

DL Education in the EU and in the US: Where Are We?, Where Are We Going?

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Panel Description

The EU i2010 policy framework to build the European Information Society has positioned digital libraries as a critical component for its realization. The i2010 Digital Libraries initiative sets out to make all Europe's cultural resources and scientific records – books, journals, films, maps, photographs, music, etc. – accessible to all, and preserve it for future generations. In the US, digital libraries have been indicated as a critical component in the long-term realization of the promise of cyberinfrastructure, as tools that will change how science and humanities research is organized, stored, disseminated, and curated (Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel on Cyberinfrastructure). Since the advent of digital libraries in the early nineties, a consistent focus of DL research and development, beyond Computer Science, has been the application of DLs in educational contexts. Many projects have explored how best to teach WITH digital libraries, but only more recently has research been conducted on the best way to teach ABOUT digital libraries.

Some LIS schools have focused on specialized education programs, providing advanced certificates in "digital librarianship" beyond the first professional degree. Others have focused on integrating education for digital librarianship into the general LIS professional degree education program. A few have pursued programs of education that are independent of the first professional LIS education degree. North America and Europe present patterns of education that represent all three approaches. Due to different disciplinary and cultural influences, DL education programs have developed along different paths, and as a result the focus of DL education is on different approaches to DL development and different applications and implementations of DLs in practice.

DL education in the US has traditionally (in the Web age, 15 years are enough to make a tradition) emphasized two aspects of DL development: collection development (digitization and metadata) and information architecture (applications and network infrastructure). In short, DL education practices in the US have been heavily influenced by both traditional library education and elements of computer science. DL education in the EU has evolved from a different tradition. On one side we have the extension of LIS curricula towards digitization issues, formats, digital access and delivery. On another side it has been growing out of what could be called humanities computing and museum informatics.

The main purpose of this panel is to debate the strengths and the weaknesses of those different approaches, and to identify commonalities and complementarities, which could guide further development of DL education. It is understood that there is a variety of approaches to DL education, and certainly the panelists will not be able to represent all of them. Participation from the audience will be encouraged and solicited in order to get a picture of the current situation as wide as possible (not necessarily restricted to US and EU), and in order to find the greatest common denominator that could be the base for a "common" shared view of DL education.