$3,000. In 2013, Cornell raised approx. \$340,000 through membership fees from 173 institutions.

We are grateful for Simons Foundation's support. The gift aims to encourage long-term community support by lowering arXiv membership fees, making participation affordable to a broader range of institutions. This support helps ensure that the ultimate responsibility for sustaining arXiv remains with the research communities and institutions that benefit from the service most directly.

An integral part of our sustainability planning process has been assessing the services, technologies, standards, and policies that constitute arXiv. The sustainability of arXiv also depends on enabling interoperability and creating efficiencies among repositories with related and complementary content to reduce duplicate efforts. 2013 has been a transition year for arXiv including adding new staff and exploring new organizational models. Here are some of our key accomplishments and areas that are work-in-progress:

User Support and Moderation

- Worked with the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) to formalize the responsibilities of the subject advisory committees.
- Worked with the SAB to elect a new Chair to the Physics Advisory Committee and resurrect that committee.
- Began identifying moderators for physics categories without moderation (filled out seven categories lacking moderators).
- Began working with moderators to define requirements for new tools and interfaces to support their work in a more systematic way.
- Shifted all communications with users and moderators to a web-based issue tracking system (Request Tracker). The new system provides better tracking and built-in reporting for answering user questions, troubleshooting technical problems, soliciting and following up on moderator input, responding to and resolving moderation appeals, etc.

Technical Features and Infrastructure

- Migrated all servers to virtual machines infrastructure and increased capacity.
- Migrated help and moderation arXiv admin interactions from email to a ticketing system.
- Gathered requirements to improve tools and interfaces to support moderators in interacting more directly and efficiently with the arXiv system and administrators. Started work on improvements.
- Reviewed use of and experience with the Data Conservancy pilot, which ended in March 2013 (see pilot documentation of our conclusions). We will continue to support modest sized datasets and other materials using the existing ancillary files mechanism and will ingest data from the pilot as ancillary files to support it long-term.

Governance, Communication, & Organizational Model

- Created an interim Scientific Director position to bring in scientific expertise to Cornell's arXiv team and to provide intellectual leadership for arXiv's operation. We are in the process of recruiting an interim Scientific Director in order to test and further refine this position.

- Established a Member Advisory Board (MAB) to represent participating institutions' interests and to provide input to CUL on issues related to repository management and development, standards implementation, interoperability, development priorities, business planning, and outreach and advocacy. Representation on MAB is reserved for libraries, research institutions, laboratories, and foundations that are members of arXiv and that contribute to the financial support of the service. The MAB bylaws detail the goals, composition, operation, and election of the Board.
- Created bylaws for the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) to describe the group's goals, composition, operation, and member election process.
- Developed a program roadmap (2013 & 2014) to bring further transparency to arXiv team's goals and priorities, especially for SAB and MAB members to help them understand the vision, priorities, and challenges to be able to contribute to the arXiv's governance.
- Held an annual meeting for SAB and MAB. The discussion topics included: budget review, IT development priorities, moderation tools and policies, Scientific Director position, arXiv reserve policy, fund raising strategies.
- Developed a set of procedures for describing how arXiv reserve funds can be used
- Created a Library Guide to provide basic information about arXiv.
- Continued the dialogue with a group of publishers/societies that are interested in Cornell's sustainability planning efforts to discuss the emerging mandates for open access and ideas for collaboration.

Cornell University Library, arXiv Team

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