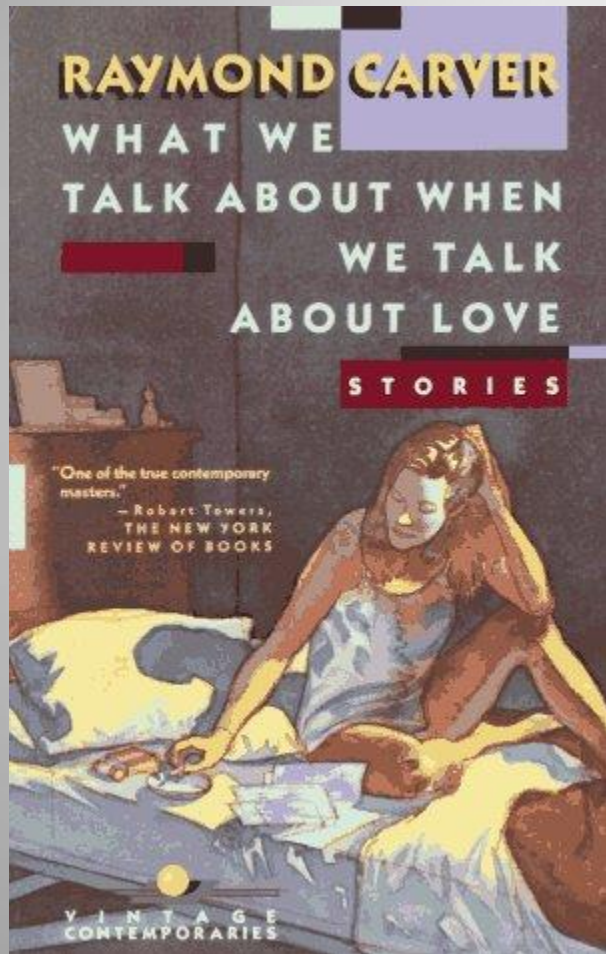


What We Talk About When We Talk About Institutional Repositories



- **Metaphors** can help us understand IRs
- How do faculty understand IRs?
- Making a sustainable IR by using language faculty understand and offering services they want and value

Carver would make a lean, mean awesome IR.

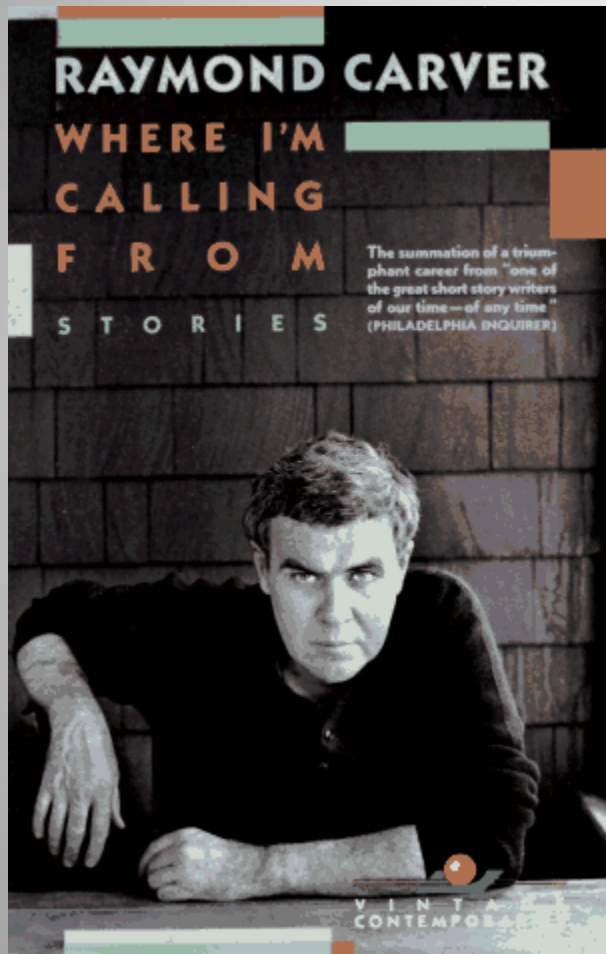
Raymond Carver's fiction

- Simple language to illuminate complex situations
- Avoids jargon
- Does more with less
- Everyone knows where they stand
- People have clear roles
- Meaning, beauty and value are the result of this economy and clarity

Concordia's IR under the spell of Carver

- We acknowledge IRs are complex but we strive for clarity nonetheless
- We promote it using clear language that faculty understand
- We carefully examine our role and the roles of other characters in the story (aka "stakeholders")
- We create an IR that is sustainable and has use, value and meaning for people

Where are we calling from? From Complexity to Clarity



- Who are we and what is our role?
- Who are our faculty and what is their role?
- What do we want to achieve?
- What do we want to offer faculty?
- How can an IR help their work?
- How can we create a **sustainable** IR?

