



Contextual Conversations: Representation and Digital Practice

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME



Welcome to "Contextual Conversations: Representation and Digital Practice", The Digital Commonwealth's 14th Annual (and 1st Virtual) Conference!

The Digital Commonwealth Conference Committee has brought together an extraordinary range of professionals from a wide variety of institutions, including academic libraries, schools, and community archives, who will be sharing their experience and expertise with you today. These individuals will help us to understand and explore the topics of: contextualizing collections concerning underrepresented communities; collaboration with underrepresented communities; developing inclusive discovery tools; representation in digitization; and interpretation in digital environments. These topics will be explored through panel discussions and other presentations. We are so happy that we were able to salvage the Committee's hard work over the past nine months to bring you the conference in virtual format.

We would like to extend a special thank you to the many partners of the Digital Commonwealth, including all of the libraries, cultural institutions, archives and historical societies that have shared their collections and made it possible for researchers around the globe to access their collections. We are once again extremely grateful for our continued partnership with the Boston Public Library and for their assistance with the technology platform, system developments, and digitization services. Thank you also to our conference sponsors: Backstage Library Works; the Massachusetts Library System; New England Document Systems; Preservica; and Quartex by Adam Matthew, for their kind support our virtual event.

To expand our audience, this year, the Membership Committee created a new membership category, the Friends of Digital Commonwealth membership level. The Friends' membership level allows individuals who are either not associated with an institution or associated with an institution that is ineligible to join Digital Commonwealth, to become members. The Friends' membership will provide eligible individuals with the same privileges as institutional membership, except without voting rights.

Also, Massachusetts participants, please remember, Line 9401-State Aid to Regional Libraries provides funding to the Library for the Commonwealth which funds digitization services through the Boston Public Library among other wonderful services. We encourage you to contact your state legislators and ask them to support the Massachusetts Board of Libraries Commissioners' budget.

Thank you for joining us today for our first ever virtual Digital Commonwealth Conference wherever you may be! We hope you enjoy the conference and that you and your families stay safe and well during these challenging times!

Sincerely

Danielle

Danielle Sangalang
President, Digital Commonwealth



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SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE

9:00AM – 9:05AM	<p>Welcome and Housekeeping <i>Sonia Pacheco, Conference Host & Moderator</i></p>
9:05AM – 9:15AM	<p>Welcome Remarks <i>Danielle Sangalang, President, Digital Commonwealth</i></p>
9:15AM – 10:05AM	<p>Keynote Address “Representing the Others: Preserving Evidence and Knowledge for Equity” <i>Elaine Westbrooks</i></p>
10:05AM - 11:05 AM	<p>PANEL A: Politics, Privacy, and Ethics in Digital Collection <i>Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello, Eben English, Jane Kelly, Elizabeth Watts Pope</i></p>
11:05AM – 11:30AM	<p>Building Diverse and Inclusive National Collections <i>Michael Della Bitta and Shaneé Murrain</i></p>
11:30AM - 12:30PM	<p>PANEL B: LGBTQ+ Collections in Context: The Politics of Representation <i>Stephanie Yuhl, Andrew Elder, Laura Peimer, K.J. Rawson</i></p>
12:30PM - 1:00PM	<p>Break</p>
1:00PM - 1:30PM	<p>Digital Commonwealth Repository Systems Update <i>Eben English, Boston Public Library</i></p>
1:30PM – 2:20PM	<p>History of Chinese Students at Phillips Academy <i>Hijoo Son & Paige Roberts, Phillips Academy</i></p>
2:20PM – 3:10PM	<p>Visibility for Disability Digitization Project <i>Kyle Boyd, UMass Amherst</i></p>
3:10PM – 3:55PM	<p>Beyond Orality: Digital Preservation and the African Ajami Library <i>Gabe Adugna, Eleni Castro & Rachel Dwyer, Boston University</i></p>
3:55PM – 4:00PM	<p>Closing Remarks <i>Sonia Pacheco, Conference Host and Moderator</i></p>

Website Addresses

Digital Commonwealth Membership & Programming: <https://digitalcommonwealth.wildapricot.org/>

Digital Commonwealth Massachusetts Collections Online: <https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/>



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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

9:15AM – 10:05AM

“Learning to Live with the Legal Risks of Digital Collections”

Elaine L. Westbrooks,

Vice Provost of University Libraries & University Librarian,

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill,

& Board Member, Digital Public Library of America

Cultural heritage organizations continue to digitize and manage local histories, journals, images, and other research and evidence. These same organizations are also committed to preserving the scholarly record. These processes, digitization and preservation, often perpetuate the inequities that existed in analog environments. Westbrooks will engage us in a conversation about how cultural heritage organizations might employ a lens of equity to disrupt longstanding practices.



