

Proposal to IMLS' Laura Bust 21st Century Librarian Program, Continuing Education Category: "Art Museum Libraries: A National Digital Stewardship Residency Program"

October 2015

Project Summary

The Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) is seeking a \$500,000 grant to partner with the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) and the Library of Congress (LOC) to develop a National Digital Stewardship Residency (NDSR) program to train residents and develop curriculum for librarians working in art museums. Building upon the NDSR initiatives in Washington, D.C., New York, and Boston, this project will emulate program components of each to embed ten residents over the course of two years at art museum libraries across the country and thus expand the locally based NDSR model to a national level.

Statement of Need

There is a critical need to address digital stewardship in art museums, and the tools and skills of librarians are a key component to filling this gap. Museums often struggle to keep pace with technological changes that impact the way institutions interact with the public and perform their technological operating processes. They typically lag far behind in capturing, preserving, and sustaining digital and electronic assets, including ephemeral applications, social media, event photography, audio-tours, touch-screen installations, gallery guides and brochures for exhibitions, eBooks, born-digital publications, and electronic institutional records. There is often not adequate staff-time, funding, or expertise to deploy such systems, and museum infrastructures cannot afford to create or sustain digital preservation platforms without complex restructuring or extensive use of costly vendors and consultants.

Museums with large information technology (IT) departments still face significant challenges. Typically, they have relied upon their IT departments as the sole provider for systems to preserve and manage collections and documents critical to day-to-day museum operations. The challenge with this practice is that most IT departments often do not have the training or expertise necessary for the stewardship of digital assets. There is a critical need to integrate existing IT infrastructures with the skills that art librarians already possess and ultimately develop more optimal systems, in addition to the larger need for a set of professionals who can successfully acquire, manage, and preserve digital materials.

An additional complication for art museums is rights management, compounded by copyright laws and the lack of Fair Use in regard to images. They must be extremely conscientious of copyright laws that impact their daily use of images in curatorial, retail, marketing, publishing, education, interpretive, and library activities. Copyright restrictions can limit or even prevent the inclusion of images in electronic resources in such a way that it effectively changes the distribution of these images and, in turn, what materials can be collected and preserved. It is essential that institutions learn to work within existing copyright laws, yet still embrace Fair Use, so that such material can be maximized, saved, and preserved.

Work Plan

The proposed NDSR program will be administered and managed by the PMA in collaboration with the LOC, who created the pilot NDSR program, and ARLIS/NA, which represents more than 1,000 art and cultural information professionals, and serves as the only professional society for art museum librarians. The LOC will collaborate with the PMA and ARLIS/NA to develop a curriculum that will address at least the following issues: fair use, copyright, and image rights management; navigating social media within the museum; digital asset management, with a particular focus on image

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management and its issues of discoverability and preservation; and lastly institutional repositories and workflows for art museum specific data (i.e. digital works of art; cell-phone tours; touch-screen applications, provenance). An advisory board convened by the Museum, in collaboration with the Library of Congress and ARLIS/NA, will review the curriculum.

The PMA will put out a call for residents and award residencies to the five most qualified candidates. PMA will work with ARLIS/NA's Museum Division to place residents within an appropriate host institution, where they will be assigned a staff mentor. Before the residency, an immersion training course will take place at the PMA in Philadelphia, PA, during which all residents and hosts will gather to learn about the issues to be covered by the program, a birds-eye view of the field of digital preservation and where it is going, how it fits into the preservation landscape, and key resources and tools that can be relied upon during the residency.

As the residency progresses, both mentor and resident will join monthly conference calls, facilitated by ARLIS/NA, to discuss progress on their individual projects and receive 30-60 minute training sessions. All training sessions will be hosted via the ARLIS/NA Learning Portal platform. In addition, residents will keep a blog during the program, submit quarterly updates to the program administrator at the PMA, and participate in final evaluation and debriefing activities at the PMA at the end of the program.

Outcomes and Evaluation

As made clear in *IMLS Focus: The National Digital Platform for Libraries, Archives, and Museums*, workforce development is a vital step toward the realization of a more engaged and connected nationwide community of libraries and archives. Other NDSR programs have taken steps toward a sustainable model for addressing the changing needs of 21st century libraries and archives by offering training and work experience to emerging professionals. Building upon this precedent, PMA's proposed NDSR residency program constitutes the first significant investment in workforce development for the field of art librarianship.

Residents will gain practical experience applying their skills in a museum library setting, while participating museums will develop new capacities that will greatly advance the functionality and accessibility of their digital content and services. Our project will better equip art museums libraries to meet the needs of the 21st century user. Furthermore, our NDSR program will enable a range of institutions across the country to shape and create a nationwide network of art librarians, who can transform their day-to-day work to include digital preservation and stewardship. The program will be evaluated from the perspective of all the key stakeholders and will recommend improvements to the model and next steps for future programs. An evaluation of curriculum components and measurable and perceived outcomes will be conducted.

Budget

The estimated budget for this two-year project is \$500,000. This will cover salaries of \$40,000, including benefits, for each of the ten residents, and the remaining \$100,000 for workshops, enrichment sessions, capstone meetings, resident conference attendance, mid-year meeting at PMA, speakers, and program assessment and evaluation.