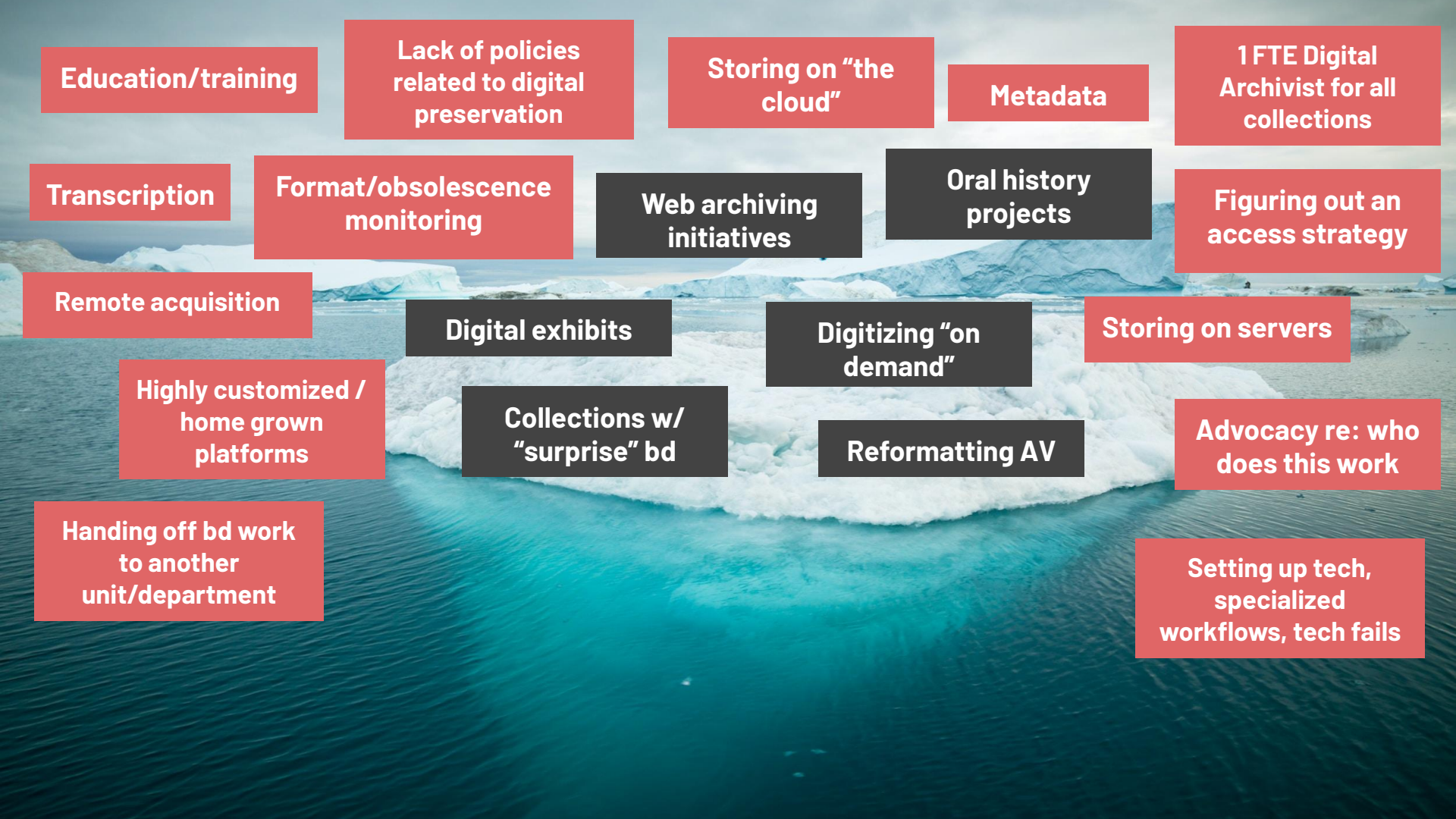
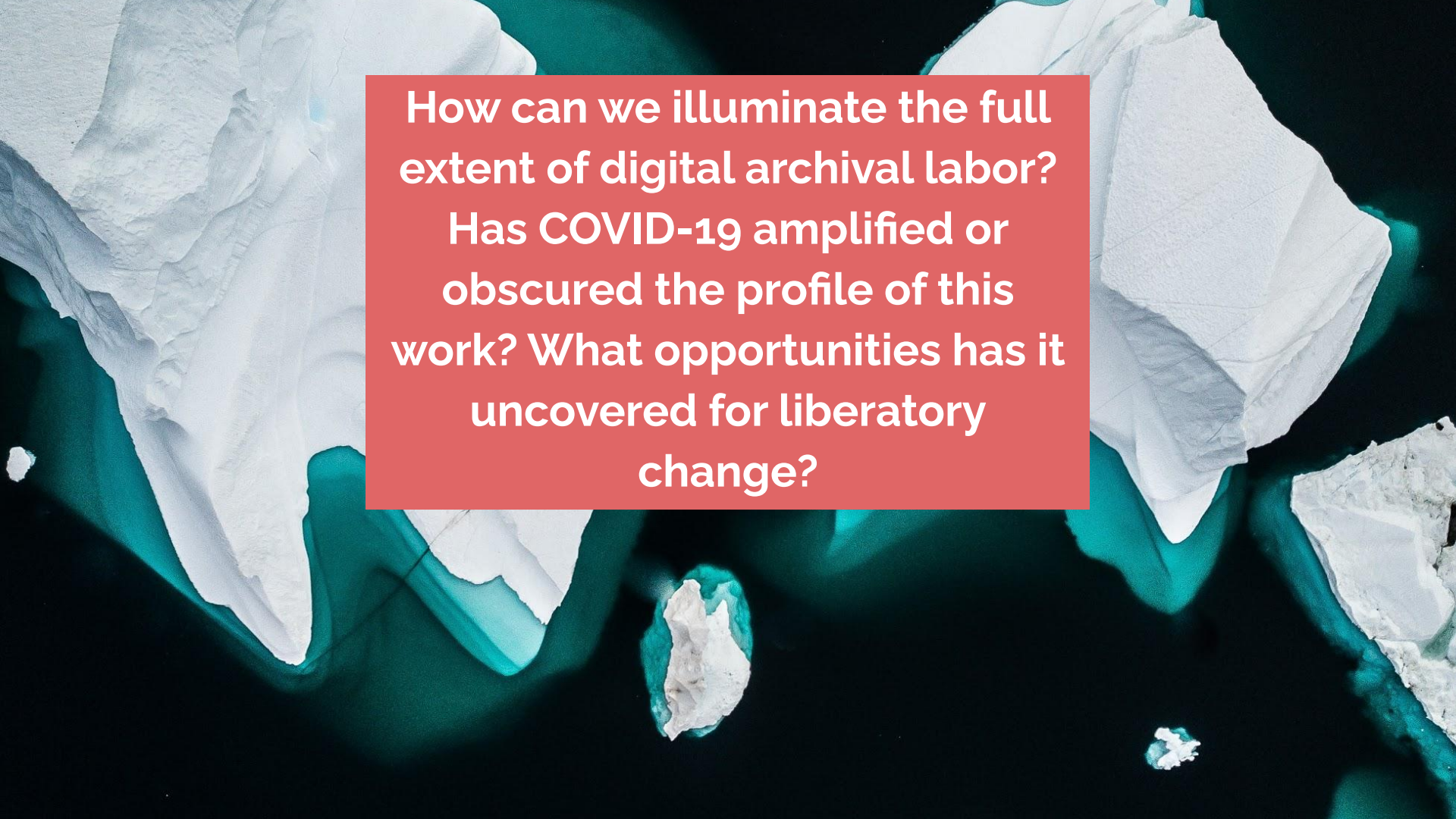
HIDDEN DEPTHS: Illuminating the extent of invisible systems, born-digital, and collections management work

