

## AQUATIC COMMONS UPDATE

Lisa Raymond and Jennifer Walton

MBL/WHOI Library  
7 MBL Street  
Woods Hole, MA USA

**Abstract:** Aquatic Commons was developed to facilitate the exchange of scientific research related to marine and aquatic environments and offer repository services where local, stable IT support is lacking (or where non-OAI compliant services exist). Aquatic Commons supports IAMSLIC's long-term goal of helping researchers and the public freely access needed information. The Aquatic Commons repository (<http://aquacomm.fcla.edu>) repository went live in August 2007. Conceptually, the Aquatic Commons model provides an integrative architecture accommodating researchers and research institutions at all technological levels.

**Keywords:** research; marine environments; repositories; digital libraries

The Aquatic Commons repository model was developed by IAMSLIC in response to the open access movement recognizing that not all libraries have the same level of access to technology. The model includes the repository, an official harvester Avano, and metadata harvesting by services such as Google, BASE, OAIster. It is built on the EPrints platform which is easy to use both for researchers searching for documents and people submitting items. With Aquatic Commons we hope to promote the exchange of scientific information by offering a stable environment to deposit both born digital and legacy documents. This is an international effort with contributors from all over the world. While a majority of downloads come from U.S. users, other countries with large numbers of downloads include India, Great Britain, Turkey, Nigeria and Argentina.

Unique visitors to the site have remained fairly consistent over time indicating that people are using what is being deposited. Aquatic Commons was included in the 2009 Ranking Web of World Repositories,

an initiative of the Cybermetrics Lab in Spain. Using web indicators they measured the global visibility and impact of scientific repositories. Aquatic Commons was ranked 259 out of 400 repositories.

Since coming online in August 2007, the Aquatic Commons repository has experienced a steady growth in both deposits and downloads. As Aquatic Commons has grown, groups have chosen to use Aquatic Commons to assist special projects. FAO, mainly through its FishCode Programme, is supporting development of the Aquatic Commons as one of several mechanisms to improve the availability and sharing of fisheries management and related information. IAMSLIC librarians have used Aquatic Commons to host items that were needed by researchers at another institution. After receiving permission from the publisher, the Journal of Aquatic Plant Management was added to the repository. A group of SAIL librarians creating a bibliography based on a 1912 survey of the Panama Canal region added articles to Aquatic Commons that were not previously digitized.

The Aquatic Commons repository is OAI compliant, permitting service providers to harvest and broaden access. Research indicates open access materials are used more, both in terms of citations and downloads.