

# University of Georgia

Making the Library an  
Indispensible Research  
Partner



UNIVERSITY OF  
**GEORGIA**

The University of Georgia Libraries is raising the profile of faculty research and making it more discoverable with the help of Ex Libris Esploro. In doing so, the library is demonstrating its value to UGA as a key partner in the research process.

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Deputy University Librarian Jason Battles



## About the University of Georgia

As the most comprehensive research institution in the state of Georgia and one of the best in the United States, the University of Georgia (UGA) is producing cutting-edge research that is changing lives. UGA is among the top five U.S. research universities in new products created, having introduced more than 800 new products into the marketplace—including 59 products in fiscal year 2020 alone. R&D expenditures at UGA topped \$495 million in FY 2020, and the university’s research has made a \$6.5 billion impact on Georgia’s economy.

## The Challenge: Understanding the Full Scope of UGA Research

Although UGA researchers have done some very impressive work, the university’s research platform did not reflect the full scope of these activities. UGA was using an institutional repository (IR) that required faculty to manually upload research assets and fill out several data fields with the corresponding metadata so these items could be found in searches. This created both legal and technological hurdles for researchers, says Deputy University Librarian Jason Battles.

“Faculty would have to know how to upload items, as well as what they were allowed to upload from a copyright perspective,” he explains. Because of these hurdles, the university’s IR was severely underused.

Library staff worked with faculty who were engaged and motivated to help them upload their research outputs to the IR—the “usual suspects,” as Battles calls them. But these faculty members represented only a small minority of the university’s entire research community, meaning that students, researchers, institutional leaders, and the public were only seeing a fraction of the university’s research outputs.

What’s more, “it took a lot of legwork for us to convince faculty to upload their research,” Battles says. This was effort that could have been spent on more strategic work instead. “If we’re going to have a repository,” he resolves, “let’s at least make it a more useful tool.”

## A Better Approach with Esploro

UGA was already using Ex Libris Alma as its library services platform. Battles’ search for a better research repository led him to Ex Libris Esploro.

Esploro is a cloud-based research information management solution that showcases institutional research work from all academic disciplines and makes research assets more discoverable. It supports a wide variety of asset types, including not only publications but also pre-prints, data sets, audiovisual media, creative works, activities, awarded grants, projects, and other kinds of materials. It also captures research information from a variety of sources automatically, reducing the workload on librarians and faculty while making it easier to populate the research information hub.

***“Esploro changes the conversation. Faculty no longer have to struggle with the technology when uploading their research. It lowers the bar that restricted their participation before.”*** Deputy University Librarian Jason Battles

## Smart Harvesting of Research Assets

The UGA Libraries' Esploro implementation was led by digital conversion and curation librarian Mary Willoughby. She worked with library technology colleagues to feed Esploro a list of the research faculty at their institution. Using a “smart harvesting AI” process, the software automatically identified research published by these faculty members in journals, databases, and other external sources; captured the relevant metadata for these sources; and created a record within Esploro for those research assets.

“We already have more research outputs in Esploro than we ever had in our old repository, just through the smart harvesting we’ve done so far,” Battles says.

Esploro automatically captures relevant metadata to ensure that outputs are fully discoverable. Librarians and researchers can enhance this information and also submit other materials that weren’t captured through the smart harvesting process. Esploro gives users a very simple, structured way to upload research and add metadata.

“When faculty can see so much of their material already entered within the system, it’s incentivizing for them to want to make this information complete,” Battles adds.



## Removing Barriers for Faculty

Battles and his team finished implementing Esploro just as the fall 2020 semester ended. Training faculty in how to use the system was scheduled to begin in spring 2021.

“Esploro changes the conversation,” Battles says. “Faculty no longer have to struggle with the technology when uploading their research. It lowers the bar that restricted their participation before.”

## Bringing Visibility to Research

As additional research outputs continue to be added, Esploro will give UGA stakeholders a much better understanding of the university’s research activities.

Students at the university will know what research projects faculty members are involved in, so they can connect with faculty doing work that aligns with their own academic interests. Faculty will know what their colleagues in other departments are working on, so they can find potential partners for interdisciplinary research projects. Institutional leaders will have a better sense of the return on their investment, with real-time reports and insights.

## Demonstrating the Library’s Leadership

Giving faculty an easier way to showcase their research within a single, comprehensive database not only helps faculty, students, and university leaders; it also helps the library demonstrate its value to the research process

“We hope Esploro will help us build better relationships with faculty and with our Office of Research,” Battles concludes. “With Esploro, leaders will be able to get a more holistic picture of research outputs. This shows our leadership as a research partner at the University of Georgia, and we hope it will encourage everyone to engage with the library more often in research activities.”

### About Ex Libris

Ex Libris, a ProQuest company, is a leading global provider of cloud-based solutions that enable institutions and their users to create, manage, and share knowledge. In close collaboration with its customers and the broader community, Ex Libris develops solutions that increase library productivity, maximize the impact of research activities, enhance teaching and learning, and drive student mobile engagement. Ex Libris serves over 7,500 customers in 90 countries. For more information, see our [website](#) and join us on [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).

