

# **Cultivating Community: Cross-Institutional Development of Digital Preservation Learning Materials for Smaller Cultural Heritage Organizations**

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**Abstract:** In early April 2020, Andrew Leith, Conservation and Collection Program Manager at the Chicago Cultural Alliance (CCA), sent out a call seeking professionals to develop and lead a digital preservation workshop for CCA member organizations. The CCA is an active consortium consisting of over, “40 Chicago-area cultural heritage museums, centers, and historical societies...in the Chicago area and represent over 30 different cultures from around the world.”

Through a convergence of professional and personal networks, digital preservation professionals from three institutions rapidly assembled to address the opportunity to engage with organizations that have digital preservation concerns and limited resources. Through discussion with Andrew, digital preservation experts from Northwestern University, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and University of Iowa quickly developed a series of four one-hour workshops with the goal of providing foundational knowledge of digital preservation issues and assisting these organizations in taking action toward preserving their digital collections.

The workshops covered digital preservation basics and how they apply to CCA member organizations with focus on three main areas of digital preservation: storage, metadata, and capacity building. Intended learning outcomes include developing understanding in these areas to begin laying the groundwork for digital preservation at member organizations.

In this presentation Tracy Popp and Dan Johnson will discuss the experience of developing the workshop, share lessons learned drawn from experience and attendee feedback and will posit how this workshop framework may be used to teach other small cultural heritage organizations about getting started with digital preservation.

## **About the authors:**

**Tracy Popp** is Digital Preservation Coordinator at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign University Library. Ms. Popp leads the Library's born-digital content preservation efforts. Ms. Popp shares her expertise in digital curation and preservation topics as a guest lecturer in graduate-level courses within the iSchool at the University of Illinois. She is also a frequent presenter on digital preservation and curation at professional conferences. Ms. Popp holds a Master of Science of Library and Information Science and Certificate of Advanced Study in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

**Daniel Johnson** is the Digital Preservation Librarian at The University of Iowa. Johnson has experience working in digital preservation, digital archives, reformatting/digitization, digital file management, web

archiving, metadata standards, database management and project management. Johnson has presented on digital preservation related topics at many conferences including the American Library Association, the Society of American Archivist, the Rare Book and Manuscript Section, the Digital Library Federation and the Upper Midwest Digital Collections Conference. Johnson earned his MLIS from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2009.

*Laura Alagna* is the Digital Preservation Librarian at Northwestern University, where she develops and implements policies and workflows for preserving born-digital and digitized content. Her research interests include repository interoperability, sustainability in digital libraries, and preservation of mobile environments. She holds an MLIS from the University of Illinois School of Information Sciences and a BA from Amherst College.