Convergence of Education for Information Professionals in libraries, archives, museums, and other institutions in LIS schools in research and curriculum offerings - the U.S. and Canadian Experience

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2/12/2013 iConference (Rev. 2/20/13)
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Assumptions

- Interest in Convergence of Professional Education of Librarians, Archivists, and Museum Curators is based on the foundation of American Library Association (ALA) Accredited Master’s degree programs in the U.S. and Canada.

- The desired result is the provision of professional education of Information Professionals intending to work in a variety of information contexts
Current Status of Education for Library, Archives, Museum Professionals in the U.S. and Canada

58 ALA Accredited Master’s Degree Programs in the U.S. and Canada
http://www.ala.org/accreditedprograms/directory/alpha

23 Archival Education and Training Institutions are listed in the U.S. and 4 in Canada in the International Council of Archives/ Section on Archival Education (ICA/SAE) online Directory (http://www.ica-sae.org/)
Current Status of Education for Library, Archives, Museum Professionals in the U.S. and Canada


153 graduate Museum Studies programs listed in GradSchools.com were in the U.S. and Canada. [http://www.gradschools.com/search-programs/museum-studies?PageNo=1](http://www.gradschools.com/search-programs/museum-studies?PageNo=1)
Current Status of Education for Library, Archives, Museum Professionals in the U.S. and Canada

Of the 58 ALA Accredited Master’s Degree Programs in the U.S. and Canada, 54 offer courses related to Archival or Museum studies.

Three iSchools and one non-iSchool with ALA Accredited Degrees also have degree programs in Archives and/or Museum Studies

UCLA [Masters in Moving Image Archive Studies]
UBC [Master of Archival Studies]
U of Toronto [Master of Museum Studies]
San Jose State [Masters of Archives & Records Admin.]
Current Status of Education for Library, Archives, Museum Professionals in the U.S. and Canada

Only 42 of the LIS Schools with ALA Accredited Master’s Degree Programs offer specializations in Archival or Museum studies. Some of these specializations are not part of Master’s degree program (eg. Illinois)

Only 13 of the Schools offering these specializations are iSchools.
Current Status of Education for Library, Archives, Museum Professionals in the U.S. and Canada

Of the **Archival Education** and Training Institutions listed in the U.S. [http://www.ica-sae.org/index.html](http://www.ica-sae.org/index.html) about half were at institutions with programs accredited by ALA.

In the SAA Directory, over 70% of the listed graduate programs were affiliated with ALA Accredited programs. A Certificate of Advanced Studies in Digital Libraries was often listed as an option for Archivists in this directory.

Of the U.S. and Canadian graduate **Museum Studies** programs listed, only one was specifically listed as affiliated with an accredited library education program [http://www.gradschools.com/search-programs/museum-studies?PageNo=1](http://www.gradschools.com/search-programs/museum-studies?PageNo=1)
Current Status of Education for Library, Archives, Museum Professionals in the U.S. and Canada

This information suggests that there are much closer ties and potential for convergence between Library Studies and Archival Studies than between Museum Studies and either Archival or Library education programs.
Institute of Museum and Library Services: a Force for Change

- In the U.S. the IMLS has played a role in the convergence of missions of Archives, Museums, & Libraries
- Formed in 1998 from a merger of the Office of Library Programs and the Institute of Museum Services
- “Primary source of Federal government funding to libraries and museums” (Institute of Museums and Library Services, Perspectives on Outcome Based Evaluation for Libraries and Museums, n.d. p.2).
- Statutes establishing the Institute mandate “its funds be used to foster collaboration between and among museums and libraries” (Martin, 2007, p. 82-83).
- "Until the creation of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, collaboration among and between cultural heritage institution categories was relatively rare" (Allen & Bishoff, 2001, p.61).
The Role of IMLS in promoting Convergence

Many grants given to joint projects brought libraries and museums together to work on solutions to shared problems. Some examples:

- **2000** *Perspectives on Outcome Based Evaluation for Libraries and Museums*: need for methods of assessment that resemble those of non-profit agencies
- **2002** *Status of Technology and Digitization in the Nation's Museums and Libraries*: Findings: Libraries lead museums in use of technology
- **2003** *Assessment of End-User Needs in IMLS-Funded Digitization Projects*: more need for user-driven projects
- **2006** *Status of Technology and Digitization in the Nation's Museums and Libraries*: increased use of technology, digitization projects.
What evidence of impact on education of Librarianship, Archival Studies and Museum Studies?

