Advancing Art Libraries and Curated Web Archives: A National Forum

Abstract: The Internet Archive and the New York Art Resources Consortium (NYARC) – representing the Frick Art Reference Library and the libraries of the Museum of Modern Art and Brooklyn Museum – propose a one-year National Forum Grant in the Curating Collections project category for **$97,500** for two invitational national forums and workshops to advance practices and collaboration among art libraries for the stewardship of historically valuable art-related materials from the web. The events will bring together librarians, archivists, curators, and researchers from a diverse group of art and museum libraries and archives to discuss tools, collection development policies, and best practices for curating web-published, born-digital collections crucial to art historical scholarship. The two events, held in different regions, will build upon emergent efforts to form alliances and provide training for expanding web archiving in art libraries, result in a suite of open access deliverables, and help catalyze a nascent community of practice focused on shared services and collaborative knowledge development. The meetings will lay the groundwork for a national network to support the broad expansion of web archiving in art and museum libraries in support of curating collections of web-based, born-digital cultural heritage records.

Statement of National Need: Web archiving is an increasingly common part of library and archive collection development strategies. The NDSA Web Archiving Survey has shown substantial growth in new web archiving programs year-to-year and Archive-It, the Internet Archive's widely-used, non-profit web archiving service, has continued to see 30% year-to-year growth in the number of organizations starting new web archiving programs. This growth, however, is largely made up of colleges, universities, and government organizations. Few art libraries have established web archiving programs and art-oriented collecting institutions remain underrepresented in the larger web archiving community. Of approximately 530 total institutional users of Archive-It, 20 (3.7%) are art or museum libraries. Reasons for this slow adoption likely include methodological uncertainty, resource limitations, or a perceived high barrier-of-entry because of the technical complexity and lack of collection development alignment around collecting web records. At the same time, the web itself continues to expand as the de-facto platform for individual artists, galleries, arts organizations, and others to publish resources, audio-video, creative outputs, and other primary source records crucial to art scholarship. Joint services and knowledge sharing have allowed like-minded organizations like state libraries to build out community-wide efforts, helping institutions of all sizes to start web archiving programs. A similar model can align the unique needs of art and museum libraries with the potential of archiving web materials.

Goals, Outcomes, & Impact: The goal of this project is to mobilize the art library community to integrate web-published, born-digital records into their broader curatorial collection building. This mobilization can achieve national scale through the community building and shared infrastructure development that the project team will foster through a planned program of discussion, training, and strategic roadmapping. A chief outcome of the project will be the convening of up to 60 key stakeholders from the art library and web archiving communities for focused discussion on building relevant born-digital collections. The associated workshops will provide hands-on training to at least 40 of these attendees. Other outcomes include preliminary research and surveys, individual conference reports, and a final written report that addresses the forum discussions, current practices, and roadmap for future national alliances. The workshop training materials and two webinars held after the forums will also be made available online. All events and outcomes will be promoted via art library and relevant listservs, conference and interest group presentations, blogs, and webinars. By facilitating conversation on potential collaborations for both collection development and shared infrastructure, the forums can launch a larger effort at multi-institutional network to expand the number of art libraries curating web archives. Expanding collecting capacity will significantly improve the diversity, scale, and availability of art history materials for future students and researchers.

Relevance to Funding Priorities: The project builds on a range of preliminary work. Project team members play leadership roles in the ARLIS/NA's Web Archiving Special Interest Group and conducted a "Getting Started with Web Archiving" workshop at ARLIS/NA 2017 for 20 attendees. A subsequent NYARC-led open discussion at ARLIS/NA about planning a national web archiving network drew over 40 attendees. Project members also have run collaborative collection development projects preserving the Venice Biennale with art library partners, a National Symposium on web archiving practices in 2017, and an IMLS-funded initiative for similar community development and capacity building for web archiving in public libraries. These efforts will inform agenda and strategic objective setting for the forums. This project advances the *Curating Collections* goals of scaling out regional shared services models like NYARC and catalyzing action on national coalition building. The facilitated communications, published outputs, and workshops materials will serve to bolster methods and techniques to provide access to born-digital art history collections at scale.

Project Activities: The project will encompass three overlapping phases of work starting July 1, 2018. In **Phase One** (3 months), the project team will conduct a preliminary **environmental scan and community survey** to consolidate current challenges, catalyze interest in the project's goals, identify areas for discussion, and nurture interest in national coalition building. Outcomes from this work will be published as open access reports prior to the events. In **Phase Two** (4 months), the project team will use these reports to organize the topics for discussion at the events, identify expert speakers, and structure the forums' follow-on workshops. The team will then host the project's **two national forum and workshop events**. The forums will include an agenda of both discussions and presentations. The forums will be followed by half-day, hands-on introductory training workshops in web archiving tools and concepts. The forums and workshops will be scheduled in different parts of the country to maximize ease of attendance and travel budgets. Invited attendees will include a diverse group of stakeholders from art and museum libraries and research facilities around the country, including librarians and archivists, curators, scholarly researchers, digital humanists, technologists, and journalists. Talks will highlight themes specific to art libraries around curatorial issues, program development, and digital preservation and access. The events will also focus on guided discussion and brainstorming on network building and shared services development. **Phase Three** (3 months) will feature **two open webinars** reporting on forum outcomes and soliciting further community input and coalition building. The project will conclude with the publication of all research materials, including the preliminary **environmental scan and community survey, forum reports, summary project report, and the workshop training materials**. All outputs will be published online with an open access license.

Project Team: The project team has demonstrated expertise in art librarianship, web archiving, network and partnership building, shared services development, and conducting national forums. The Internet Archive team consists of Jefferson Bailey (Director, Web Archiving) who will be PI and is PI on IMLS and other digital preservation grants, Lori Donovan (Senior Program Manager), who manages web archiving programs and partnerships, and Karl-Rainer Blumenthal (Web Archivist), who founded the ARLIS/NA Web Archiving SIG and chairs the SAA Web Archiving Section. For NYARC, the team is Deborah Kempe (Chief, Collections Management & Access) and Sumitra Duncan (Head, Web Archiving Program) who co-chairs the ARLIS/NA Web Archiving SIG. We expect a third organization to join the team, either as an event host or coordinating partner, if the project is invited to submit a full proposal.

Budget: The total amount requested is $97,500. This includes $60,000 in forum attendee travel stipends (60 stipends of $1,000 for regional air/rail travel and two nights' lodging; $30,000 for each of the two events), $15,000 for event costs (for two 1.5 day events with catering, space costs, a/v, materials), $12,500 for project management staffing (0.20 FTE), $5,000 for workshop costs (instructor and materials costs), $5,000 for research and dissemination costs (survey work, report writing and editing, webinar and publication).