

# Statewide & Regional Stepping Stones To The National Digital Platform

A New Collaborative Michigan Initiative

## June 16<sup>th</sup> Governance Workshop White Paper Draft for Community Feedback

### Summary of Stepping Stones Pre-Conference Workshop - 2019 Michigan Archival Association Annual Meeting

Sunday, June 16th - 12pm-4pm

Mission Point, Mackinac Island

Instructors: Matt Schultz (Grand Valley State University); Alexis Braun Marks (Eastern Michigan University)

Attendees: Grand Valley State University, Eastern Michigan University, Central Michigan University, Wayne State University (graduate student), Henry Ford Museum

### Background

On Sunday June 16<sup>th</sup>, several members of the Michigan archival community met to continue the conversation that took place during the [Spring Symposium](#) held at GVSU. The purpose of this pre-conference was to bring interested individuals together to discuss ideas surrounding professional communities, governance models and a possible mission and vision statement for the Stepping Stones project.

The afternoon was structured to include the following:

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12:30pm-1:15pm

**Group Exercise 1: Joining a Digital Preservation Network...What Do I Want/Need to Know?**

*Pre-Workshop Reading:* [Project Symposium White Paper](#)

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1:15pm-2:00pm

**Group Exercise 2: Exploring Governance Models on a Spectrum—  
Formal vs. Informal**

*Pre-Workshop Reading:* [Governance Model Example Case Studies](#)

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2:00pm-2:15pm

**Break**

2:15pm-3:00pm

Group Exercise 3: Membership Terms & Committees—How to Incentivize & Sustain Efforts?

3:00pm-3:45pm

Group Exercise 4: Drafting Policies & By-Laws—Exploring Implications

3:45pm-4:00pm

Wrap-Up and Q&A

A brief review of the Symposium was presented by IMLS grant PI Matt Schultz. From there attendees were led through a gallery walk exercise by Alexis Braun Marks where they were directed to respond to a series of prompts. These prompts had individuals think about what brings them into or pushes them out of communities, what they like and dislike about collaborative work, and what keeps them engaged or causes them to disengage in collaborative work. After working independently to fill in these prompts, respondents were asked to talk through possible solutions to issues that arose. The following is a summary of this first exercise:

Prompt	Responses	Discussed Solutions
What motivates you to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Sharing what I know</li><li>● Finding others with the same interests and problems</li><li>● Learning/Sharing</li><li>● Encouragement from others</li><li>● Information sharing</li><li>● Mom guilt</li><li>● Relationship building</li></ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of community</li> <li>• Making friends</li> <li>• Professional development</li> <li>• Work ask/assignment</li> <li>• “Do the Right Thing” ethical stewardship</li> </ul>	
What do you dislike about collaboration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking to people</li> <li>• Laggards (to clarify, those who say they will but don't)</li> <li>• Takes more time</li> <li>• Working to other's schedules</li> <li>• Note taking</li> <li>• Misunderstandings</li> <li>• Different goals</li> <li>• Justification for collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater communication</li> </ul>
What do you like about collaboration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking to people</li> <li>• Information sharing</li> <li>• Sharing load of larger projects</li> <li>• Unexpected ideas/being surprised</li> <li>• Sharing the load</li> <li>• Getting help and expertise</li> <li>• Learning from diverse experiences</li> </ul>	
What keeps you invested?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback</li> <li>• Continue to receive useful information</li> <li>• Cost savings</li> <li>• Stays useful</li> <li>• Regular meetings/conversations (keep the ball rolling)</li> <li>• Consistency in large goals/ideas</li> <li>• Thank yous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to come and go as needed</li> <li>• Institutional cache'</li> <li>• Open communication channels</li> <li>• Regularity of communication</li> </ul>
What would cause you to disengage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nobody else participating</li> <li>• Priorities change/divergence</li> <li>• Lack of Progress</li> <li>• Lack of transparency and communication</li> <li>• Lack of meaningful output/info</li> <li>• Unbalanced asks of time (to clarify, having the same people asked over and over)</li> <li>• Power imbalances (to clarify, conversations dominated by individuals and/or institutions that drown out others)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct asks</li> <li>• Encouragement of talent</li> <li>• Cultivation of talent</li> </ul>

