National Children's Advocacy Center

Building CALiO – A Repository and Digital Library for Field Practitioners

Summary of the poster presented at the 10th International Conference on Open Repositories

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by

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Creating a digital library designed for field professionals is much different from amassing collections for academic and research purposes. A digital collection that delivers resources that specifically address the core needs of practitioners, quickly, easily and reliably becomes an invaluable tool for professional practice and improves outcomes.

Repositories can play an active and crucial role in addressing the needs of practitioners locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. This presentation describes the mission, development and implementation of CALiO, the Child Abuse Library Online, which is the primary digital library for multidisciplinary teams of professionals throughout the United States and in dozens of other countries.

The front face of CALiO, and the primary digital collection for the large cadre of professionals nationally and internationally, is the repository, CALiO™Collections.

This presentation addresses some of the most fundamental issues regarding collections and services for field professionals, including:

- How do the information needs of practitioners differ from those of academic and research professionals?
- How do information-seeking behaviors of practitioners differ from those of academic and research professionals?
- What are the implications for design of digital collections and services? And,
- How can repositories effectively respond to these issues?

The digital library now called CALiO originated more than a decade ago when the National Children's Advocacy Center launched its digital library specifically designed to serve as the core knowledge base for evidence-based practice among field professionals working to combat the scourge of child maltreatment. The original digital library effort aimed to meet the needs of multidisciplinary teams at Children's Advocacy Centers throughout the United States.

The scope of CALiO collections and services has broadened over the years due to three concurrent developments.

1. The evidence-based practice movement has driven organizations to establish qualitative goals and encouraged field professionals to meet standards of service,
2. The open access movement has steadily increased the availability of high quality information resources that can benefit field professionals, and
3. Advances in information technology, especially the development of institutional repository platforms, have enabled a path for focused solutions by libraries.

The guiding principles for development of CALiO differ significantly from the mission of academic and research libraries. And since the National Children's Advocacy Center is not an academic or research institution, CALiO in its entirety, and the CALiO™Collections repository which is its public face, are significantly different from academic and research libraries in both resources and services.

The most important characteristic of collections and services designed for practitioners is user focus, propelled by practical purposes. The difference between that concept within the context of practitioners vs academic/research clientele lies in purpose. Practitioners are primarily motivated by the need for information for timely case-related decision making.

This presentation discusses the core principles that shaped development of CALiO and the implementation of those principles as a functioning digital library that responds specifically to the needs of field professionals. Those core principles address three aspects of a user-oriented digital library:

• Usability – the ability of users to figure out how to go about looking for the information they require
• Findability – the ability of users to successfully identify resources that meet their requirements, and
• Availability – the accessibility of the resources the user has identified as meeting their requirements

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This presentation discusses some of the common obstacles and frustrations encountered by users in each of these aspects, particularly in regards to seeking quality information for decision making, and how CALiO has attempted to alleviate them.

The importance of targeted acquisitions for disciplinary repositories has been a cornerstone of the development of the CALiO™Collections repository. The resources contained in the repository are not limited to in-house documents of the National Children's Advocacy Center. In fact, the majority of records link out to open access resources from publishers, government agencies and other repositories, including international publications.

This strategy of supplementing locally produced information with open access materials from external sources is key to achieving the mission of a digital library for field professionals. This presentation describes methods used by CALiO staff to identify resources that are of potentially high benefit to practitioners in the field of child abuse, and how the records are enhanced to improve findability.

The identification and enhancement of open access resources for inclusion in CALiO™Collections far exceeds current technology for automated harvesting of records from databases. The resources are selected and descriptive elements to records enhanced, one by one, by librarians with subject expertise and close working relationships with practitioners.

The same guiding principles applying to the CALiO™Collections repository also encompass the development of the overall CALiO digital library. The repository holdings are a valuable component of the overall CALiO digital library, which provides subscription-based resources for multi-disciplinary practitioner teams affiliated with the 900+ Children's Advocacy Centers throughout the United States.

No library can ever afford to acquire every document that might be of potential benefit to its clientele. This is particularly true for a non-profit organization like the National Children's Advocacy Center. The open access resources collected into the CALiO™Collections repository

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are drawn into the search results of full-text subscription databases, and the open access resources are included in internally-produced specialized information resources including topical bibliographies and expert collections.

Since launch of the CALiO™Collections repository, more than 13,000 searches have been conducted. Some of those, of course, were run by CALiO librarians. Although the CALiO™Collections repository resources are included in Google search results, the greatest volume of these searches have originated from the CALiO home page.

Finally, this presentation discusses the keys to success of CALiO™Collections repository and why we believe CALiO represents an ideal implementation of digital library services to practitioners.

CALiO is a vital element in the ongoing battle against child abuse and neglect in all its forms, not only in the United States, but internationally. The development of the repository collections to date represents first steps toward a truly global digital library for practitioners.