IRs: hard to understand and hard to populate*

- Are faculty not getting the message?
- Have libraries sent the right messages?
- If IRs were well understood and well explained would they grow faster?
- What would make them more sustainable?

*unless there is an institutional or funder mandate

Metaphors help us understand.



Concordia University`s repository environment would be like an ecosystem or an **information ecology.**

A Metaphor that May Shed Light

- An **Information Ecology** (as described by Bonnie A. Nardi and Vicky L. O`Day in 1999) is:
 - A system of people, practices, values and technologies in a particular local environment
 - The spotlight is not on technology, but on human activities that are served by technology
 - Information ecologies are marked by strong interrelationships and dependencies among its different parts

An information ecology



- A system of parts and relationships
- Exhibits diversity
- Experiences continual evolution
- Keystone species are necessary to the survival of the ecology (hint: librarians are a keystone species)
- Complexity of an ecology ensures that there are niches for different roles and functions

The Concordia IR:

A system of people, practices, values and technologies in a particular local environment

- **People:** authors, students, librarians, readers, web surfers
- **Practices:** self-archiving, publishing, disseminating, storing, providing access, writing, thinking, reading, uploading, downloading
- **Values:** open access to information, improved scholarly communication, greater dissemination of research
- **Technologies:** the IR software, metadata, web browsers, harvesters, file formats, information retrieval systems, search engines
- **Particular local environment:** Concordia community

When do faculty understand and want to use IRs?

- When it is put in language meaningful to them
- When it benefits their lives
- When they have proof it works

How can we make a sustainable IR?

- Respect diversity of disciplines and scholarly cultures around us – propose services that suit them
- Take a local approach
- Give faculty services they want and will use
- Help faculty achieve increased visibility and impact

What do faculty want?

- Do their research (read, write, share)
- Keep up in their fields
- Preserve their work and keep it safe from loss or damage
- Control over who has access to their work
- Help with managing versions of their work (often beyond the scope of typical IR software which is more for finished versions of work)
- To share their work with people who work in closely related fields
- To showcase themselves and their research
- To give out links to their work
- To maintain ownership of their own work
- Have their work easily accessible to others through Google searches and searches within the IR itself
- Advancement, promotion, tenure, grants, research time
- CITATIONS

(see References at end of presentation)

What faculty do NOT want

- Clerical responsibility
- Additional activities that cut into their research and writing time
- A lot of detail about digital tools - ie. What they are or how they work (they just want them to work)
- To do anything complicated
- To maintain a server

You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make him or her drink.

We can't just build it and hope they will come.

At the same time, you can't make someone deposit unless there is a mandate.

How to encourage a horse to drink?

How to get them to deposit

CARROT METHODS

- Pay them (some places do this)
- Offer awesome services
- Advocacy Route: Convince them it is for the good of scholarship and the progression of ideas
- Give information on how this will improve their visibility and impact (Alma Swan)

STICK METHODS

- Mandates from research funders
- Mandate from the university

What are some services out there?

- Mediated deposits (someone does it for them)
- Copyright advising
- Scanning
- Rights checking
- Individual bibliography pages
- Statistics on how many downloads per paper
- A researcher profile page
- Permanent links to their publications

What is not necessarily meaningful

- The institutional promotion angle may not mean much to individual researchers
- Our jargon about IRs: words like repository, metadata, harvest, so many acronyms!
- Arguments about open access to information do not always seem relevant when professors and their colleagues are all affiliated with university libraries that provide journals – they may not feel access is a challenge

What *are* we talking about when we talk about IRs?

- Introducing and IR will bring about a change in our practices and environment. It will build on what we already do:
 - Taking an interest in what our faculty members are doing
 - Being aware of their publications
 - New step:
 - Helping them increase their visibility and impact within their fields by providing an additional venue (open access and crawled by Google) for their publications

What would be new about an IR?

- A new step in faculty's publication-making activities – depositing things into the IR
- A new layer in our collection-building activities: we cultivate a collection that is created by Concordians
 - It is a reconfiguration of collections already housed in and made accessible by databases, indexes, journals
 - It is a relocation of these publications out on the **open web**, not behind economic or technological walls
 - It is a rebranding of the information: old brand was journal, new brand is institution or researcher
- A whole new set of services to faculty members

Final thoughts

- A significant investment of people, skills, and technology is required to establish an IR
- An IR is a commitment to a rich web presence for the entire university
- Could be a full text CV for all Concordia's researchers
- An IR is a tool a university uses to reveal itself to the world (through the web)
- Library develops and staffs this tool on behalf of the university (hopefully with the university's cooperation and support)

Mixed metaphors, same message

Raymond Carver, information ecologies, leading horses to water, carrots, sticks...

Questions?

References and Recommended Readings

What do faculty members want (and not want) in an IR?

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What services are out there?

See the work of Vanessa Proudman: <http://www.tilburguniversity.nl/services/lis/driver-population.html>

More about Information Ecologies and other Useful Metaphors:

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