

Feminist Podcasting: Delivering Scholarship Outside the University Walls

by Erin Fields

Recent attacks on the role of Women's and Gender Studies departments in Canadian universities¹ spurred an initiative from the women's and gender studies librarian and the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies (CWGS) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) to capture and more widely disseminate the "informal" work of feminist scholars at the university.

CWGS offers a lecture series on Wednesday afternoons during the fall and winter semesters. This series brings together scholars who focus on issues related to women and the study of gender/sexuality, including post-doctoral and visiting scholars as well as faculty both from CWGS and from other departments who are engaging in research relevant to the mission of the centre.

In collaboration with the director and chairs for CWGS, and with help from a graduate student who organized the lectures, we developed a plan to podcast the series and deposit the podcasts in cIRcle, the institutional repository at UBC, which was chosen as host because search engines (e.g., Google) and indexers (e.g., CARL) can search cIRcle and make its content readily available. Placing the podcasts in cIRcle also supports open access initiatives that distribute freely available academic materials.

Using an open-source editing and recording program called Audacity (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>), a Samson Go portable USB condenser microphone, and a laptop computer, the lectures are recorded live. The podcast is then edited and

converted into an mp3 file, which is uploaded to CWGS's podcast community in cIRcle (<https://circle.ubc.ca/handle/2429/26856>). Each participant signs a waiver allowing the audiofile and presentation notes to be archived in cIRcle. Each item in cIRcle has an abstract, keywords, and descriptive information.

The cIRcle community has been added as a link to the CWGS website to increase dissemination of the presentations both locally and globally. Information about the podcasts is currently found on the Humanities and Social Sciences news blog at Koerner Library (<http://hss.library.ubc.ca/blog/centre-for-womens-and-gender-studies-podcasts/>),. By the end of January 2011, the series has had over 460 views from such places as Burkina Faso, Algeria, Korea, China and Germany. Due to the success of the podcast series, the community was featured on *cIRcle: UBC's Institutional Repository Blog* (<http://blogs.ubc.ca/circle/2010/11/17/cwgs-research-lecture-series-in-circle/>). Additionally a poster session for the Ontario Library Super Conference 2011 highlighted the series as a part of an outreach plan for interdisciplinary departments.²

Spreading the word about the work of feminist scholars is vital both to the continued support of departments and faculty members in "at-risk" subject areas and to the development of diverse collections that reflect the scholarship of the departments that librarians and information professionals serve. This initiative allows librarians to get involved in the development and archiving of a unique scholarly product while supporting faculty in publicizing their research efforts to illustrate the importance of their scholarship.

Note

1. Women's Studies is still with us (January 26, 2010) National Post Editorial Board -
<http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fullcomment/archive/2010/01/26/national-post-editorial-board-women-s-studies-is-still-with-us.aspx>
2. Liaising in the Between - A Plan for Interdisciplinary Outreach, OLA Super Conference
2011 poster session -
<http://www.accessola.com/superconference2011/pdf/postersessions.pdf>

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