Digital Curation Institute Report to the Faculty of Information Council  
For the academic year July 2011 to May 2012  

October 5, 2011

I Introduction

Recap of Mandate Statement

The Digital Curation Institute (DCI) provides a rich, interdisciplinary environment for investigating principles and theory building related to the creation, management, use, interpretation and preservation of digital resources; conducting research on digital curation issues; and developing technologies and tools to support best practice in this area. The DCI promotes innovative multi-faceted research projects that involve collaboration among faculty, students, practitioners, and researchers both national, and international. It encourages research that utilize multi-methods approaches from the fields of critical information studies; library and information science; archives and record management; information systems, media, and design; cultural heritage; museum studies, knowledge management and information management.

Director’s Statement/Executive Summary

The DCI has embarked on a number of initiatives this year: a colloquium series, a new research award, and a stakeholders’ meeting. The DCI will also host the IPres conference, in Fall 2012. Each initiative is described in more detail below.

II Fall 2011

Activities

The DCI organized a DCI lecture series, with two speakers in fall 2011. Seamus Ross gave the first lecture of the series providing an overview of digital curation and Caroline Hank, University of Montreal gave a lecture on the preservation of blogs. As the ISchool was searching for a new faculty member in digital preservation and all candidates gave public lectures, the DCI decided to suspend its colloquium series for winter, 2012.
Grants

The DCI has instituted the DCI research award. See attached.

Collaborations

I am collaborating with Helen Tibbo at the University of North Carolina; I am a member of the Closing the Gap project; and I am in discussions with faculty at the University of Amsterdam about possible collaborations.

The ISchool and DCI are also represented on the DigCurV project. This European funded project is addressing the availability of vocational training for digital curators in the library, archive, museum and cultural heritage sectors needed to develop new skills that are essential for the long-term management of digital collections.

Personnel

We have no personnel at the current time

III Objectives/Plans for upcoming year

Key Priorities

1. Knowledge transfer among the academic and scholarly community. The Institute plans to meet this priority through our lecture series. We have invited an archivist from the National Archives of Norway to discuss his work on trusted digital repositories for the fall.
2. Knowledge transfer among various professions. The Institute plans to meet this priority through a stakeholders meeting.
3. Research. The Institute plans to meet this priority through the DCI research award and the stakeholders’ meeting.

Ongoing Programming

We are organizing a digital curation stakeholders meeting in October in conjunction with the IPres conference. See attached for the background and overview to the meeting.

We will be working with IPres to host the IPres conference from Oct 1-5, 2012. For more information on this conference see http://ipres.ischool.utoronto.ca/

Budget statements 2010-11 actuals and 2011-12 projected
Submitted to the Dean

IV Plans for fall 2012 and beyond

I would also like to seek funds to establish an international network of excellence for digital curation. The Network of Excellence would include educational programs, institutes and research centres.
Digital Curation Institute’s Research Award

May 11, 2012

Draft

The DCI promotes innovative multi-faceted research projects that involve collaboration among faculty, students, practitioners, and researchers both national, and international in the domain of digital curation. It encourages research that utilizes multi-methods approaches. To this end the DCI has instituted the DCI research award to provide start up funds for research projects.

The research award provides small start up funds, to a limit of $5000, to initiate a pilot study related to digital curation by a member of the ISchool community. The funds can also be used to support travel to Toronto for an ISchool faculty member’s collaborator. Collaborators will be expected to provide a public lecture during their visit on a topic related to digital curation. Pilot projects and collaborator’s travel related to the development of a research grant application related to digital curation will be given priority.

Proposals should not exceed three pages, not including references and appendices. The application should provide a summary of the proposed research, its significance, a brief description of how the pilot (or collaborator) will assist with the development of the related research grant application, a budget, timeline and cv of applicant and collaborators if relevant.

The annual deadline for applications is October 15 of any year.

The DCI Review Panel will review applications in early November.

Applicants will be notified of the decision regarding their proposals in November.

The Review Panel reserves the right to not allocate funds in any given year.
Digital Curation Stakeholders Meeting
Overview

1. Background

Curated digital information is digital information preserved through the long term\(^1\) for the purpose of reuse and exploitation. Any organization generating digital information, regardless of its affiliation with the private, public, and academic sectors is concerned at some level with curating digital information so it will be available for future use. At the same time, concerns are being raised about the methods required for ensuring the integrity of such information through time. Can the information be trusted? Can the sources from which the information are derived be trusted? Are they complete? How was the information generated, by whom and under what conditions? Is there sufficient contextual information to enable the information to be understood? Does the organization have the ability to trace back from the information it is reusing to the sources from which the information was derived? How can its authenticity and integrity be ensured in spite of changes to the original creating technology?

Questions such as these are no longer the purview of libraries, archives, and museums. Increasingly, organizations within discrete sectors such as the environment, health, economics, and a host of other sectors and sub-sectors are beginning to raise these and related questions. They are also beginning to recognize that the challenges each is experiencing in this area and the directions being taken to develop appropriate strategies, while aligned with the specific characteristics and requirements of a given sector, tend to be similar. However, across Canada there is relatively little cross-sector communication or collaboration. This is leading to stove-piped approaches and missed opportunities to maximize the value of what is being learned and applied within individual sectors. The result is a fragmented set of parts rather than a comprehensive whole.