Elaine L. Westbrooks, Vice Provost for University Libraries & University Librarian at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will be the 2020 Keynote Speaker. Ms. Westbrooks was a keynote speaker at DPLAFest 2019 and has presented her research at various conferences including the Digital Library Federation, Coalition for Networked Information, and the Association of College and Research Libraries. She is a member of the HathiTrust Board of Governors, University of North Carolina Press Board of Governors, the DPLA Board of Directors, ARL Scholars and Scholarship Committee, and the Governing Board of the Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN). She co-edited Metadata in Practice with Diane Hillmann in 2004

and Academic Library Management: Case Studies with Tammy Nickelson Dearie and Michael Meth in 2017. She has a B.A in Linguistics and a MLIS from the University of Pittsburgh.



10:05AM-11:05AM

PANEL A: Politics, Privacy, and Ethics in Digital Collections

While traditional collection development has always been fraught with questions of relevance, appropriateness, and selection bias, the awesome power of the internet has made the process even thornier for creating digital collections. This panel will attempt to address difficult questions in digitization and collection building from legal, practical, and ethical perspectives, including: How have issues such as privacy, copyright, and context been amplified in a digital context? Are our traditional library values and practices of selection and description still sufficient in the current political and social climate? Do our collection development and digitization plans reflect the needs and expectations of our communities? Are we justified in creating digital collections of materials that may never have been intended for preservation or widespread dissemination? How can the cultural heritage context of a digital collection be maintained in the face of current online behavior patterns? During the first half of the session each panelist will offer a 5 minute overview of a specific challenge they currently face and then will engage one another in a moderated discussion. The second half of the session will be devoted to Q&A with the audience.

Panelists

Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello is Chair of the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies and Coordinator of the American Studies program at Salem State University. She is a publicly-engaged interdisciplinary scholar/social-justice activist with nearly twenty years of experience linking the higher education, museum, social service, K-12, service-learning and cultural sectors in both the US and Europe. She was the Founding University Fellow for Service-Learning at Salem State. Her interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship engages the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, immigration, religion, place-making and social justice. Her 2018 monograph *Modern Bonds* links literary theory, art history and sociology/urban studies to explore how the concept of community was transformed in the early twentieth century in the U.S. She is the recipient of two Fulbright fellowships (in Luxembourg and Greece) and a Whiting Fellowship (in Cote D'Ivoire). She holds a Ph.D. in American Studies and undergraduate degrees in History and Sociology.

Eben English currently serves as Digital Repository Services Manager at the Boston Public Library, and is the main technical lead for the Digital Commonwealth repository system. Prior to this position, he worked in academic libraries at Loyola University Chicago and Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, focusing on digital collection development and library website design. He holds an MLIS from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Jane Kelly is the Records and Accessioning Archivist at Tufts' Digital Collections & Archives. Prior to that she was the Web Archiving Assistant for the #metoo Digital Media Collection at the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard. In that role, she identified material for inclusion in the collection, conducted web crawls, created descriptive metadata, and researched issues related to ethics in social media archiving. She received her MSLIS at the iSchool at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in 2018.

Elizabeth Watts Pope is curator of books and digitized collections at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Mass. Her work aims to connect people to their history by providing access to printed and digitized sources, especially focusing on under-documented groups. Elizabeth promotes, makes accessible, and builds upon the strengths of the Society's unparalleled collection of early American books and pamphlets. She works closely with digitization partners to make AAS collection material as widely available as possible. Her previous position at the Society was as the head of readers' services; prior to that she worked in acquisitions at AAS and in the archives at the Dodd Center at the University of Connecticut. She has an M.A. in History from the University of Connecticut.



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11:05AM – 11:30AM

Building Diverse and Inclusive National Collections

Michael Della Bitta and Shaneé Murrain, Digital Public Library of America

Since its inception in 2013, the aggregation of digital collections for public use to ensure the accessibility of our nation's cultural heritage has been core to the Digital Public Library of America's (DPLA's) mission. As we expand this program, we have also expanded our efforts to ensure the inclusion of community-based efforts that represent experiences that have been historically marginalized. As smaller institutions with more diverse collections haven't always had the resources to make their collections freely accessible at mass, it is incumbent upon DPLA and similar organizations to provide a pathway to participation in national collections that empowers our community partners. Late last year, DPLA embarked on a project, with funding from Pivotal Ventures, to support a collaborative digital collection focused on the roles and experiences of Black women in the women's suffrage movement and, more broadly, women's rights, voting rights and civic activism between the 1850s and 1960s. The project is in progress and will debut in the summer of 2020, in line with the anniversary of the 19th amendment. In this session, DPLA community manager Shaneé Yvette Murrain and director of technology Michael Della Bitta will discuss opportunities, challenges and learnings encountered as we help surface and preserve these stories in an increasingly digital-centric information landscape.

