IF WE BUILD IT, WILL THEY COME?: CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE CREATION AND MAINTENANCE OF LOCAL LEARNING OBJECT REPOSITORIES
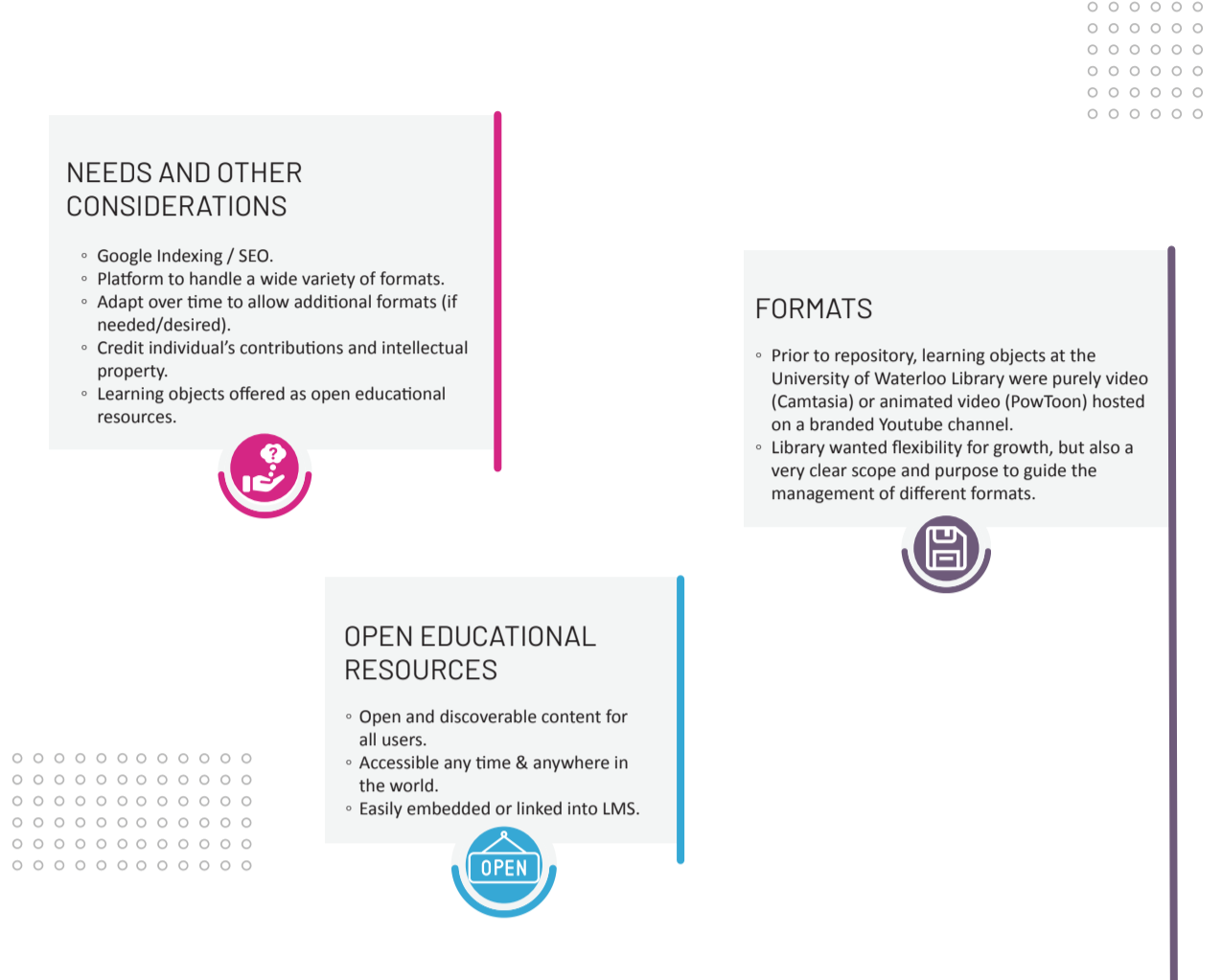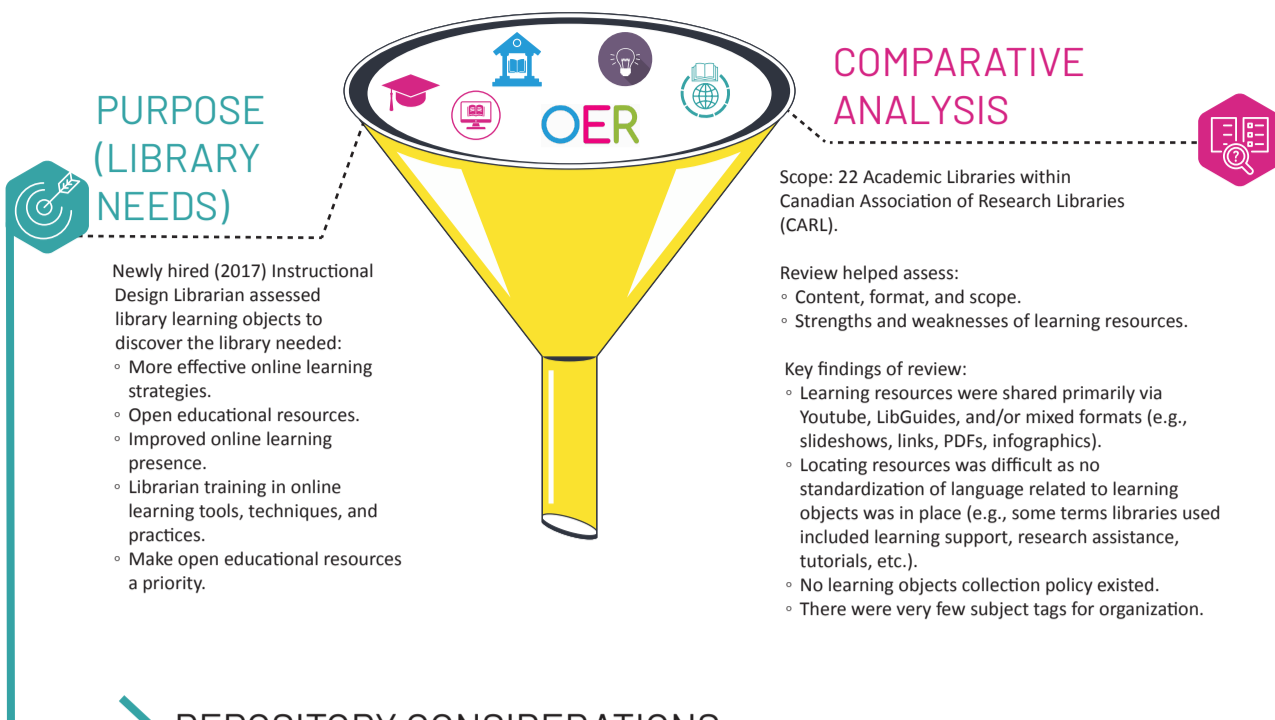
AUTHORS