Elvia Arroyo-Ramírez, Mark Matienzo, Shira Peltzman, and Charlie Macquarie

BitCurator Users Forum

October 13, 2020


Education/training
Lack of policies related to digital preservation
Storing on “the cloud”
Metadata
1 FTE Digital Archivist for all collections
Transcription
Format/obsolescence monitoring
Web archiving initiatives
Oral history projects
Figuring out an access strategy
Remote acquisition
Digital exhibits
Digitizing “on demand”
Storing on servers
Highly customized / home grown platforms
Collections w/ “surprise” bd
Reformatting AV
Advocacy re: who does this work
Handing off bd work to another unit/department
Setting up tech, specialized workflows, tech fails


How can we illuminate the full extent of digital archival labor? Has COVID-19 amplified or obscured the profile of this work? What opportunities has it uncovered for liberatory change?

Workshop breakdown

Presentations: (20 minutes)

- "Taking Holistic Care: Weaving Recommendations for Born-Digital into the UC Guidelines for Efficient Archival Processing" (Shira & Elvia)
- "Designing the Future of Archival Discovery and Delivery: The Lighting the Way Forum" (Mark)

Q&A / Break (5 minutes)

- If we don't get to your question, we will follow up after via email

Workshop breakdown, cont'd

Survey exercises (15 minutes)

- Two surveys via PollEverywhere & analysis

Self-reflection exercise (5 minutes)

- How our personal experiences are reflected in the results

Small group discussion (20 minutes)

- Note taking on the Google Slides

Share with larger group (5 minutes) /Concluding remarks

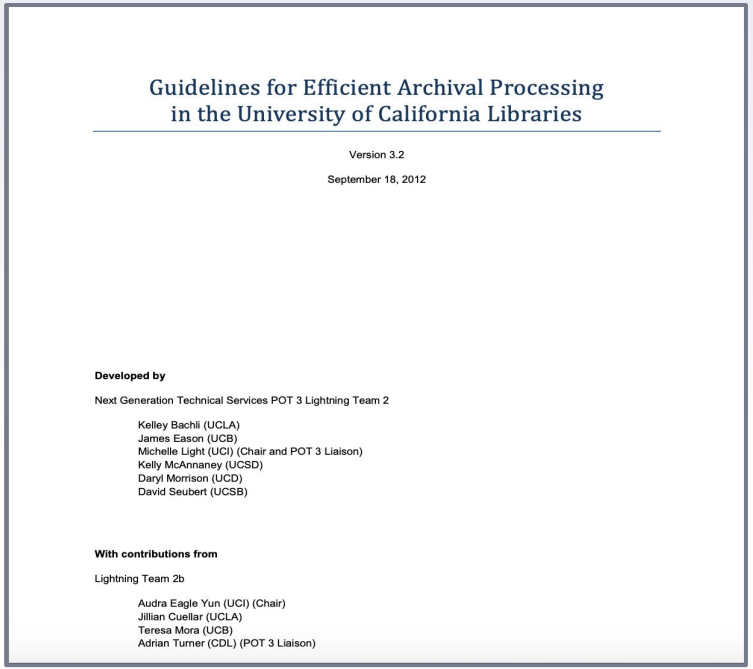
Taking Holistic Care: Weaving recommendations for born-digital into the UC Guidelines for Efficient Archival Processing

Elvia Arroyo-Ramírez, Shira Peltzman, & Charlie Macquarie

Background

Guidelines for Efficient Archival Processing in the University of California Libraries

- 2012: Defense of efficient processing
- 2020: Holistic collection management



Guidelines for Efficient Archival Processing
in the University of California Libraries

Version 3.2

September 18, 2012

Developed by

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Overview of salient recommendations

Emphasize the importance of appraisal *prior* to accessioning

Encourage logical file transfer; discourage disk imaging except when appropriate

Provide baseline steps for born-digital accessioning

Cross-reference UC Guidelines for Born Digital Archival Description

Acknowledge the need for a digital preservation policy

Overview of salient recommendations, cont'd

Describe born-digital material at the collection level whether or not it has been processed

Emphasize challenges of using metrics to guide/estimate born-digital processing

Make distinction between legacy media vs. contemporary files

Adopt an accepted formats policy

Rethinking our approach: ‘Born-digital processing *is* archival processing’

- Scant guidelines meant that we didn’t have much to go on
- A standalone section for born-digital didn’t make sense
- We proposed a new plan to interweave born-digital processing guidance throughout the doc rather than address it separately

Rethinking our approach: Making it happen

- Born-digital team shouldered a larger commitment to this project than previously anticipated
- The workplan was adjusted to aid the born-digital team to incorporate recs in each of the sections. In the end, the Guidelines read stronger

Takeaways

De-silo bd work. When appropriate advocate for integration of bd as part of the holistic care for archival collections.