*Given the growing concern about digital curation across all sectors and given the increased level of attention being paid to the digital curation issue, it is timely for some form of cross-sector communication and collaboration to be explored.*

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\(^1\) ‘Long term’ is a period of time which is long enough to be concerned about the impacts of changing technology on the authenticity and integrity of digital assets. Given that the value of digital assets can extend beyond the life of the systems managing the assets this period of time can be relatively short.
2. The Stakeholders Meeting

The Digital Curation Institute (DCI) at the Faculty of Information (iSchool) at the University of Toronto has recognized the need for cross-sector communication and collaboration. Through its mandate, the DCI provides a rich, interdisciplinary environment for investigating principles and theory building related to the management and preservation of digital resources. It promotes:

- innovative multi-faceted research projects that involve collaboration among faculty, students, practitioners, and researchers at both the national and international levels;
- encourages research based on multi-disciplinary approaches involving specialists and experts from a wide range of organizations from the academic, private, and public sectors, and;
- hosts meetings to address a wide range of digital curation issues and approaches including the establishment of networks of inter-disciplinary expertise.

In establishing networks and fostering collaboration the DCI recognized that bringing together stakeholders from all sectors of Canadian society would be too ambitious at this early stage. In this respect it was recognized that before cross-sector networks could be established one would first need to address the challenges of establishing such networks within the individual sectors themselves. Addressing the digital curation issues and fostering collaboration across the often diverse interests within an individual sector was seen as an important jumping off point to examining such issues at the broader cross-sectoral level.

Given its size, complexity and diversity, the Health Sector was seen as an example of the kinds of issues many sectors are facing with respect to the management, exploitation, and preservation of valuable data and records through the long term. It supports a range of diverse and distinct interests, from medical care to health education, all of which are facing significant digital curation issues and all of which would be expected to share considerable interest in exploring the potential for collaboration. If these issues, especially those related to collaboration, could be addressed across the diverse segments of the Health sector then the potential to extend what has been learned to other sectors could be high. To that end the DCI is organizing a working meeting on October 1-2, 2012 of those stakeholders from various segments of the Health Sector who are most involved in digital curation activities. Stakeholders involved in digital curation initiatives in the archives and library communities and representatives from those faculties of the University who are involved in addressing the same digital curation issues as those being faced by the stakeholders in the Health Sector will also be invited.
3. Meeting Objectives

The objectives of the meeting are as follows:

- To develop a shared understanding and appreciation of the extent to which identified digital curation issues are common and shared across the various segments of the Health Sector and across organization types (i.e. private, public, academic).
- To identify and define the approaches each segment of the Sector is taking to address its digital curation issues.
- To identify specific initiatives that could have wider cross-sector benefits.
- To identify research initiatives that would benefit from cross-sectoral approaches.
- To develop a mechanism for establishing digital curation initiatives that reach across various segments of the Sector.
- To identify opportunities for knowledge transfer across the Sector (e.g. speaking at each other’s conferences, joint articles, workshops, etc.).
- To establish a network for the purposes of collaboration and knowledge exchange, establishing partnerships, and undertaking joint initiatives to seek funding from multiple sources.
- To explore how the results of this working meeting and the establishment of a network can be extended to other sectors.

The working meeting of stakeholders will be held in conjunction with the iPRES2012 conference (October 3-5, 2012 [http://ipres.ischool.utoronto.ca/home](http://ipres.ischool.utoronto.ca/home)) at the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Information.

4. Working Meeting Participants

In order to promote discussion and the ‘working’ nature of the meeting, the number of stakeholders is being limited to around 20. Approximately 14-15 stakeholders are being invited from various segments of the Health sector as well as those from the Archives and Library communities who have extensive experience in digital preservation. Approximately 4-5 stakeholders are being invited from those areas of the University of Toronto that are aligned with the areas represented by the other stakeholders. An expert in health information will deliver a keynote paper at the beginning of the meeting that will provide an overview of digital curation concepts and issues and relate these to the challenges being faced in managing health information. This keynote presentation will set the context for the meeting. An individual experienced in managing meetings of this kind chair and facilitate the discussion through the two days.

While the chair and keynote speaker may be international, the stakeholders will be Canadian. A scribe will be assigned to record the deliberations and a report will be produced that will be made available to all participants.
5. Format of the Meeting

The meeting will be in the form of a two-day working meeting to be held October 1-2, 2012 in room 728 of the Bissell Building on the U of T campus. The agenda is as follows:

Day One

- Introductions and context setting (Dean, iSchool and Director, DCI)
- Overview of digital curation concepts and issues related to the management of health information including a framework for positioning the issues (keynote speaker)
- Presentations from stakeholders in the Health sector
- Discussion re: common issues; priority areas of concern; the framework for positioning the issues and the initial identification of potential areas of collaboration

Day Two

- Recap of the previous day; objectives for Day 2
- A series of facilitated discussions throughout the day will cover the following topics:
  - Identification of areas of potential collaboration including the nature of the collaboration (e.g. joint research projects, liaison, etc.) and, where relevant, funding strategies including potential joint initiatives to solicit or apply for funds.
  - Strategies leading to a sustainable mechanism for facilitating the establishment of joint initiatives.
  - Establishment of a network of expertise (i.e. objectives, what it would look like, how supported, by whom, etc.).
  - Identification of opportunities for knowledge transfer across the Sector (e.g. speaking at each other’s conferences, joint articles, workshops, etc.).
  - Feasibility of extending the network to embrace other sectors.
- Next steps after the meeting
- Summary of the 2 day meeting
- Closing remarks (Dean, iSchool and Director, DCI)

6. Logistics

Although travel and accommodation costs will be absorbed by the invited participants, morning coffee/tea and pastries as well as lunches on both days will be provided by the DCI. A reception for all participants will be held at the end of the first day.

For Additional Information

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