Emerging Best Practices for Managing Online Exhibits

PAM HACKBART-DEAN, LEANNA BARCELONA, and ANNE MARIE HAMILTON-BREHM

Many libraries, archives, museums, and other institutions provide online exhibits to serve as surrogates for or to supplement in-person/physical exhibits. Online exhibits may provide more detailed information about a physical exhibit or may stand alone. While online exhibits can have more permanence than physical exhibits, they can be difficult to support in the long term, requiring regular updates and maintenance. Online exhibits may lose context when creators and supporting staff with institutional memory move on. It may also prove challenging to migrate a legacy exhibit to a current version, a different platform, and/or a new server. To continue serving patrons optimally, online exhibits must remain fully accessible and be regularly reviewed for accuracy and utility. As rapidly developing technology presents us with new opportunities to connect virtually with researchers and the public, online exhibits should be reviewed and supported to supplement institutional and programmatic goals, especially if they are still pertinent to the mission of the institution.

About the authors:

Pam Hackbart-Dean has been Head of Special Collections & University Archives at the University of Illinois at Chicago since August 2019, as well as Interim Associate University Librarian since June 2020. Previously she was Director of the Special Collections Research Center at Southern Illinois University Carbondale from 2006-2019, Head of Special Collections & Archives at Georgia State University and Director of the Southern Labor Archives from 2000-2006 and from 1990 to 2000, she was the assistant department head/processing archivist for the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Study at the University of Georgia. She is tenured and holds the rank of Professor. Pam has been an active member of the Society of American Archivists, as well as the Academy of Certified Archivists and the Society of Georgia Archivists; serving as President for both groups. She is a fellow of the Society of American Archivists and the Society of Georgia Archivists. Pam received her MA in history from the University of Connecticut with a certificate in archival management and public history and her BA in history from Hendrix College (Conway, AR).

As Associate Dean of Southern Illinois University's Morris Library, *Anne Marie Hamilton-Brehm,* PhD, CA directs the Special Collections Research Center and oversees Records Management and the University Museum. After earning her doctorate in Linguistics from the University of Georgia, she earned her MLIS from the University of Alabama in 2008. She has developed digital and archival collections and exhibits for universities and public libraries across the nation, including the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada, the Digital Library of

Georgia, the Center for Oak Ridge Oral History, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Henderson District Public Libraries, the Henderson Historical Society, the General John A. Logan Museum, and Southern Illinois University Carbondale. An active member of ALA, SAA, and MAC, she serves on the editorial board of *Archival Issues*. Striving to increase public access to cultural heritage, she pursues education and preservation initiatives in collaboration with diverse institutional and community partners. She is currently working with university and community stakeholders on planning the Center for African American History in Southern Illinois. In addition to researching online exhibit best practices, she is surveying conference attendance preferences of library and archives workers to examine demand for in-person and virtual access.

Leanna Barcelona is Assistant Professor and University Archivist at the University of Illinois Chicago. She received her MLIS from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She is a Certified Archivist and holds SAA's Digital Archives Specialist certificate.