Recognize the need for flexibility (time and resources) when this work is previously unaccounted for, or is intentionally being centered. If this work is creating imbalances in the distribution of labor, how can this be acknowledged and rectified?

Takeaways

Education as a constant need and a two way-road.

Communication is key. Ask for more time and explain why you need it to help resource allocators understand the challenges.

Encourage collaboration and participation of folks who do not specialize in bd work.

bit.ly/UC-Guidelines

Version 4
May 2020

Version 4

May 2020

Guidelines for Efficient Archival Processing in the University of California Libraries

Authors

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Designing the Future of Archival Discovery & Delivery: The Lighting the Way Forum

Mark A. Matienzo, Hillel Arnold, Dinah Handel, Josh Schneider, & Camille Villa

#LTWForum / https://lightingtheway.stanford.edu/

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The Project

Lighting the Way: A National Forum on Archival Discovery & Delivery

September 1, 2019 — August 31, 2021

https://lightingtheway.stanford.edu/

Key concepts

Archival discovery and delivery

What people & systems do to support finding, accessing, and using material from archives and special collections

Includes archival description, digital object delivery, request management, interpretation, specialized environments

Integration

Getting systems to work together as a coordinated whole; “functional coupling”

Impacts researchers and those who work in archives

Relies heavily on people to accomplish

Annotated bibliography: http://bit.ly/ltw-abstracts

List of systems/glossary: http://bit.ly/ltw-systemsglossary

Zotero group: https://www.zotero.org/groups/2371748/

Foundational research questions

- What systems support archival discovery and delivery?
- How do those systems need to work together from a functional and technical perspective?
- Why is a specific institution or project integrating those systems? What push or pull factors do these systems present?
- How are those systems being integrated?
- Who (from a staff perspective) is involved in specifying, developing or maintaining the integration work?
- Have there been specific successes or challenges with specific systems or integrations?
- Are there workarounds are in place due to limitations in resources?
- What technical or institutional contexts shape systems implementation and integration?
- Are any ethical or legal concerns represented in integration?

Forum goals

- To allow participants to **see, map, and build connections** – between one another, their work, the systems they rely on, and the communities they serve
- To **identify and organize around shared opportunities** and challenges, as defined by participants during group activities
- To **provide a platform for engagement** with the project, leading to participation in other project activities

Forum application process

- Call for participation and brief application form
- Applications evaluated with rubric based on project goals:
  - Practitioner focus
  - Inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented voices
  - Current engagement with and ongoing commitment to project
- Over 200 applicants, 71 participants selected for Forum

Forum Design: inclusion/facilitation

- Community Agreements and Code of Conduct
  - Distributed in advance of Forum
- Facilitation Roles
  - Lead Facilitator - provide overall direction for exercise
  - Table Facilitator - ensure participation at local level
  - Notetaker - document important conversations and questions

Monday, February 10	Tuesday, February 11	Wednesday, February 12
Welcome / Logistics / Acknowledgements (15 mins)	Recap of Day 1 / What's Today (15 mins)	Recap of Day 2 / What's Today / Logistics (15 mins)
Project Team Presentation (15 minutes)	Activity 3A - Trading Cards (15 minutes)	Activity 7 - Social Network Webbing (60 minutes)
The Evolving Systems Ecosystem (45 mins)	Activity 3B - Context Map (75 minutes)	
Networks and the Big Picture (30 minutes)		Activity 8 - Who/What/When Matrix (30 mins)
Break (15 minutes)	Break (15 minutes)	Break (15 minutes)
Ethical, Legal, and Cultural Concerns (45 minutes)	Activity 4 - TRIZ (60 minutes)	Retrospective (30 minutes)
Impacts on Public Service and Outreach (45 minutes)		General Q&A / What's Next? (30 minutes)
Lunch (60 minutes)	Lunch (60 minutes)	Lunch / social discussion allowing for potential followup (120 minutes) - **Forum officially concludes at 2:00**
Activity 1 - Mad Tea (60 minutes)	Activity 5 - Affinity Map; 2 tables/group (90 minutes)	
Break (30 minutes)	Break (30 minutes)	
Activity 2A - Speedboat (45 minutes)	Activity 6A - 15% Solutions (30 minutes)	
Activity 2B - Low-Tech Social Networking (45 minutes)	Activity 6B - 25/10 Crowd Sourcing (60 minutes)	
Retrospective + Prep for Day 2 (30 minutes)	Retrospective + Prep for Day 3 (30 minutes)	

