AX-SNet Research Agenda

HELEN R. TIBBO, ELIZABETH YAKEL, AND WENDY DUFF

Abstract: AX-SNet, (Archival eXcellence in Information-Seeking Studies Network) is an evolving international collaboration of researchers and institutions interested in facilitating accessible access to and use of primary sources; in exploring user information seeking and use behaviors; and in the provision of user instruction and guidance. AX-SNet presently includes members from the United States, Canada, Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, Finland, Sweden, Latvia, and the Netherlands.

AX-SNet is developing a research agenda to conceptualize, organize, and help foster and facilitate research and funding for improving access to archival materials and repository services. This poster will present and discuss a draft model that captures the themes and facets of this research domain. It will also present and solicit feedback on key research questions and priorities for the field and funders.

About the authors:

Helen R. Tibbo, SAA Fellow and professor at the School of Information and Library Science (SILS) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), teaches in the areas of archives and records management, digital curation, electronic retrieval, and reference. She has served on SAA committees and boards for over 20 years and was the co-founder of the SAA Research Forum.

She is currently the PI for the IMLS-funded DigCCurr I that is developing an International Digital Curation Curriculum for masterÕs level students (www.ils.unc.edu/digccurr) (2006-2009). In April of 2007 the DigCurr Conference attracted close to 300 participants with 100 speakers from 10 countries (www.ils.unc.edu/digcurr2007). DigCCurr2009 will be held April 1-3, 2009 in Chapel Hill, NC. She is also the PI for DigCCurr II (2008-2012)that extends the Digital Curation Curriculum to the doctoral level and will provide week-long summer workshops for digital curation practitioners.

Dr. Tibbo is a co-PI with collaborators from the University of Michigan and the University of Toronto for a Mellon Foundation-funded project to develop standardized metrics for assessing use and user services for primary sources (http://www.archivalmetrics,org). She is also a co-PI with Drs. Gary Marchionini and Christopher Lee on the NSF-funded Preserving Video Objects and Context: A Demonstration Project and its continuation funded by NDIIPP of the Library of Congress.

Dr. Tibbo earned her Ph.D. from the University of Maryland College Park in Library and Information Services and has Master's degrees in Library and Information Science and American Studies.

Elizabeth Yakel is an Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan School of Information in the Archives and Records Management specialization. Previously she taught at the University of Pittsburgh and was a practicing archivist for over 15 years. She is active in the Society of American Archivists (SAA) where she has served on the governing Council, was elected Fellow in 1999, and chaired a CEPD Task Force in 2003.

Elizabeth's research interest is access and accessibility to primary sources. This includes investigations into the design and development of access systems, the information seeking patterns and the human information interaction of users with archival records. She is currently involved in two complementary research projects. The first, "Assessing Access and Accessibility of Interfaces for Primary Sources," is funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and examines the usability of archival surrogates in online catalogs and databases of EAD finding aids as well as the information searching strategies of researchers seeking primary sources in the online environment. The second, "Academic Reference Librarians and Extending Access to Primary Sources" is funded by the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) examines the role of reference librarians as gatekeepers to primary sources. Her research combines methodologies from Archives, Library and Information Science, and Human Computer Interaction.

Her third project "Developing Archival Use and User Metrics" is funded by the Mellon Foundation. This project is aimed at standardizing the information archives and special collections collect on use and users. Elizabeth has published in the top archival journals. Recent articles include "AI: Archival Intelligence and User Expertise," with Deborah A. Torres which appeared in American Archivist and an article called, "Archival Representation," published in Archival Science. Her forthcoming article, "Midwest State Archives on the Web," co-authored with Jihyun Kim in Archival Issues analyzes web site design and discusses some of the concepts that will be presented in the SAA workshop "Designing Usable Web Sites."

Wendy M. Duff obtained her BA (1979) from the University of Kings College, her MLS (1983) from Dalhousie University and her Ph.D.(1996) from the University of Pittsburgh. While doing her doctoral work, she was project co-ordinator for the University of Pittsburgh Electronic Recordkeeping Project. Prior to beginning her doctoral studies, she worked in libraries and archives in Nova Scotia for more than 11 years, and taught courses at the Nova Scotia Community College and Dalhousie University.

She is a founding member of AX-SNET, an evolving international team of researchers interested in facilitating access to primary materials. She has also served as a member of the ICA Adhoc Commission on Descriptive Standards, the Encoded Archival Description Working Group, and the EU(DELOS)/NSF Workgroup on Digital Archiving and Preservation, and was chair of the Canadian Committee on Archival Description.