Proposal for NDLTD Quality Seal

June 16, 2010

Starting an ETD repository and instituting an ETD requirement is only the beginning of an evolution. Yet, we see that some institutions become complacent once they see that the ETD repository is a success in terms of size and usage of the repository. To encourage more ambitious goals, we propose to institute an NDLTD Quality Seal with a catchy name to be decided. This Quality Seal will measure a multitude of facets of the ETD repository.

Precise criteria need to be developed. However, considerations to take into account may include:

1. Completeness of the collection
   a. Is there an ETD requirement? Since when?
   b. What portion of all theses produced by the institute has been scanned into the repository?

2. Quality of the repository
   a. Is the repository OAI compliant? OAI-PMH? OAI-ORE?
   b. Does the metadata conform to standards? DC? ETD-MS? Other?
   c. Are local search and browse functions adequate?
   d. Is there a full-text search? If so, what portion of the repository can be full-text searched?
   e. Is the repository really open access? Is there paid content?
   f. Are there innovative features to the repository? Tag clouds?

3. Support for multimedia and data
   a. Does the repository accept and support multimedia content and/or research data?
   b. What is the level of support for students to produce multimedia content for theses?
   c. What is the level of support for students who need to store data?

4. Archival policies
   a. Backup policies? Off-campus storage and/or mirroring?
   b. Collaboration with established archival organizations?
   c. Archival standards and maintenance policies?
5. Quality of student support
   a. How well are students supported during the authorship of their theses?
   b. Do students and advisors have a shared virtual workspace?

6. Quality of the administrative processes
   a. How do students communicate with the exam committee?
   b. How are the approval processes implemented?
   c. Do format requirements fit current needs or are they a holdover from the paper era?

Using these and other criteria, it should be possible to create several levels of Quality Seals. The mere existence of an ETD repository may be sufficient for a plain seal. Various premium levels, say Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum like the LEED certifications for green architecture, could encourage openness, completeness, and innovation. To obtain this certification, NDLTD membership should be required as well as an additional application fee.