Sustaining Digital Curation and Preservation Training

The Educopia Institute proposes a one-year LB21 Planning Grant (National Digital Infrastructure)to study, evaluate, and document sustainability scenarios for grant-funded digital curation and preservation curriculum. The project will convene leading continuing education (CE) stakeholders (trainers, hosts, administrators) to engage in multi-stakeholder scenario planning and to develop a shared vision for expanding and supporting digital curation and preservation training. A report will document key aspects of and different approaches to CE sustainability. It will give recommendations for how stakeholders can apply specific adoption and incubation models to help open resources developed in grant-funded projects move into broader use across the fields. The project will increase and promote communication between training programs and hosts. Activities include an environmental scan, two facilitated meetings for key stakeholders, and a sustainability report.

Project Team: PIs Katherine Skinner/Sam Meister, Educopia. Partners: The Coalition to Advance Learning, the Library of Congress (DPOE, NDSR), SAA (DAS), MIT (DPM), NEDCC (Digital Directions), LYRASIS, AAACE, NIU (Digital POWRR), UNC-CH SILS (DigCCurr, CRADLE MOOC), and DPN (DP Workflow).

Statement of Broad Need:

Over the last two decades, continuing education opportunities in digital curation and digital preservation have been crucial for re-skilling librarians, archivists, and curators in a quickly changing information environment. Consortia, individual libraries, non-profits and for-profit businesses serving libraries and archives provide hundreds of institutes, workshops, online and blended training, MOOCs, and other offerings on these topics each year.[1] The IMLS, the NEH, the NHPRC, and multiple private foundations continue to invest millions each year to existing programs and new continuing education projects in this area. Demand for these programs still outpaces supply, and the concentration of these programs in the east coast corridor leaves much of the country without adequate training opportunities.[2] As demonstrated in a 2016 survey of nearly 3,000 professionals in US libraries, archives, and museums about continuing education needs, "Intermediate to advanced technology skills, digital collection management, and digital preservation" are rated highest by respondents as the competency areas in which they most needed "significant improvement."[3]

To ensure our national investments in digital curation and preservation training have the greatest possible impact, we need to establish better mechanisms and pathways for transitioning successful grant-funded curricula and resources into ongoing, replicable training programs that can serve the needs of targeted constituencies. We also need to strengthen relationships between existing trainers, hosts, and administrators of digital curation and preservation training programs, improving their knowledge of each other's offerings and fostering a network of support. Finally, we need better mechanisms for informing those seeking continuing education opportunities in these areas what programs are available and what competencies they fulfill.

The question of how to better ensure the longevity and impact of digital curation and preservation training has been raised in many single-program settings (see e.g., DPM, Digital POWRR, and DPOE); it has not yet been addressed at the system/infrastructure level.[4] There are many sustainability models currently operating both within and beyond our field from which we can learn. From national and international trainer

---

[1] Tibbo, Helen. 2015. "Digital Curation Education and Training: From Digitization to Graduate Curricula to MOOCs." *International Journal of Digital Curation*, Vol 10, Iss 1, pp 144-153. http://www.ijdc.net/index.php/ijdc/article/view/10.1.144/387
[2] Coalition to Advance Learning, 2016
[3] Drummond, Christina et al. 2016. "Self-Identified Library, Archives, and Museum Professional Development Needs 2016 Edition" p 13. https://educopia.org/publications/self-identified-library-archives-and-museum-professional-development-needs-2016-edition
[4] These individual efforts have largely sought a next-phase grant, not a long-term sustainability plan, to support a successful training effort for a few more years and/or a few additional sites.

associations (e.g., ATD, AAACE) to nonprofits and service providers in our fields (e.g., SAA, ACA, LYRASIS, NEDCC), and from academic environments (e.g., MIT, UNC-CH, SJSU) to long-lived conference series' hosted with community-based support but no formal infrastructure (e.g., PASIG, Code4Lib), there is no "one size fits all" (or even most!) approach to growing and sustaining curriculum. Documenting the variables, models, and approaches to sustainability in practice will help us to map how variables might function differently in different contexts and inform the scenario planning work that we will engage in during this project.

Project Design: This project is designed to explore sustainability scenarios and relationships between grant-funded training projects and organizations that host CE as part of their mission/business structure. It will produce a set of materials that focus on the bounded, high-need area of digital curation and preservation training sustainability; however, these materials will also serve as a model for how other topical training areas might address similar issues. Findings will be circulated broadly through the library, archives, and museum sectors.
Months 1-2: hire staff, set meeting schedule, select location/date for initial event, refine/finalize environmental scan (draft submitted with full proposal), building on work by Educopia (competency mappings, survey research) and UNC-CH (2015 study of existing training cited above). We will also work with AAACE, ATD, and other associations to research/document sustainability models (verticals, pipelines, etc) used in other fields.
Months 3-4: host initial event with all project partners (approx 15 people). PIs and a professional facilitator will draft and circulate forum agenda and scan to all invitees for content/structure input. Questions may include: How does ownership function? How is curricula updated? How do attendee networks function? Who are our attendees (geography, diversity)? What risks and opportunities can we identify for existing trainings? Where have we successfully bridged from a creator to a maintainer structure? What lessons have each of us learned?
Months 5-6: Synthesize findings, circulate meeting report to participants for feedback. Disseminate report in Month 6 as an open, web-based format and use it to gain interest/feedback from extended stakeholders (hosts/trainers in across library/archives/museum topical areas). Finalize sustainability research, draft report 2.
Months 7-8: Share report 2 on sustainability research (from months 1-2 and from months 5-6) with all partners; host virtual discussions of findings and potential directions to explore. Plan event 2 (date/location).
Months 9-10: Host second event on scenario planning. Questions will include: How do we build "pipelines" for distributing both the content and the responsibility for its assessment, maintenance, and use? How do we bridge all stakeholders (including attendee networks) to effectively promote and propel programs? How do we articulate and support at a system level the competencies needed and offerings available, including those that cross over different sectors and fields (nonprofit, government, private; library, archives, museums).
Months 11-12: Finalize report 2; Publish environmental scan and both reports and disseminate widely; host informational webinars to further circulate findings. Disseminate recommendations for next steps.

Diversity Plan: Our environmental scan and meetings will be used, in part, to help us identify and assess what we do/do not know about diversity in CE--including attendees, hosts, and trainers. Establishing that baseline will help us make recommendations on where and how to improve access to curricula by diverse groups.

Budget: Total project cost is $50,000, supporting 15 partners, project staffing, and a professional facilitator. 20% of the budget is for staff salaries/benefits; 40% is for participant travel; 15% is for event location and catering, 5% is for AV expenses, and 20% is for the consultant-facilitator.