↓ LIVESTREAM / RECORDING ↓

Forum Design: Breakout Activities

- Use proven human-centered design methodologies:
  - Ideation sessions and use of lateral thinking
  - Divergent/emergent/convergent model
- Drawn from *Liberating Structures* and *Gamestorming*

Henri Lipmanowicz & Keith McCandless, *The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures*. Liberating Structures Press, 2014.
Dave Gray, Sunni Brown, & James Macanufo, *Gamestorming: A Playbook for Innovators, Rulebreakers, and Changemakers.* O'Reilly, 2010.

In Detail: Who/What/When Matrix

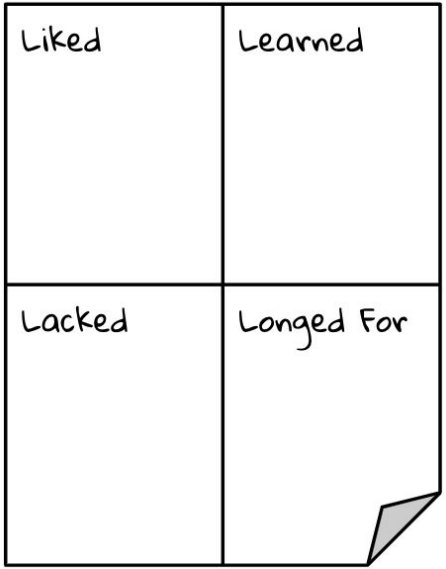
- Designed to identify specific next steps and individuals responsible for moving them forward
- Built on earlier exercise: ways to support the “top 10 ideas” generated from 25/10 Crowd Sourcing results generated on Day 2
- Final exercise of the forum; produced a tangible deliverable for participants

In Detail: Who/What/When Matrix

- As individuals:
  - Identify at least one concrete action you can personally commit to taking on in the next year. (10 minutes)
- In groups of two or three:
  - Discuss, clarify and refine the proposed actions. (10 minutes)
- Add actions to large sheet of paper, indicating:
  - **Who** is taking the action.
  - **What** action they are committing to.
  - **When** that action will take place.

Evaluation and feedback

- Daily group retrospective using the 4 Ls format
  - **Liked** - *what did you like?*
  - **Learned** - *what did you learn?*
  - **Longed** - *what did you long for?*
  - **Lacked** - *what was lacking?*
- Created opportunity to modify the next day's activities and/or course correct



Survey Results

Enjoyed the most

- ***meeting people*** and ***hearing from colleagues in a variety of different roles***
- ***"cooperative and optimistic spirit"*** of the participants and facilitators
- attendees want to **adapt activities** for use at their home institutions

Enjoyed the least

- ***scope creep***
- more ***practical and explicit discussion of technology and systems***
- a ***deliverable*** from the forum to help focus the activities
- ***the days were too full without enough time for personal reflection***

What people learned

- understanding of ***shared challenges*** across institutions
- ***collaborative efforts to address archival delivery and discovery are underway***
- ***innovative and adaptable practices*** to bring back to their institution

Most valuable thing project can offer

- ***a community of practice***
- ***interactive virtual meetings***
- advice on ***tool selection*** and ***sharing of workflows, systems, and procedures***
- ***deeper conversations on nuanced topics***

Emerging themes from Forum

- Leadership skills are critical to success in improving archival discovery and delivery
- Collaboration, strategic alignment, and shared development
  - “Virtual reading rooms” as promising area of focus
- UX research, user studies, and accessibility
- Political, economic, and structural factors (precarious labor, systemic racism, etc.) impact archival discovery and delivery

Future work

- Determining engagement strategies and focus shifts in response to pandemic-related project delays
- Working meeting (January 2021, tbc)
- Organizing and seeking written contributions for “handbook” deliverable (~5 pages)
  - Case studies/position papers on archival discovery & delivery
  - Intended as a resource that includes detail on needs, systems integrations, or opportunities for further collaboration

Thank You!