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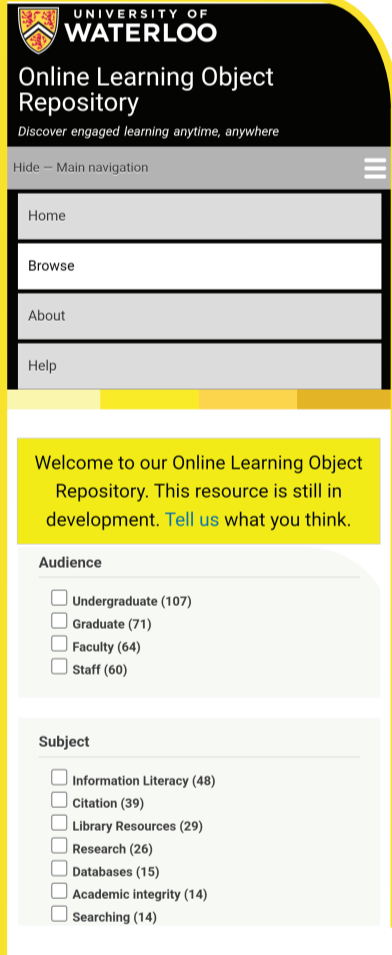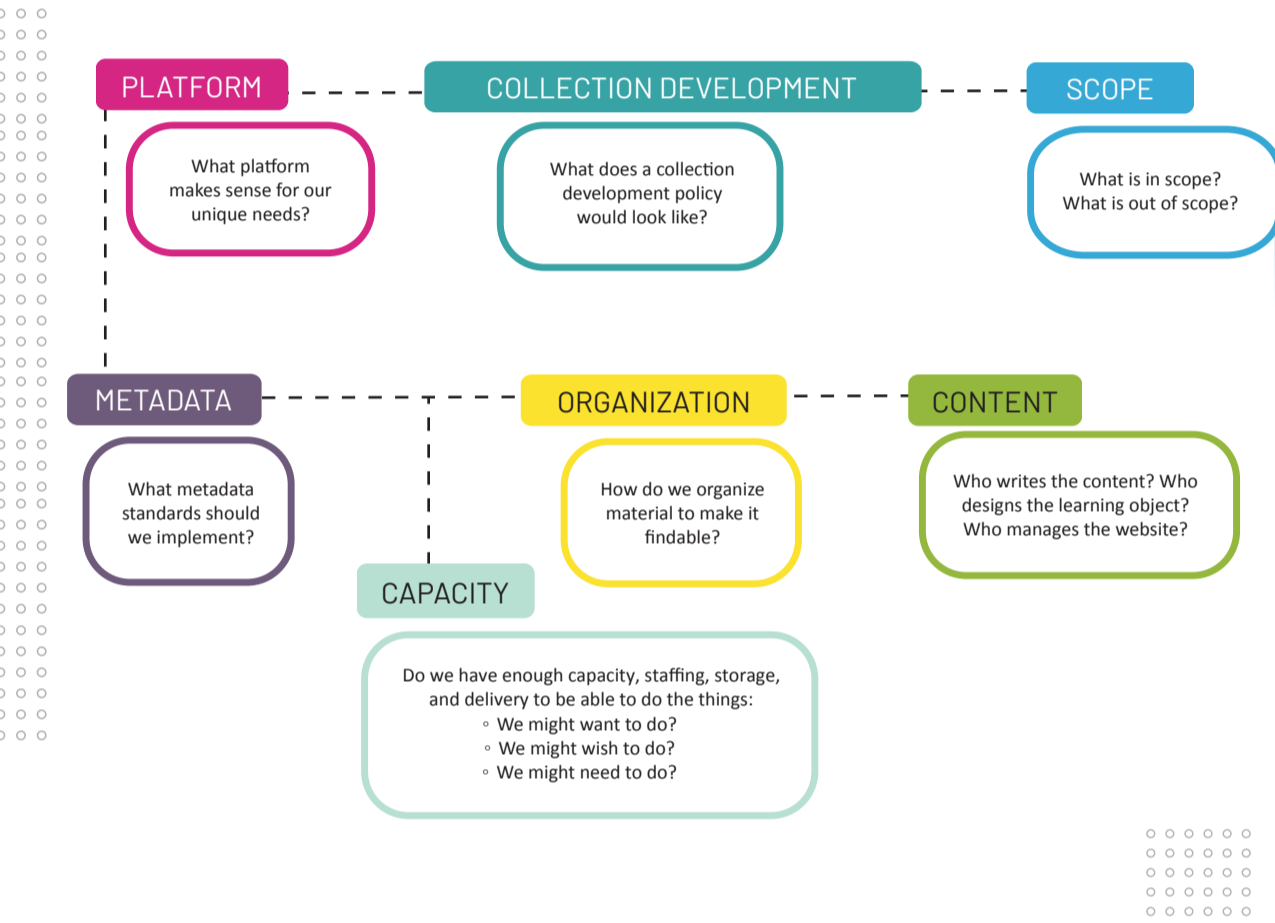Alisha Ali — Instructional Graphic Design Co-op Student