***Michael Della Bitta** is the DPLA director of technology. Michael has worked in software development and publications and in the startup, library, and education space for nearly 20 years. Michael most recently worked as a data and analytics developer, architect, and engineering manager at the marketing company ScribbleLive. Prior to that, Michael worked as a developer and architect on the repository and digital gallery teams at the New York Public Library, and built content management, online learning, and semantic metadata applications at Columbia University. Michael holds a B.A. in Philosophy from Bates College. Home base: Providence, Rhode Island.*

***Shaneé Yvette Murrain** is the community manager for DPLA. She identifies and develops services, partnerships, and products to support our national network. Previously, Shaneé was the university archivist and an assistant professor at the University of West Georgia. Shaneé holds a B.A. in Religion and Philosophy from Bethune-Cookman University, a Master of Divinity from Drew Theological School and a Master of Library Science from North Carolina Central University. As former Director of Library Services and Archivist at Payne Theological Seminary, she curated the Payne Theological Seminary and African Methodist Episcopal Church Digital Collection. Shaneé is also the current president of the Society of Georgia Archivists, serves on the Board of Directors of Atla (formerly known as the American Theological Library Association) and is a member of the Society of American Archivists. Home base: Atlanta, Georgia.*



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11:30AM – 12:30PM

**PANEL B: LGBTQ+ Collections in Context:
The Politics of Representation**

This panel will begin with each of the three panelists responding to a shared question: What does LGBTQ+ collection-building, outreach, and digitization look like at your institution? The panelists will share their experiences in a range of archives that include LGBTQ+ materials—a university-based special collections library focused on women’s history, a community-based non-profit documenting LGBTQ New England, and a transgender-themed digital collection. The discussion will also touch upon questions of access and accessibility, erasure versus visibility, privacy concerns and ethics, and navigating volunteer-run digitization efforts. There will be ample time for questions and discussion with the audience.

Panelists

Stephanie Yuhl is Professor of History at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts and Associate Faculty in the Critical Conservation Master in Design Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. She specializes in the social and cultural history of the twentieth-century United States, with emphases in public history, memory, gender/sexuality, and social movements. Her book-length treatment of Charleston’s cultural and touristic renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s, *A Golden Haze of Memory: The Making of Historic Charleston*, won two national awards. A practicing public historian and consultant, Yuhl has worked with museums, oral history projects, and in the Digital Humanities. She recently co-curated *LGBTQ+ Worcester For the Record* at the Worcester Historical Museum, and co-authored the accompanying catalog. At the center of this ongoing project is the building of an LGBTQ+ historical archive and a community oral history project.

Andrew Elder is Chair of the Board of Directors and a volunteer archivist at The History Project, a volunteer-driven community archives documenting LGBTQ+ history in Boston, and Interim University Archivist and Curator of Special Collections in the Healey Library at UMass Boston. He regularly facilitates discussions and speaks about participatory and community archiving, the significance and contributions of community archives, and institutional/community-based collaboration.

Laura Peimer is an archivist at the Schlesinger Library where she works with a wide range of LGBTQ+ collections. She has published and presented on the issues of description, privacy, and access in transgender-related collections. Most recently she participated on the Boston Seminar on the History of Women, Gender, and Sexuality panel, *Transgender History and Archives: An Interdisciplinary Conversation*.

K.J. Rawson is an Associate Professor of English at the College of the Holy Cross. He is also the founder and director of the [Digital Transgender Archive](#), an online database and digital repository of transgender-related historical materials. His scholarship has appeared in *Archivaria*, *Enculturation*, *Present Tense*, *QED*, *RSQ*, *TSQ*, and several edited collections.



1:00PM- 1:30PM

“Digital Commonwealth Repository Systems Update”

Eben English, Digital Repository Services Manager, Boston Public Library

This annual talk will provide a review of collections and features added to the Digital Commonwealth repository over the past year. A survey of the year’s most popular content, as well as an examination of usage statistics and traffic sources for the Digital Commonwealth collections site will be included. In addition, this talk will feature a preview of the next generation of the repository’s back-end content management system, and explore how to increase the repository’s capacity to accommodate growing community collections of newspapers, audio, and video.



