

Data curator: who is s/he? a survey of international and interdisciplinary perspectives

The role of data curator has become an important position, stimulated by the emerging need of curate data produced by scholars, governments, institutions. Is this the role of data scientists? cultural heritage professionals? computer scientists? or is it a completely new role? A preliminary discussion about the data curator role occurred during the Satellite of LTR in Turin on 14 August 2014. The final Round Table stimulated the discussion about the role of data curator (<http://satelliteturin2014.wordpress.com/programme-2/>)

The project contributes to the IFLA KI Digital content and Outreach. It also contributes describing how libraries can afford the threads of IFLA TRENDS REPORT, looking at the importance of persisting libraries and cultural heritage institutions value for access to data and information. It also matches the Lyon Declaration about the importance of libraries for the UN post 2015 development goal, in particular the report from the Expert Committee on Data revolution (2014).

Project Team

Anna Maria Tammaro <annamaria.tammaro@unipr.it>
Terry Weech <weech@illinois.edu>,
Patricia Montiel-Overall <overall@email.arizona.edu>,
Krystina K. Matusiak" <krystyna.matusiak@du.edu>,
Heidi Kristin Olsen <Heidi-Kristin.Olsen@hioa.no> ,
Vittore Casarosa ISTI CNR (<http://www.isti.cnr.it>) will contribute in kind to the project, allowing to contribute to the development and formal representation of the ontology.

Aims and objectives

The project aims to collect perceptions and definitions about the role and competencies of the data curator at an international and interdisciplinary level. Different approaches to cultural heritage convergence issues and the transferability of traditional professional competencies will be stressed.

The project objectives include:

- a glossary with the definition of data curator role and competencies;
- an ontology where we use a formal representation of concepts.

Methodology

The project methodology includes a literature and documentary review about the role of data curators, followed by a structured interview to data curators themselves and the people who hire data curators about their definitions and perceptions of Data curator role. The interviews should ask interviewees for their definition and perceptions about data curators and their role.

The sample could be drawn from multiple countries to ensure an international coverage. This approach would allow us to compare and contrast the theoretical concepts drawn for content analysis (concepts articulated in the literature) and practitioners' understanding of the role of data curators.

Depending on the availability of resources, the methodology will include also the development a questionnaire to be sent to selected US and European LIS institutions delivering courses related to

data curation, in order to collect “first hand” views on this topic.

Duration and preliminary working schedule

The Project is one year project.

It includes the following milestones:

- literature and documentary review;
- structured interviews and transcriptions of interviews with data curators and others;
- development of a questionnaire and distribution to selected LIS institutions;
- analysis of the different inputs;
- definition of an ontology (terms, properties, relationships);
- formal description of the ontology in RDF/SKOS.

Submitted July 28th, 2015