CONTACT

Questions should be directed to the Library Instructional Design team at librainstructionaldesign@uwaterloo.ca.

PURPOSE (LIBRARY NEEDS)

Newly hired (2017) Instructional Design Librarian assessed library learning objects to discover the library needed:
- More effective online learning strategies.
- Open educational resources.
- Improved online learning presence.
- Librarian training in online learning tools, techniques, and practices.
- Make open educational resources a priority.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Scope: 22 Academic Libraries within Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL).

Review helped assess:
- Content, format, and scope.
- Strengths and weaknesses of learning resources.

Key findings of review:
- Learning resources were shared primarily via Youtube, LibGuides, and/or mixed formats (e.g., slideshows, links, PDFs, infographics).
- Locating resources was difficult as no standardization of language related to learning objects was in place (e.g., some terms libraries used included learning support, research assistance, tutorials, etc.).
- No learning objects collection policy existed.
- There were very few subject tags for organization.

REPOSITORY CONSIDERATIONS

NEEDS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
- Google Indexing / SEO.
- Platform to handle a wide variety of formats.
- Adapt over time to allow additional formats (if needed/desired).
- Credit individual's contributions and intellectual property.
- Learning objects offered as open educational resources.

FORMATS
- Prior to repository, learning objects were purely video (Camtasia) or animated video (PowToon) hosted on a branded Youtube channel.
- Library wanted flexibility for growth, but also a very clear scope and purpose to guide the management of different formats.

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
- Open and discoverable content for all users.
- Accessible any time & anywhere in the world.
- Easily embedded or linked into LMS.

THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTIONS
GUIDANCE FOR BUILDING OUR REPOSITORY

PLATFORM
What platform makes sense for our unique needs?

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT
What does a collection development policy would look like?

SCOPE
What is in scope? What is out of scope?

METADATA
What metadata standards should we implement?

ORGANIZATION
How do we organize material to make it findable?

CONTENT
Who writes the content? Who designs the learning object? Who manages the website?

CAPACITY
Do we have enough capacity, staffing, storage, and delivery to do the things:
- We might want to do?
- We might wish to do?
- We might need to do?

LAUNCHING THE ONLINE LEARNING OBJECT REPOSITORY (OLOR)

University of Waterloo

Online Learning Object Repository

Discover engaged learning anytime, anywhere

Hide — Main navigation
- Home
- Browse
- About
- Help

Welcome to our Online Learning Object Repository. This resource is still in development. Tell us what you think.

Audience
- Undergraduate (107)
- Graduate (71)
- Faculty (64)
- Staff (60)

Subject
- Information Literacy (48)
- Citation (39)
- Library Resources (29)
- Research (26)
- Databases (15)
- Academic Integrity (14)
- Searching (14)

