

The Care and Maintenance of Archival Innovation: The Lighting the Way Working Meeting as Incubator for a Sociotechnical Investigation of Archival Discovery and Delivery

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Archives and special collections have invested heavily in the ecosystem of systems supporting their work over the past ten years and beyond, and have made significant improvements in archival discovery and delivery (finding, accessing, and using archival material). While the pandemic and shift to remote work has required many archivists to innovate in their work, deeper and more inclusive collaboration on this work has remained challenging. The Lighting the Way project team adapted a planned in-person Working Meeting to a series of online and asynchronous activities for participants to engage in a facilitated practice to develop ideas and written contributions on archival discovery and delivery. Drawing from a pool of over 100 applicants across 24 groups, a cohort of 9 groups and 52 individual participants developed topics and ideas from their initial submissions through the use of McCandless and Schurtau's Strategy Knotworking framework, a refinement and adaptation of the Liberating Structures facilitation methodology. Facilitators worked with participants in both plenary and group-focused sessions to guide a collaborative process centered on the role of archival practitioners. The experience facilitating the Working Meeting sessions and supporting the development of written contributions underscores the importance of viewing archives and archival practices as sociotechnical systems further embedded in broader sociotechnical contexts. This presentation will describe the activities undertaken during the Working Meetings in relation to other research and practice within the field on archives as sociotechnical systems, and argues for a "bottom-up" model of archival innovation reliant on networks of care and mutual responsibility.

About the author:

María A. Matienzo is an archivist, technologist, and ambient musician. As Assistant Director for Digital Strategy and Access for Stanford University Libraries, her work includes managing a team of engineers and designers and a portfolio of services and applications supporting digital library discovery, access, and delivery. María currently serves as the Project Director of the Lighting the Way project, an IMLS-funded effort to hold sector-wide conversations on improving archival discovery and delivery, and is co-chair of the International Image Interoperability Framework's Archives Community Group. Prior to joining Stanford, María worked as an archivist, technologist, and strategist specializing in born-digital materials and metadata management, at institutions including the Digital Public Library of America, Yale University Library, The New York Public Library, and the American Institute of Physics, and on projects including Hyku, ArchivesSpace, and AIMS (Born Digital Collections: An Inter-Institutional Model for Stewardship). María received a Master of Science in Information from the University of Michigan and a BA in Philosophy from the College of Wooster, and was the

2012 recipient of the Mark A. Greene Emerging Leader Award from the Society of American Archivists. María resides on the unceded ancestral lands of the Duwamish People past and present, who are still actively working for federal recognition.