Eben English currently serves as Digital Repository Services Manager at the Boston Public Library, and is the main technical lead for the Digital Commonwealth repository system. Prior to this position, he worked in a variety of academic libraries in Chicago, focusing on digital collection development and library website design. He holds an MLIS from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and has no pets (though his daughter has been bugging him to get a dog).



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1:30PM – 2:20PM

History of Chinese Students at Phillips Academy
Hijoo Son & Paige Roberts, Phillips Academy

Our presentation is twofold. First, we want to share a collection of primary source materials from the Phillips Academy Archives and Special Collections that document the history of Chinese students at Phillips Academy since 1878 to the present that we are scanning, cataloging, and designing into a website for use by educators, scholars, and general audiences alike. This collection showcases a rich and important education migration history that shaped Chinese modernity, the history of Sino-American relations, and the history of Asians in America. Some one hundred Chinese students matriculated into Phillips Academy between 1878 and 1930s at the same time that the U.S. established the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and Asian Exclusion Act of 1924. Ironically, then, the Phillips Academy Archives' large cache of materials records the history of Sino-American educational exchange during an era of hostile U.S. migration policy. With these materials, we are planning to build a robust, searchable web site that provides relational data and high-quality scans of original correspondences, images, travel diaries, student records, receipts, and other material objects. Second, we will present some findings from an interdisciplinary course using computing methods to quantify and qualify this digital corpus and the cumulative student work including data visualizations, reports, and curated poster boards for presentation purposes. Currently, we are co-teaching, alongside computer science teacher Dr. Nick Zufelt, an interdisciplinary course titled "Silences and Gaps: The History of Chinese Students at Phillips Academy" in order to explore with students why such a rich archive has largely been ignored. The "silences and gaps" of the record on Chinese students of Phillips Academy from late nineteenth to the twentieth centuries thus equally examine the process of how primary documents were produced, recorded, catalogued, and left in the annals of history. As part of the analysis of available resources in the archives, students identify, interrogate, and visualize their reasoning for such silences and gaps or evidence of power relationships in the documentary record that may impact the research process, historical memory, and community *remembrance. We believe that collections in cultural heritage institutions and archives reflect and reinforce social power structures. Thus, the power of the archive may be witness to inclusion but also include distortions, omissions, erasures, and silences. Silence, in this sense, is an important exercise of control and power. By sharing our workflow, design goals, pedagogical challenges, and student work, this co-presentation brings attention to a collection that illuminates in particular the understudied experiences of Chinese students in the U.S. and the diffusion of American values and educational models abroad.

Hijoo Son is an instructor of the History and Social Science and Interdisciplinary Studies Depts. She is also the Geographer-at-Large at Phillips Academy. She received her Ph.D. from UCLA's Dept. of Asian Languages and Cultures. She has published in Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review (2018), the Journal of Korean Studies (2012) and had done several translations in co-edited volumes. She is currently working on a textbook manuscript titled A Concise History of Korean Migration. At PA, Hijoo has taught a variety of courses including US, World, and Asian History, an art history course titled "Art and the State." As a Tang Fellow last year, she taught the course "Reading with and against the Grain: A Comparison of History Textbooks from the Pacific Rim."

Paige Roberts has been Director of Archives and Special Collections at Phillips Academy since 2012. She is responsible for all aspects of collections management including appraisal, preservation, processing, and digitization as well as reference, outreach, instruction, records management, and digital preservation. She is on twitter: @paige_roberts



2:20PM – 3:10PM

Visibility for Disability Digitization Project

Kyle Boyd, UMass Amherst

Funded by the Council on Library and Information Resources, the Visibility for Disability Digitization Project draws from 19 collections which include organizational records and the personal papers of activists. The project will provide free digital access to over 50,000 items about the experience of disability and the growth of the modern disability rights movement. This talk will discuss the challenges in selecting material and creating descriptive metadata for the project.

Kyle Boyd is the Project Coordinator for the Visibility for Disability Digitization Project at UMass Amherst Special Collections and University Archives. Prior to this project, she managed the digitization of the MacConnell Aerial Photograph Collection, processed the Clarke School for the Deaf Records, and created descriptive metadata for the Lyman Family Papers. She's a graduate of Simmons College School of Library and Information Science.

3:10PM – 3:55PM

Beyond Orality: Digital Preservation and the African Ajami Library

Gabe Adugna, Eleni Castro & Rachel Dwyer, Boston University

This talk will provide an overview of the African Ajami Library (AAL), an open access digital repository of materials written in Ajami script (modified Arabic script) from all over Islamized Africa, which is hosted in OpenBU at Boston University. AAL is a collaborative initiative between Boston University and the West African Research Center (WARC) in part funded by the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme. We will discuss use cases of collaborations from both East and West Africa, along with more general technical digitization workflows, lessons learned, and opportunities for international scholars to engage more deeply with these manuscripts.