ONLINE LEARNING OBJECT REPOSITORY (OLOR)
- Launched in response to lockdown (June 2020).
- Manages, collects, shares, and makes discoverable online learning objects created by library.
- Resources are designed for University of Waterloo community, and can be used by other institutions (e.g., Virginia, Queensland, and BC use our modules as curricular requirements).
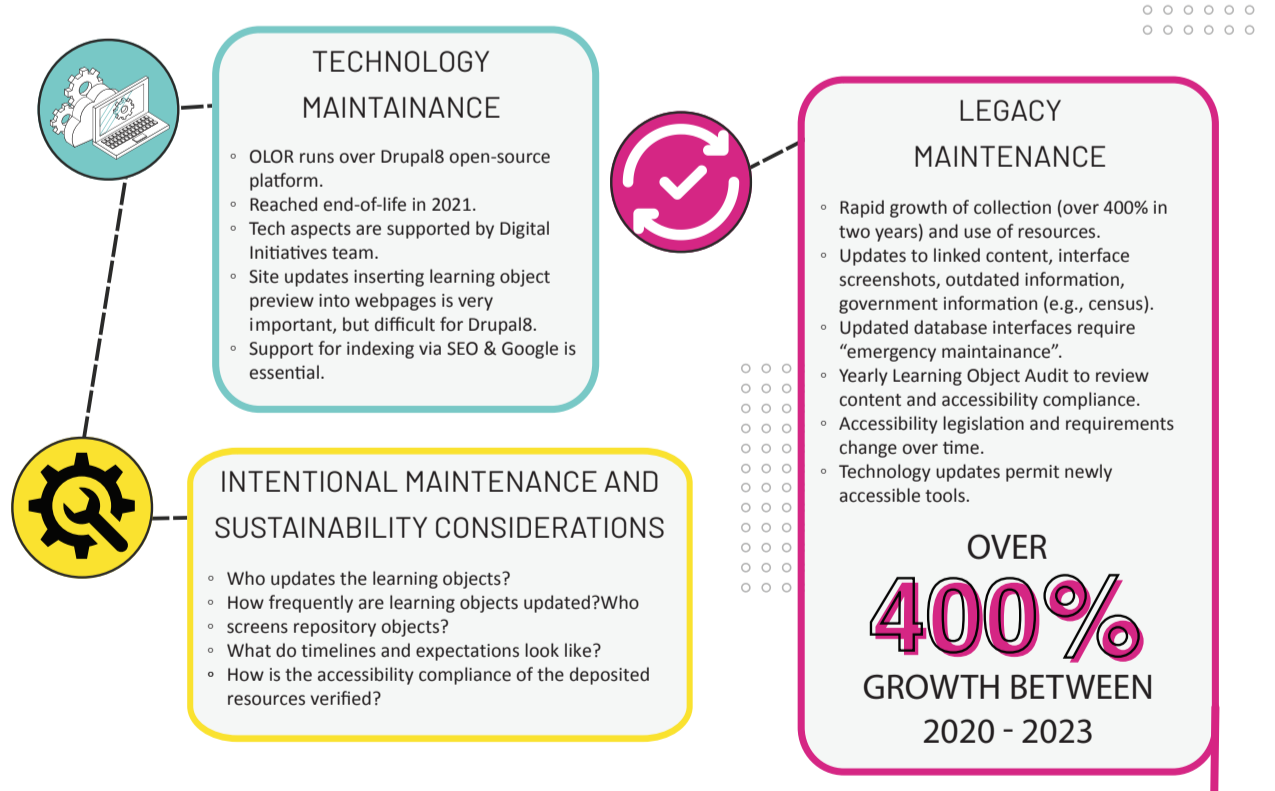
MULTI-DEPARTMENT TEAM