For more information, visit
https://lightingtheway.stanford.edu/

Acknowledgements

- *Additional Project Team Members: Sally DeBauche, Jib Kiattinant, Franz Kunst, Tom Cramer, Glynn Edwards*
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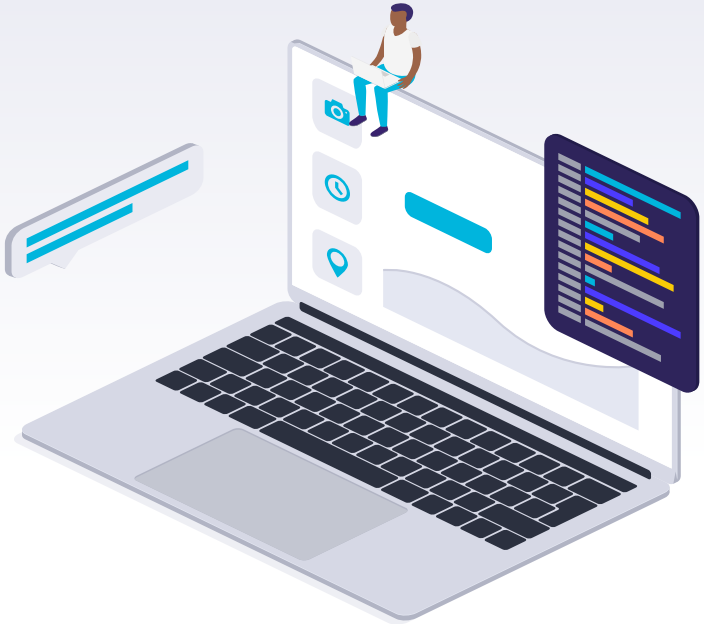
- *Additional Forum Facilitators: Michelle Dalmau, Christie Peterson, Sarah Seestone*

Q&A + Break



Survey Time!

Inequities in digital archives work

Respond at **PollEv.com/matienzo**

Text **MATIENZO** to **22333** once to join, then **A, B, C, D, or E**

"I statements" about existing inequities in digital archives work

I do not have the word “digital” in my title but have been asked to lead digital archiving and preservation initiatives.	**A**
I’ve been tasked to build workflows for collections outside of my job title responsibilities.	**B**
I’ve been tasked to lead educational sessions to help colleagues incorporate digital archiving work.	**C**
I’ve devoted personal time outside of work hours to learn about a new tool, software, etc.	**D**
It has generally been difficult to convince resource allocators at my institution to invest in digital preservation, or remote access to collections.	**E**

Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at **pollev.com/app**

How has COVID-19 and remote work impacted your work life?

When poll is active, respond at **PollEv.com/matienzo**

Text **MATIENZO** to **22333** once to join

How has COVID-19/remote work impacted your work life?

My priorities have shifted significantly since beginning remote work.

I lack key infrastructure.

I am unable to provide remote access to collections due to the lack of infrastructural support.

I've been asked to come up with a project for a colleague whose work does not translate well to remote work.

I have been asked to brainstorm new work for our entire unit to undertake.

Administrators at my institution are suddenly interested in providing remote access to collections that were "locked down" previously.

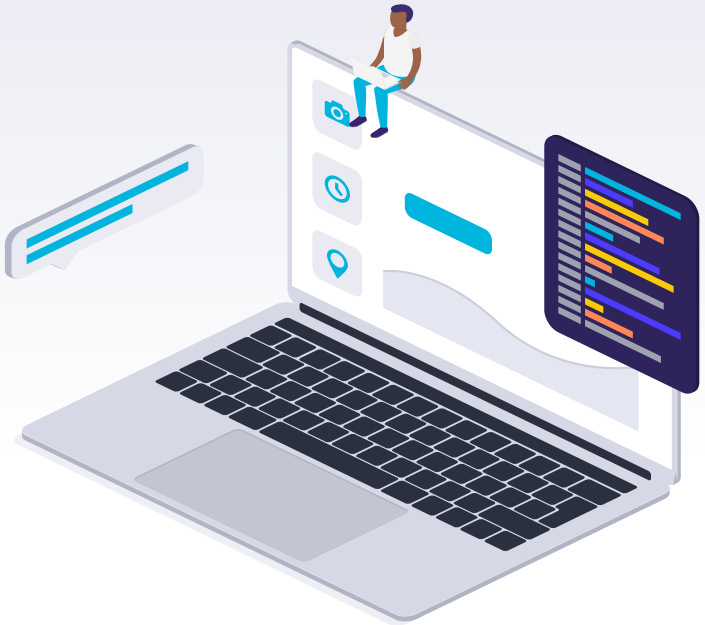
I've been asked to implement remote access to our collections with a short turnaround time.