Gabe Adugna is the Subject Liaison Librarian for African Studies at Boston University. Prior to this position, he served as Librarian for the Community College of Baltimore County, for the Ethiopian National Meteorological Services Agency, and for a number of international NGOs. He received a Diploma in Library Science from Addis Ababa University and a Master's of Library Science from University of Maryland, College Park.

Eleni Castro manages the institutional repository, OpenBU, and the Electronic Theses & Dissertations Program at Boston University Libraries. She regularly works closely with faculty, researchers and staff to design and implement digitization and born digital projects for items and collections deposited in the repository. Castro was the technical lead for the Endangered Archives Programme/Arcadia funded project, Digital Preservation of Mandinka Ajami Materials of Casamance, Senegal (EAP1042). She received her Master's of Library and Information Studies from McGill University.

Rachel Dwyer is the Assistant Head of the African Studies Library at Boston University. In addition to reference, instruction and collection development, her current focus is improved visibility of and access to African Studies special collections. She has presented on Wikipedia in the classroom and on African language learning with Wikipedia. Dwyer received her Master's of Library and Information Science Degree from Simmons College.



Digital Commonwealth is your organization....can you help?

Conference Committee

Have an idea for an interesting breakout session? Know of a great speaker? Please think about joining the Conference Committee! The Digital Commonwealth Conference Committee designs and executes the Annual Conference for Digital Commonwealth. This committee meets monthly, usually by teleconference. A professional Conference Manager is contracted to assist with the conference and manages the majority of the planning details, allowing the committee members to focus on the content. Most committee members have served for several years but new members are always welcome!

Please reach out to either of the Conference Committee co-chairs if you are interested: Sarah Moazeni and Justin Snow at jsnow2@salemstate.edu or smoazeni@wellesley.edu.

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee's goals are to:

- Recruit new member institutions
- Organizing events and workshops
- Ensure current members are engaged and are aware of the services available to them
- Build member connections to strengthen the Digital Commonwealth community.

The Membership Committee organized Digital Commonwealth's participation in Library Legislative Day at the Massachusetts State House again this year.... we'd like to make this an annual event! They have also organized four "Getting Started with Digital Commonwealth" events across the state. The first of these was attended by 30 people and was enthusiastically received! They also set up four Members Only VIP Tours of the BPL's Digitization Lab so that you can see how your materials are handled and digitized. Please see below for additional event dates this year.

If you'd like to join this committee, please contact us at: membership_committee@digitalcommonwealth.org.

Outreach and Education Committee

Get involved with your Outreach Committee! There are many ways to participate in the Outreach Committee:

- Contributing to social media communication and authoring blog posts
- Interviewing Digital Commonwealth members about their collections
- Designing publicity material

Help raise awareness for Digital Commonwealth! Please contact us at: outreach@digitalcommonwealth.org.

2020 Digital Commonwealth Events

Getting Started with Digital Commonwealth & Little Red Shop Museum Tour, Hopedale, May 15, 10am-1pm

VIP BPL Tour, Boston, June 8, 10am-2pm

VIP Behind the Scenes Tour of Peabody Essex Museum Library, Rowley, July 13, 10 am–12 pm

VIP BPL Tour, Boston, September 23, 10am-2pm

Getting Started with Digital Commonwealth, Canton Public Library, Canton, October 16, 10am-1pm

What to Digitize, Beverly Public Library, November 6, 10 am-12 pm

VIP BPL Tour, Boston, December 8, 10am-2pm



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Thank you!!

The Digital Commonwealth Conference Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in this year's conference – our members, attendees, speakers and sponsors, without whom this conference would not be possible. A special thank you to the Digital Commonwealth Board for supporting us in the transition to a virtual conference, and to Board Treasurer, Tegan Kehoe for dealing with Zoom and running the conference "back end".

Conference Committee Co-chairs:

Justin Snow
Salem State University

Sarah Moazeni
Wellesley College

Conference Manager:

Glynda Benham

***Want to be involved in
planning the 2021 DC conference?***

Email Justin Snow (jsnow2@salemstate.edu)
or Sarah Moazeni (smoazeni@wellesley.edu).

New committee members always welcome!

Committee Members:

Alison Bassett
Trustees of Reservations

Anna Bognolo
Eaglebrook School

Graham Goss
Beverly Public Library

Alan Karass
Columbus State University, Columbus, GA

Paige Neumann
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Sonia Pacheco
UMass Dartmouth

Peter Weis
Northfield Mount Hermon



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