- Library's Instructional Design & Digital Initiatives teams collaborated on OLOR development.
- Digital Initiatives team provides expertise in technical components, online repositories, metadata, etc.
- Library Instructional Design team offers expertise in online pedagogy, learning object design, graphic design, etc.
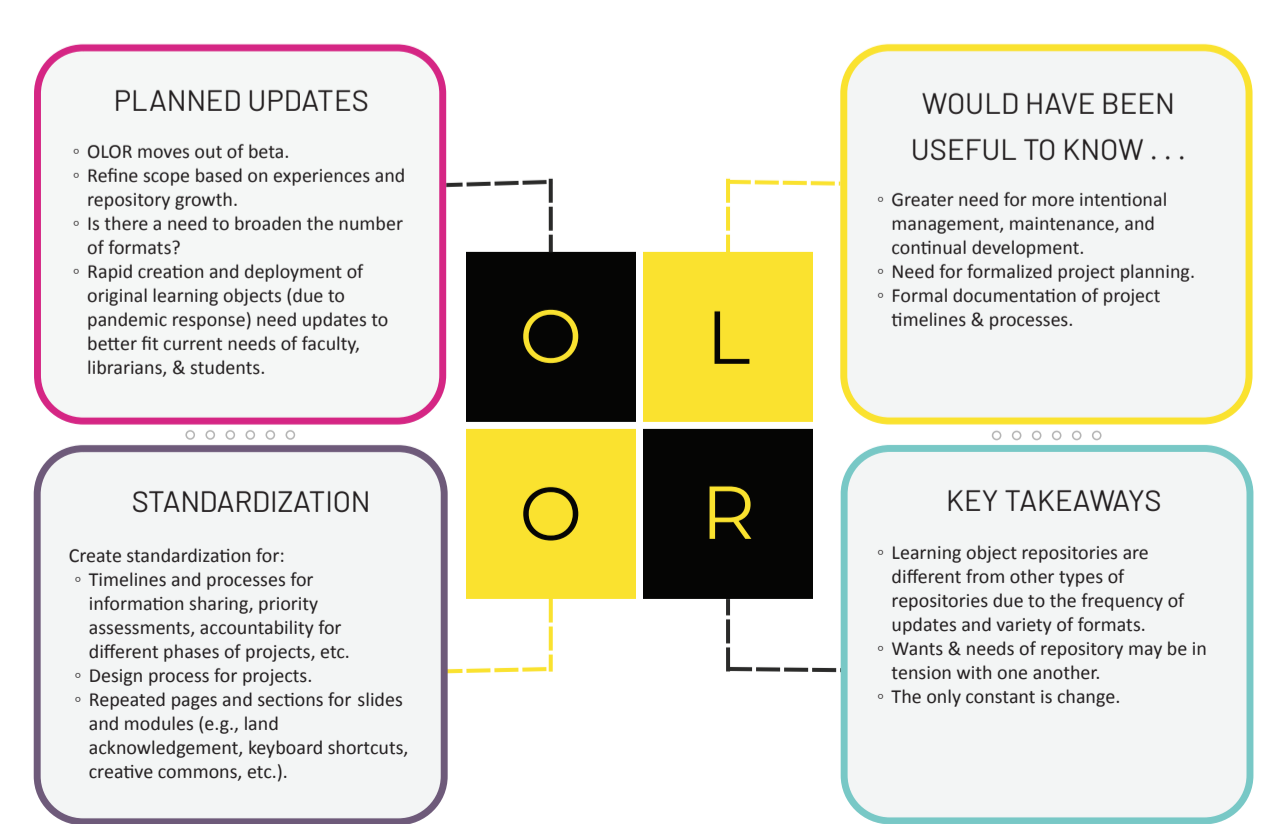- Liaison librarians serve as content specialists.

