

# Developing and Maintaining Successful Archives and Special Collections Blogs

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Many archives and special collections use blogs as part of their outreach strategy. What are the characteristics of a successful blog, and how is success defined and measured? What type of work do blogs require? Are blogs worth the effort and what audiences do they try to reach? This presentation discusses the initial findings of a 2021 research study. The data, collected through a qualitative online survey, represents a diverse group of institutions in the USA and abroad. Survey answers convey a clear picture of how blogs are planned, developed, managed and assessed. Goals, audiences, technical aspects and marketing strategies are discussed. Respondents indicate that blogs are worth the effort. The amount of time dedicated to each blog differs, but blogs generally require a good degree of planning and effort. Goals and intended audiences vary, from very generic to very specific. The study results and this presentation are useful to archivists and special collections librarians who want to reflect on their existing blogs, or who plan on starting a new blog. Since blogs are time-consuming, the study results can also help professionals decide if they want to embark in the effort, and can help them make a case for a blog to their administrators and IT divisions.

## About the author:

*Dr. Francesca Marini*, she/her (fmarini@library.tamu.edu) is Associate Professor at the Texas A&M University Libraries, Cushing Memorial Library and Archives. As the Programming and Outreach Librarian, she makes collections and ideas available to the public in-person and online, through talks, exhibitions, tours, fairs, the blog, and more. She is co-chair of the Don Kelly Collection of Gay Literature and Culture Research Fellowship committee. She coordinates the Student Internship and Practicum Program, and is co-editor of The Cushing Collective blog. She holds a Ph.D. in Library and Information Studies (UCLA), a Master's degree in Archival Studies, Paleography and Diplomatics (Modena State Archives), and a Bachelor's Degree in Film and Theatre Studies (University of Bologna). Her research focuses on performing arts archiving, and on special collections and archives outreach; she publishes in performing arts, library and archival journals. She is active in several organizations, including the Theatre Library Association (President), the Society of American Archivists (member, Exhibits and Events Committee), and the ALA/ACRL Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (member of several committees and task forces, and former Chair of the Diversity Committee).