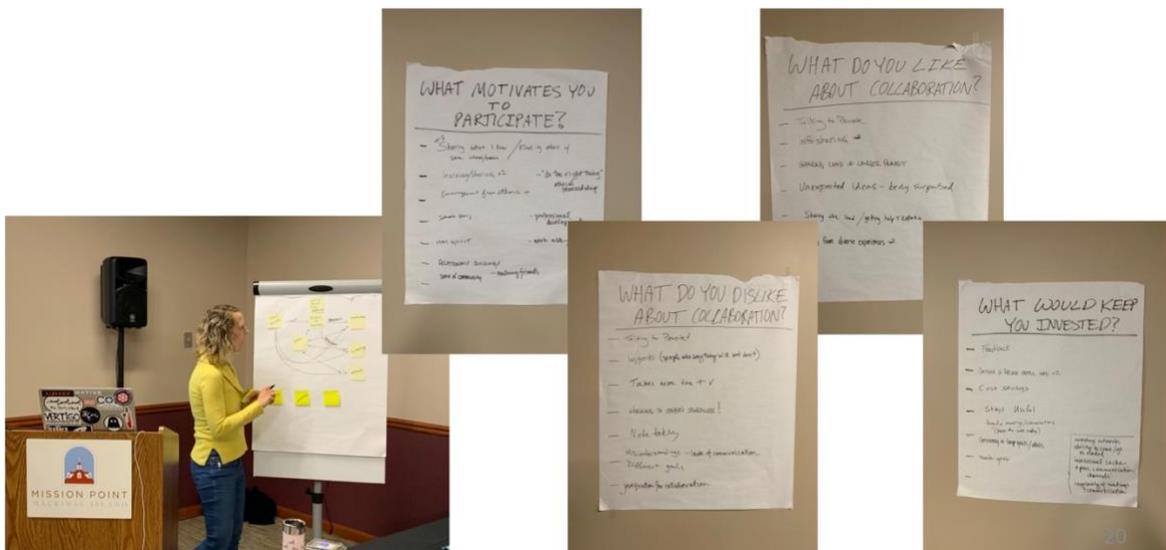
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After completing this first exercise, Schultz went on to engage the group in a conversation and discussion about different governance models of other digital preservation networks around the country. Participants were asked to start by pre-reading a document that looks at formal and informal governance structures: [Governance Model Example Case Studies](#)

After a quick break, the conversation from the governance models continued through a group exercise led by Alexis Braun Marks where participants were divided into two groups, with no more than one representative from an organization in the group. Each group was given a series of supplies (note cards, post-it notes, and pipe cleaners) and a different scenario. Group one was tasked with creating a digital preservation network and group two was tasked with creating an advocacy and training network.



Groups were given 7 minutes to identify stakeholders, and necessary committees. After the 7 minutes were up, groups reported out their stakeholders and committees. From there groups were given 5 minutes to determine relationships and channels of communication and accountability.

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Once those had been drafted, a scenario was presented to both groups: Your community is beginning to lose members to a new commercial vendor that is promising a cheaper contract for provided services. How can you work with your existing committee structure to address membership retention? What new committees/structures might you need to create?

Groups were allowed to review their community and modify it based on the aforementioned scenario leading to the following:

Group one	Style of Governance	Changes made after scenario and questions that arose
	Hierarchical	<p>Led to the creation of a working group to address the declining membership pulling from the Membership and Outreach Committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Questioned what was being offered</li> <li>● Questioned the purpose of the Outreach committee and how to improve engagement</li> <li>● Questioned levels of entry</li> <li>● Questioned Different membership levels</li> <li>● Question of public access vs. preservation</li> </ul>
Group two	Style of Governance	Changes made after scenario and questions that arose
	Egalitarian	<p>Addition of Communications committee to create greater transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Questioned how many representatives from each institution would be allowed in the planning group</li> <li>● Questioned the need for a technology committee</li> <li>● Added additional stakeholders many of which are themselves committees of stakeholders (e.g. COLD, SHRAB)</li> </ul>

Each community was reviewed visually by all attendees with questions being asked, possible solutions being offered, and likely changes that needed to be made. All of this was done and informed by the actual stakeholders in Michigan.

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At the end of the allotted time for the exercise a decision was made by all participants to continue the conversation around governance and community building rather than moving on to an exercise to draft a mission and vision. This additional discussion led the small group of pre-conference participants to focus on articulating next steps.

This included creating a planning group with smaller working groups that can focus on issues related to:

- Technology
- Policies--both for institutions (digital preservation plans) as well as the community (by-laws, PII considerations, storage of data vs. data repositories)
- Advocacy--messaging, identifying possible partners, and grant applications
- Training--onboarding kits for new talent recruits
- Communication.