OLOR KEY FEATURES
- Learning objects can be accessed by subject, audience, format, or using browse feature.
- Formats are restricted to:
  - modules (Articulate & embeddable H5P)
  - infographics
  - handouts
- Content is specific to library-related topics (e.g., information literacy, library literacy, research skills, etc.).
- All resources have Creative Commons licenses.
- Content is owned by the subject specialist (e.g., librarians).
- Project is owned by instructional design team to avoid "orphaned" projects.

lib.uwaterloo.ca/online_learning/

REPOSITORY MAINTAINANCE
LEARNING OBJECTS REQUIRE CONTINUAL MAINTENANCE

TECHNOLOGY MAINTAINANCE
- OLOR runs over Drupal8 open-source platform.
- Reached end-of-life in 2021.
- Tech aspects are supported by Digital Initiatives team.
- Site updates inserting learning object preview into webpages is very important, but difficult for Drupal8.
- Support for indexing via SEO & Google is essential.

LEGACY MAINTENANCE
- Rapid growth of collection (over 400% in two years) and use of resources.
- Updates to linked content, interface screenshots, outdated information, government information (e.g., census).
- Updated database interfaces require "emergency maintenance".
- Yearly Learning Object Audit to review content and accessibility compliance.
- Accessibility legislation and requirements change over time.
- Technology updates permit newly accessible tools.

INTENTIONAL MAINTENANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS
- Who updates the learning objects?
- How frequently are learning objects updated? Who screens repository objects?
- What do timelines and expectations look like?
- How is the accessibility compliance of the deposited resources verified?

OVER 400% GROWTH BETWEEN 2020 - 2023

OLOR LESSONS LEARNED

PLANNED UPDATES
- OLOR moves out of beta.
- Refine scope based on experiences and repository growth.
- Is there a need to broaden the number of formats?
- Rapid creation and deployment of original learning objects (due to pandemic response) need updates to better fit current needs of faculty, librarians, & students.

WOULD HAVE BEEN USEFUL TO KNOW . . .
- Greater need for more intentional management, maintenance, and continual development.
- Need for formalized project planning.
- Formal documentation of project timelines & processes.

STANDARDIZATION
Create standardization for:
- Timelines and processes for information sharing, priority assessments, accountability for different phases of projects, etc.
- Design process for projects.
- Repeated pages and sections for slides and modules (e.g., land acknowledgement, keyboard shortcuts, creative commons, etc.).

KEY TAKEAWAYS
- Learning object repositories are different from other types of repositories due to the frequency of updates and variety of formats.
- Wants & needs of repository may be in tension with one another.
- The only constant is change.

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