

**Developing Cutting-edge Internship Programs in Digital Preservation:  
What Are the Essential Elements?**

Sponsored by the Library of Congress Digital Preservation Outreach and Education  
Program (DPOE)

NDIIPP/NDSA Partners Meeting Workshop

Wednesday, July 22, 2011

1:30 p.m.

**Presenters:** George Coulbourn (Office of Strategic Initiatives, or OSI, breakout group facilitator), Lara Lookabaugh (OSI, breakout group facilitator), Kristopher Nelson (OSI, breakout group facilitator), and Rosemari Ochoa (OSI, workshop facilitator)

**Attendees:** 19

**Highlights of the topics covered during the meeting.**

Many library and archival professionals do not have access to or funding for training in the practice of digital preservation. A 2010 national survey by OSI's Digital Preservation Outreach and Education (DPOE) initiative found that, among 986 responding organizations of widely varying types, over 97 percent believed it was important or very important that their digital content be accessible for 10 years or more. However, two-thirds of respondents did not have any paid staff to perform digital preservation. OSI is drawing on these findings and other research, as well as its experience hosting more than 70 interns, fellows, and other professional visitors over six years, to develop a new model for internships. These opportunities, to be pursued with public- and private-sector partners, will help build a future corps of library and archival professionals with the skills needed to conduct and manage digital preservation efforts.

After the workshop introduction, attendees formed two small discussion groups. Many members shared from their experiences either hosting interns or being an intern.

The first group addressed elements that would be desirable to include in internships, such as:

- Providing an initial unit, such as a "boot camp," that explains digital preservation and how it is applied at the host institution. A second example given was to hold a tutorial on digital preservation during the first week and address in the second week how the models and practices in the tutorial are applied at the host institution.
- Learning about the entire digital preservation life cycle and having it serve as a map for the curriculum, tasks, and projects.
- Exploring various approaches to orientation (e.g., providing reading materials in advance).
- Having coworkers and a working environment that are excellent.
- Integrating interns as full members of the team.
- Incorporating a concrete deliverable of value to both intern and host institution.
- Providing interns with access to tasks and contacts across the institution.
- Assisting interns in finding affordable housing.

The second group discussed management and mentoring. It was suggested that a good mentor has good teaching and project-management skills, willingness, enough time to be a mentor, and a positive view of the organization. The roles of supervisor and mentor do not always have to be one and the same. Mentoring can be done through a team approach.

There should be buy-in at the organizational level, including recognition and acceptance of the amount of work required to be a mentor. Some form of mentor recognition, it was suggested, would also be valuable, such as vacation time, a cash bonus, etc.

Having a process for regular meetings between interns and mentors, as well as for each of these with peers, is important (one participant suggested a regular lunch commitment). There should also be a process to evaluate internship matches early on and to make a change if a match is not right. Ways to measure the success of mentoring were briefly discussed, such as conducting surveys, tracking interns' success in obtaining jobs, and noting whether mentors are asked to serve as references.

The workshop closed with a voting exercise to rate the relative importance of the internship elements discussed.

**Action Items:**

OSI will conduct a nationwide needs-assessment survey on developing internships in digital preservation. Attendees will receive an e-mailed copy and be asked to complete it. OSI welcomes suggestions of additional participants for this survey.

**Slide presentations.**

n/a