■ A great deal of funding for specializations in LIS (such as Digital Curation) to train professionals in areas that might be applied to all three professions.

■ In the case of archive studies, a number of grants to train professionals in Archival Studies, and of possible special significance, grants to fund PhD study to strengthen the growing network of archival educators in library and information science programs. (See the project "Building the Future of Archival Education and Research" with the University of California, Los Angeles (lead institution) http://aeri.gseis.ucla.edu/)

■ Less evidence of convergence for Museum Studies.
Looking at the grant programs from IMLS, there is evidence of convergence with Archival Studies with Library education curricula, as evidenced by the IMLS grant to fund PhDs to teach in LIS Schools. [http://aeri.gseis.ucla.edu/](http://aeri.gseis.ucla.edu/)
As noted above, a significant number of LIS programs in the U.S. do offer courses on Archives and on Museum Studies.

But there seems to be less integration of Museum Studies in LIS programs than Archive Studies, although many LIS programs do list museum work as an alternative career for LIS graduates.
Sample of Courses that are available in selected LIS Curricula

- Planning, Production & Practice of Library and Museum Exhibitions
- Audiovisual Materials in Libraries and Archives
- Administration and Use of Archival Materials
- Archival Outreach: Programs and Services
- Museum Informatics
- Planning, Production & Practice of Library and Museum Exhibitions.
Unresolved Challenges to Convergence: Who is allowed access to information? Who does the interpreting? – Archives, Museums or Libraries

- Archives and Museums do not always share the library mission of free and open access to a broad spectrum of information.
- Archives and Museums emphasize the protection of the proprietary rights of owners of objects. Libraries have a tradition of open access to their collections.
- Identification of an object versus interpretation of an object is a common source of disagreement between libraries and museums in collaborative projects.
- Another area of dissimilarity between libraries and museums is metadata. Since libraries and museums do not share the same metadata standards, incompatibility between library and museum data is a common problem.
Unresolved Challenges to Convergence: Archives

- Differences in cultures of access may be even more evident in Archives when compared to libraries. Privacy of content of holdings is likely of greater significance in Archives because of the nature of the holdings.

- However, the convergence of the education for Archival Studies in LIS Schools in the digital age change perceptions and result in more convergence in the future.
The current status of Convergence in the U.S.

- Based on the review of the descriptions of needed qualifications for Archival Science or Museum Studies in the U.S., it appears a gap still exists between the mission, duties, and qualifications of Archival and Museum Professionals and Library Professionals.

- In the U.S., some sources indicate that a Bachelor’s degree in History or a subject related to an area of specialization is needed for Archives or Museum work — in contrast to the Master’s degree preferred or required for a professional librarian.
In 2007, the Director of IMLS observed that:

“…the distinctions we have drawn between libraries, museums, and archives, based on the kinds of things they collect, are really a matter of convention—conventions that have evolved over time.” Robert S. Martin, “Intersecting Missions, Converging Practice,” RBM 8, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 81.

Do you agree?
How relevant is this observation to the convergence of the institutions?
After decades of going separate paths toward the education and recognition of the shared attributes of librarians, archivists, and Museum professionals, progress is now being made in the U.S. toward converging on a shared educational foundation.

Are there aspects of this convergence that are worth considering in other regions and expanding to professionals in other cultural institutions?
Conclusions and Discussion

- If the convergence of Library-Archival-Museum education is desirable, what will be required to succeed in converging?

- Most LIS programs are now one year or 18 month programs. Do the number of credit hours need to be expanded to full two year programs?

- What role should other professional organizations play in the planning and delivery of converged programs of study?
Thank you for your Attention

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