

# PREPARING FUTURE DIGITAL CURATION FACULTY: THREE DOCTORAL FELLOWS AS EXAMPLES

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## ABSTRACT

Digital curation, the curation of digital assets, whether cultural, educational, scientific, or economic, is emerging as an active field of research and development.

“Digital curation” can be defined as “the active management and preservation of digital resources over the life-cycle of scholarly and scientific interest, and over time for current and future generations of users”[1]. It involves “maintaining and adding value to a trusted body of digital information for current and future use;” [2] and is “key to reproducibility and re-use”[1]. Limited graduate educational opportunities in digital curation exist. The School of Information and Library Science (SILS) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) was awarded a 2008 Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program Grant from IMLS, under the category “Programs to Build Institutional Capacity.” DigCCurr II: Extending an International Digital Curation Curriculum to Doctoral Students and Practitioners” (2008-2012) builds upon DigCCurr I (2006-09). SILS continues in their partnership with NARA, as well as introducing a new partnership, the University of Glasgow’s HATII. This project seeks to develop a doctoral-level curricular framework; course content; and networked, distributed, international seminars to prepare future faculty to educate 21st century digital curators.

The DigCCurr II project will also offer three multi-stage Institutes for Professionals in Curation Practices for the Digital Object Lifecycle, taught by a team of international experts, designed to have an immediate impact on curation practices. The Institutes are designed to foster skills, knowledge and community-building among professionals responsible for the curation of digital materials. A highly interactive website, the Digital Curation Exchange [3], has been developed which acts as a forum for discussion and collaboration during the institute and also provides forums for discussion, sharing of documents, as well as links to valuable tools and resources.

The DigCCurr II Program also provides funding for six Carolina Digital Curation Doctoral Fellows. The doctoral fellows are assisting the Institute instructors in course development and implementation through out the year and during the Institute. Each Fellow also brings his/her own knowledge and specialties to the institute, and are also offered the opportunity to develop their individual research interests and skills in addition to gaining valuable teaching experience the work of the fellows will help enrich the collective knowledge of digital curation practices. There are currently three doctoral fellows. This cohort will be

expanded to include three additional Fellows who will be recruited for Fall 2010.

This poster will report on the research trajectories of the Carolina Digital Curation Fellows as an illustration of how doctoral-level education is being integrated into a digital curation curriculum.

Mike Brown is currently working on a project studying job market ads related to digital preservation and curation. He has specific interests in the digital curation of cultural heritage and performing arts artifacts, and the overlap between personal information management and personal archiving strategies.

Kaitlin Costello’s research areas include digital curation and digital archives. Specifically, she studies selection and appraisal methods for interactive digital objects. She is also interested in instructional design and pedagogy. Kaitlin is currently conducting a study examining digital preservation education at the graduate level in information schools. She is also researching appraisal strategies for websites created by UNC.

The Sarah Ramdeen is interested in digital curation and education for the sciences – teaching others to manage their digital collections and shaping the way scientists preserve and access their data. Her current research areas include a qualitative study of collection managers at geological repositories and she is currently developing a study to look at the preservation and archival habits of geological researchers and students in relation to specialized file formats.

DigCCurr II seeks sustainability for work in the digital curation arena through raising public and professional awareness. By cultivating intensive deliberation and mutual engagement of the issues among a diversity of players, DigCCurr II will also contribute substantially to the promotion and sustainability of the communities of practice that will ensure responsible, long-term digital curation.

While all of the Fellows view digital curation through a unique lens, their projects are integral to the development of their skills as researchers. Their work will bring awareness of the critical issues of the field and will enhance the current body of knowledge in the practice of digital curation. Through their experiences with the Institutes and their collaboration with international experts, they will be better prepared for careers as educators of the next generation of digital curation practitioners.

## Categories and Subject Descriptors

K.3.2 [**Computers and Education**]: Computer and Information Science Education –/ curriculum.

### **Keywords**

Digital preservation, graduate education, digital curation

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