

Professional Development Institutes for Digital Preservation

Summary of Proposal

Northern Illinois University Libraries (NIUL) request \$249,559 for a two-year Project Grant (Curating Collections – Continuing Education) in which they will present a series of two-day institutes enabling librarians and archivists from medium-sized and smaller organizations lacking large financial resources to build and improve skills necessary for the successful curation and preservation of digital collections. Attendees will rotate between three small-group learning modules: 1) Hands-on technology training, performing a number of digital preservation micro-services across the digital curation and preservation lifecycle, using open-source tools and services on sample digital collections; 2) Consultation services to help to create the foundation of a local digital curation and preservation workflow and identify potential solution models, based on their institution's technical infrastructure, availability of resources, individual technical skill set, and the nature of their digital collections; and 3) Case studies and gap analyses, working with a professional from an institution similar to their own, which has implemented a digital curation and preservation workflow. They will review the institution's case study, identify their own institution's particular challenges and advantages, and begin discussion of how they might begin to reach their digital preservation goals. Expert speakers will discuss emerging technologies in digital preservation workflows and the integration of local activities into the national digital platform. Throughout the small group learning modules and during evening events, attendees will build a local community of practice with professionals from similar organizations that are engaging in digital curation and preservation activities.

Relation to Existing Work

The proposal builds on the activities of the IMLS and NEH-funded Digital POWRR Project, which produced the 2014 white paper and professional development workshops on the subject. The two-day institute format proposed here will provide attendees with an experience at once more detailed and more customized to their institutions' specific needs than the current POWRR workshop format, yet more pragmatic than Digital Preservation Management workshops administered by Cornell University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology or DigCCurr workshops, developed at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which consider the subject in more elaborate detail, and often from a more theoretical perspective. The two-day format will also allow the proposed program to continue Digital POWRR's emphasis on reaching representatives of institutions that may be unable to afford the above programs' per-participant registration cost of over \$1000. All attendees will participate free of charge, and representatives of institutions showing need may be awarded travel stipends.

Need and Potential Impact

Digital POWRR Project resources and events have already reached a large audience, with over 8000 views of its white paper and 465 practitioners attending a total of 20 workshop events. Information professionals evaluating past workshops have emphasized that their practical,

hands-on approach meets a large need. Many have also mentioned that they would have benefited from more direct consultation with instructors about their institution's specific needs and time to experiment with individual tools and services introduced in the workshop. Feedback also has included requests for the time and opportunity to interact with other local practitioners from similar organizations, thus building the foundation for their local community of practice. As of August, 2016, eight organizations and institutions have approached members of the Digital POWRR team with requests for an opportunity to host a professional development event featuring project materials. Financial support from the IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian program would allow the proposed project to provide five institute events to a total of 150 participants. Each institution will be asked to send a single representative so as to allow for the maximum number of organizations' participation.

Projected Performance Goals and Outcomes

1. Offer five institute events, at no charge, over the two-year grant period.
2. Offer travel stipends to librarians and/or archivists working in institutions that will benefit from their participation but are unable to pay for it.
3. Establish and maintain an online community of practice that extends beyond project institutes and supports participants as they put new skills to work and expand them.

Project Directors and Partnership Arrangements

Dr. Drew E. VandeCreek, Director of Digital Scholarship at Northern Illinois University Libraries, will serve as Principal Investigator and direct the project. Jaime L. Schumacher, Director of Scholarly Communication at Northern Illinois University Libraries, will serve as co-Principal Investigator. Partner organizations will help the project administrators to plan institutes in locations around the United States, so as to make them readily accessible to librarians and archivists situated in diverse geographical locations. They include the Association of College and Research Libraries; the Midwest Archives Conference; Northwest Archivists, Inc.; the Sustainable Heritage Network (serving Native American organizations); and the American Association for State and Local History.

Estimated Budget

The proposed project requests \$249,559. No grant funds are to be used for salaries of full-time personnel at NIUL. Major budget requests include \$50,000 for the payment, over a period of two years, of a project director working half-time as a consultant. It also requests \$50,000 for institute leaders from NIUL and a number of participants to travel to institute locations. It requests \$60,000 for the compensation of institute leaders and experts not affiliated with NIUL, and \$10,000 for NIUL-based institute leaders. It requests \$6,220 for materials. It requests a total of \$49,593 in Facilities and Administrative costs. It also requests a total of \$19,891 for a graduate assistant at NIUL for a period of twenty-four months.