Abstract

The half day workshop will explore ways iSchools can participate in research and education relevant to the employment of information professionals in libraries, archives, and museums to provide access to and preservation of the collections held by these institutions. Presently, the education of information professionals for each of these institutions has primarily separate and diverse tracks and traditions. While some schools educating librarians do offer courses that include discussion of the application of library and information science skills to archival and museum collections, few offer full specializations in this area. Archival education has traditionally been based on degrees in history, but as the archival collections have utilized more digitalization to provide preservation and expand access to the content of collections, the need for staff with more knowledge of skills related to the preservation and expansion of access to archival collections has been recognized. Similar recognition of the importance of information profession skills is being recognized in museum studies, an area that in the past has depended on specialized subject discipline education coupled with an internship/apprenticeship-based training.

*Keywords:* Library, Archive, Museum (LAM) Convergence, Data curation, Digital library, Library and Information Science (LIS) Education

Introduction

The discussion of the union of education of information professional in archives, museums, and libraries is beginning. This past year the Governing Board of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) established a working group to explore the convergence of education of information professionals for positions in archives, museums, and libraries. While evidence of such convergence was found in North America and in some other places internationally, clearly there is considerable additional research and discussion that is needed to determine the most effective way to proceed to realize a convergence in what is now a very divergent area of identifying educational goals and competencies in these three broad institutions that employ information professionals.

Goals or Outcomes

The focus of education of information professionals in iSchools on digital collections makes the exploration of the potential for iSchools to be a focal point for converging information professional education for the disciplines of Library Science, Archival, and Museum Studies especially relevant. The
fact that many iSchools also contain or have close relationships with schools of Computer Science further supports the potential benefits of iSchool involvement in the exploration of education convergence. One of the specializations relevant to all these disciplines is Digital Curation and this specialization may be especially important to the successful convergence of the education programs. Digital Curation along with other specializations in iSchools may provide the necessary link to achieve convergence. The literature on the management of digital collections, and especially the literature on Digital Curation offers a variety of definitions of the area of study due to the different approaches in each of these disciplines. There are also variations in the curriculum for Digital Curation in North America and in Europe, as well as other parts of the world. These differences need to be identified and harmonized.

The main goal of the workshop is to achieve understanding of the main trends in the interdisciplinary and international research in managing digital collections and related areas within iSchools and how iSchools may design and define more effective curricula for education specifically in the fields of Archive, Museum, and Library and Information Studies.

One possible outcome of the workshop would be the development of a wiki and/or a discussion forum on competencies needed by information professionals in these three fields related to digital collections. Such a communication channel might possibly be supported/sponsored by international organizations such as IFLA (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions).

Relevance to the Conference

Most of the participants in the iSchool Conference are involved both in Education and Research, and many of them are to some extent involved or interested in Digital Curation. The workshop intends to provide an opportunity for discussing and sharing experiences both in research and education contexts.

Proposed Program

9:00–10:00

Introduction to topic: Three invited speakers provide twenty minute introductions to the current state of education in archives, museum, and library education with a focus on the discussion of where convergence of the educational programs might be successfully obtained.

10:00 – 10:30

Three invited speakers from iSchools participate in a panel to discuss how their current education programs might contribute to the possible convergence of the information competencies needed in these three information institutions.

10:30 – 11:00

Break

11:00 – 12:00

The workshop participants will be broken into groups (four or five groups of about six participants) based on specific interests in research and development of teaching courses in one of the three areas targeted for convergence in education and will assess the challenges and best strategies for obtaining a successful convergence of information professional education as it relates to working with digital collections. The discussion will be facilitated by the Workshop organizers.

12:00 – 12:30

The workshop organizers will report on the results of the small group discussion and will summarize the workshop findings, review possible next steps, and propose specific ways the participants can continue to communicate and move forward on the desired goals identified during the workshop.