

Closing the Digital Curation Gap's "Getting Started Guides": Tools for Research and Practice

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Abstract: Curation of digital assets, whether cultural, educational, scientific, or economic, is one of the central challenges of the early 21st century. The last two decades have witnessed extensive progress toward robust repository architectures, preservation tools and strategies, and trustworthy and sustainable digital curation, yet the need for the dissemination of best practices, standards information, and training and support of digital preservation and curation professionals is more pressing than ever. A significant and troubling gap has emerged between the dramatic progress of research and development on digital curation, on the one hand, and professional practices of archivists, librarians, and museum curators, on the other. There are now many viable applications, models, strategies, and standards for long-term care of digital objects. However, many institutions with a mandate to do this work are either not aware of the options or do not currently have the ability to evaluate and implement them. This is why the Closing the Digital Curation Gap's (CDCG) "Getting Started Guides" were created.

Based on input for archivists, librarians, and museum information professionals the CDCG team has assembled several "Getting Started Guides" designed to assist cultural heritage repositories and their staffs to begin working with digital materials. We initially envisioned these guides for staff at small- to medium-sized institutions who lack experience with activities such as digitization, harvesting web sites, and long-term curation of digital content. We now believe the guides will be helpful to institutions of all sizes as they bring together both seminal and state-of-the-art resources related to several curation activities, best practices, and standards. These guides should also be useful tools for researchers needing state of the art literature reviews. Guide topics include: Acquiring Data from Storage Media, Analyzing Costs, Building Institutional Repositories, Cloud Computing, Curating Digital Video, Digitizing Collections, and Managing Data.

About the author:

Dr. Helen R. Tibbo is an Alumni Distinguished Professor at the School of Information and Library Science (SILS) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), and teaches in the areas of archives and records management, digital preservation and access, appraisal, and archival reference and outreach. She is also a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) and was SAA President 2010-2011.

From 2006-2009, Dr. Tibbo was the Principal Investigator (PI) for the IMLS (Institute for Museum and Library Services)-funded DigCCurr I project that developed an International Digital Curation Curriculum for master's level students (www.ils.unc.edu/digccurr). She was also the PI for DigCCurr II (2008-2013) that extended the Digital Curation Curriculum to the doctoral level. In 2009, IMLS awarded Prof. Tibbo two additional projects, Educating Stewards of Public Information in the 21st Century (ESOPI-21) and Closing the Digital Curation Gap (CDCG). ESOPI-21 (2009-2012) was a partnership with UNC's School of Government to provide students with a Master's of Science in Library/Information Science and a Master's of Public Administration so that they can work in the public policy arena concerning digital preservation and curation issues and laws. CDCG (2009-2013) was a collaboration with IMLS and the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and the Digital Curation Center (DCC), both of the United Kingdom, to explore educational and guidance needs of cultural heritage information professionals in the digital curation domain in the US and the UK. In 2011, IMLS awarded Dr. Tibbo funding for the Educating Stewards of the Public Information Infrastructure (ESOPI²) project that is continuing the work of ESOPI-21 through 2014. In April 2013, Dr. Tibbo received an IMLS award for the "Curating Research Assets and Data using Lifecycle Education: Data Management Education Tools for Librarians, Archivists, & Content Creators or CRADLE project that will extend through 2016.