

Digital Curation Governance: The Concept and Implications for Professional Capabilities

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Abstract: The public administration literature uses the term “governance” for the exercise of authority and control, in order to advance goals of the state. In contrast to “government,” which suggests established structures, governance is a continually evolving and interactive set of processes. The governance concept has spawned many associated terms within both the public and private sectors, including corporate governance, information technology (IT) governance, and data governance. Effective governance requires an understanding of stakeholder needs, existing policies, social norms, individual behaviors, incentive structures and characteristics of potential implementation mechanisms.

We will make the case for “digital curation governance” as an increasingly important arena of activity with associated requirements for professional education and engagement: ensuring the quality, integrity, discovery, access, and meaningful use of digital collections over time. Digital curation governance is a shared responsibility that requires extensive communication, collaboration and mutual learning. Those advancing the cause of digital curation governance must have skills and competencies to navigate the policy arena, manage projects, mobilize stakeholders and dig into the bits of digital collections.

We will elaborate the concept of digital curation governance within the context of public information, drawing from a review of the literature and interviews with a panel of experts in a project called Educating Stewards of Public Information for the 21st Century (ESOPI-21), which is funded by the Institute for Museum and Library Services. ESOPI-21 is a joint effort of the School of Information and Library Science and School of Government at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

About the authors:

Christopher (Cal) Lee is Assistant Professor at the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He teaches courses on archival administration; records management; digital curation; understanding information technology for managing digital collections; and the construction of policies and rules for digital repositories. He is one of the lead organizers and instructors for the DigCCurr Professional Institute, which is a week-long continuing education workshop on digital curation, and teaches professional workshops on the application of digital forensics methods and principles to digital acquisitions.

Cal’s primary area of research is the long-term curation of digital collections. He is particularly interested in the professionalization of this work and the diffusion of existing tools and methods (e.g.

digital forensics, web archiving, automated implementation of policies) into professional practice. Cal is editing and providing several chapters to a forthcoming book, *Digital: Personal Collections in the Digital Era*.

Cal is Principal Investigator of the Digital Acquisition Learning Laboratory project (funded by the Mellon Foundation), which is investigating and testing the incorporation of digital forensics tools and methods to digital curation education. He is also Co-PI on three projects that are focused on the preparation of professions to take on digital curation responsibilities: DigCCurr II: Extending an International Digital Curation Curriculum to Doctoral Students and Practitioners (funded by IMLS); Educating Stewards of Public Information for the 21st Century (funded by IMLS), and Closing the Digital Curation Gap (funded by IMLS and JISC). Cal recently initiated a project, Curation of a Forensic Data Collection for Education (funded by NSF), which is investigating and developing annotations, scenarios, exercises, answer keys and other forms of data to enhance access and use of disk images created to support digital forensics education (extending work led by Simson Garfinkel of the Naval Postgraduate School).

Helen R. Tibbo, SAA Fellow and President, 2010-2011, and Alumni Distinguished 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 and preservation; appraisal; and archival access, outreach, and public service. She has served on SAA committees and boards for over 20 years and was the co-founder of the SAA Research Forum with Nancy McGovern. She was Principle Investigator for the IMLS-funded DigCCurr I to develop an International Digital Curation Curriculum for master's level students (2006-2009). 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 the NHPRC-funded project to develop standardized metrics for assessing use and user services for primary sources in the government sector. 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.