voices of the cohort band

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• Introduction: the Software Preservation Network
• Introduction: Fostering a Community of Practice

Fostering a Community of Practice (FCoP)

Fostering a Community of Practice: Software Preservation and Emulation Experts in Libraries and Archives

Cohort of six different types of organization and six different software preservation use cases.

- Guggenheim Museum
- Living Computers Museum + Labs
- University of Arizona
- Georgia Tech
- University of Illinois
- University of Virginia
UIUC Library FCOP Project: Emulating Born-Digital Music Composition and Production Environments

Outcomes:

Workflows for Software Preservation

Digital Content Format Registry implementation

Acquisition Guidelines

EaaSI for collections appraisal and processing
UVA Library FCOP Project: Emulation in the Archives
UVA FCoP Project Outcomes:

- Deed of Gift
- Software questionnaire and updated donor checklist
- Archival Description Strategies for Emulated Software
- Emulation in the Archives Symposium

Georgia Tech FCoP Project: Software Preservation Stories

Goals:
- Create a proof-of-concept for retroTECH’s online presence—a virtual retroTECH Lab
- Provide online access to historical software for learning and research (particularly software created at Georgia Tech)
- Document and share the human stories surrounding the creation and use of software (via oral histories and video memories)
Georgia Tech FCoP Project: Software Preservation Stories

Stories:
- Game Boy Advance games created by computer science undergraduates
- Simulation coded for 1996 Atlanta Olympics bid
- Ribbit game created for Apple II by former Chair of the School of Computer Science
- VantagePoint text analytics software
- Architectural software used by early adopter architect / professor
Presenting A Cohesive Story from Multiple Sources

ArchivesSpace
Metadata

Emulation as a Service Sandbox
Software Emulation

MediaSpace
Oral Histories and Videos

DSpace
Images
“...a cohort of six software preservationists...”

-- FCoP Proposal

“…foster the relationships between cohort members so that the community of practice continues to grow beyond the project end date.”

-- FCoP Proposal

Cohort as band
Cohort Bands at the Software Preservation Music Fest

FCoP Cohort Stage

ARL Best Practices in Fair Use for Software Preservation Stage

Guidance

Emulation-as-a-Service Infrastructure (EaaSI) Cohort Stage

EaaS sandbox

Knowledge

SPN lawn

SPN governance groups

SPN working groups

Educopia crew

SPN community forums

Refreshments (tasty software bytes mmm)

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Cohort as bound

FCoP Project Music

**Unison:**
- 2018: in-person kickoff
- 2018-2020: monthly cohort calls, bimonthly pair calls, biweekly tech office hours
- 2019: UVA Workshop, SAA
- 2020: IDCC, code4lib, in-person reflection meeting

**Solos:**
- Project deliverables
- Intraorganizational team communication
- Music use case
- Artwork use case
- Reflection blog posts

**Harmonies:**
- EaaSI sandbox use
- Site visits by FCoP Researcher
- Architecture use cases
- Vintage computing use cases
- Gaming use cases
- User testing exploration
- Academic libraries
- Museums

**Dissonance:**
- Confusion when dependent on other project roadmaps
- Losing cohort members
- MS Outlook not updating meeting invites

Cohort as boundaries
## Working in a cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build local momentum for software preservation work within our organizations</td>
<td>Local momentum-building activities compete for time with community momentum-building activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create community momentum for software preservation work through presentations, workshops, blogs</td>
<td>Time invested in community momentum takes time away from building local momentum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore a greater diversity of use cases together than we can alone and bridge cultural heritage silos (archives/museums/libraries)</td>
<td>Differences among our goals and silos can mean we encounter dissonance, move more slowly, or sacrifice local requirements for needs of group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share resources: knowledge, questions, measurement</td>
<td>Additional meetings and assignments create expensive overhead in terms of time and effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurture relationships, trust, community vision</td>
<td>Cohorts are exclusionary and can reinforce status quo inequities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support each other through local organizational change</td>
<td>Precarity and change in project teams doesn’t just disrupt local progress; they also disrupt cohort work and relationship-building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make formal commitment to project goals and community-building</td>
<td>Risk inherent in making formal commitment that depends on other cohorts’ timelines and uncontrollable external variables</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

How can we build better cohorts?

- Explicitly define the **purpose and goal(s)** of the cohort.
- Be transparent about how the **boundaries** of the cohort are drawn and why. Let the purpose of the cohort guide those boundaries.
- Articulate the **costs and benefits** to organizations and individuals of working in the cohort. Budget for dissonance. Build in buffers and backup plans. Emphasize ongoing reflection and forgiveness.
- **Honor** the cohort’s boundaries and limitations. Monitor for disruptions across the interdependent cohort landscape.
- Be **awake** to the power dynamics at play and the extent to which groups created with equity in mind can actually reinforce the status quo.

Where is our cohort headed?

- Collaborating on FCoP project outcomes:
  - A story of change in capacity over time
  - Tools and templates for immediate use by individual practitioners and cultural heritage organizations
  - A forward-looking action agenda highlighting areas where the field needs to focus additional attention

- Incorporating FCoP project outcomes into our ongoing local work

- The Grammys?

Kudos:

- Institute of Museum and Library Services
- The Noun Project:
  - concert by pongsakorn
  - stage light by pongsakorn
  - music festival by Darshana Girkar
  - grass by Saeful Muslim
  - Food by Made by Made
  - notes by Riccardo
  - loud music by Llisole
- “Unbreakable,” Anti-Flag
Thank you!

Wendy Hagenmaier, Amanda Pellerin, Maura Gerke, Tracy Popp, Elizabeth Wilkinson, Lauren Work

code4Lib
Pittsburgh, PA
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