Web archiving initiatives have suddenly risen on the priorities list.

There is an uptick in new acquisitions of born-digital collections.

I am busier at work than I've ever been.

Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at **pollev.com/app**



Survey Time: Results Analysis

Self-Reflection

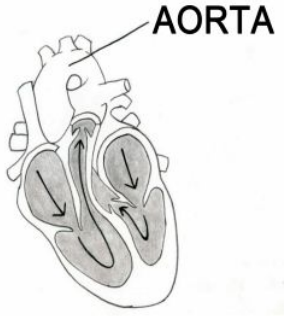
Which of the survey statements spoke to you the most? Why? Did any of the survey results surprise you? Provide comfort or relief? Feel alienating to you? Reveal something to you? Disappoint you?

http://bit.ly/BUF-hidden

Workshop Community Agreements

#1 One person speaks at a time

Please, one person speak at a time. (Being mindful of leaving a few moments in between speakers, for those who need more time to process words, or are less comfortable interjecting in a conversation.)



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www.aorta.coop

Anti-oppressive Training Facilitation for Democratic Process
http://aorta.coop/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/AO-Facilitation-Resource-Sheet.pdf

Workshop Community Agreements

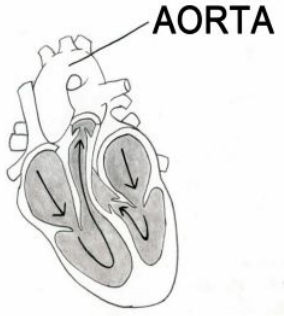
#2 Everyone has something to contribute

We know that each person is coming to the conversation with different levels of lived experience and embodied expertise. We also believe that each person has something to contribute to the conversation. This agreement asks that we all practice being humble, and look for what we have to learn from each person in the (virtual) room. It asks us to share what we know, as well as our questions, so that others may learn from us.

Workshop Community Agreements

#3 Aim for more equitable participation

If you're someone who tends to not speak a lot, please move up into a role of speaking more. If you tend to speak a lot, please move up into a role of listening more.



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Workshop Community Agreements

#4 Please feel comfortable participating

We can't be articulate all of the time (as much as we may wish we could!). Often people feel hesitant to participate for fear of "messing up" or using the wrong term. We want everyone to feel comfortable participating, even if you don't feel you have the perfect words to express your thoughts or are unsure about the terminology, technology, etc.

Workshop Community Agreements

#5 Be aware and considerate of time, and avoid speaking in long monologues

We have a lot planned for the next 90 minutes, and helps to respect everyone's time and commitment to being here.

#6 Embrace curiosity

We make better decisions when we approach our problems and challenges with curiosity. Allow space for creative thinking.

Workshop Community Agreements

#7 Acknowledge the difference between impact and intent

Often when someone does or says something that causes harm or supports the values of oppressive systems, it is not their intention to do so. But when we use our good intentions to deny (or avoid being accountable for) the harm, more harm is caused. The ask in this community agreement is that we each do the work to acknowledge that our intent and the impact of our actions are two different things, and to take responsibility for any negative impact we have. This can be as simple as apologizing in the immediate or later. What is important is the communicated acknowledgment.

Small group discussion

http://bit.ly/BUF-hidden

Ice breaker: Which of the survey statements spoke to you the most? Explain why in the context of your work (helping introduce your partner to your work and institutional context).

http://bit.ly/BUF-hidden

How has COVID-19 / remote work surfaced **existing needs (infrastructure, training)** for digital work? **Created the time/space to work** on projects that would have been off the table otherwise?

http://bit.ly/BUF-hidden

Imagine a post-COVID work environment. If you had complete authority over how that work environment looked like...

What does this look like? What is it going to take to bring this about? What would need to change? Who would need to be part of the conversation? Who would *we* need to be?

http://bit.ly/BUF-hidden

Share Back

Thank you! Have feedback? Please email us