
Is user-centered design in conflict with cataloging ethics?

Hanna Bertoldi, Mikala Narlock, Griesinger Peggy

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Is user-centered design in conflict with cataloging ethics?

Good afternoon all and thank you for joining us for this Birds of a Feather session “Is user-centered design in conflict with cataloging ethics?” Today’s session will focus heavily on discussion -- we want this to be an active session where we can all ask questions, provide our own thoughts, and grow.

If you’d like to introduce yourself, please use the chat to enter your name and the land acknowledgement for your area, but please know you are not obligated to.
[<https://native-land.ca>]

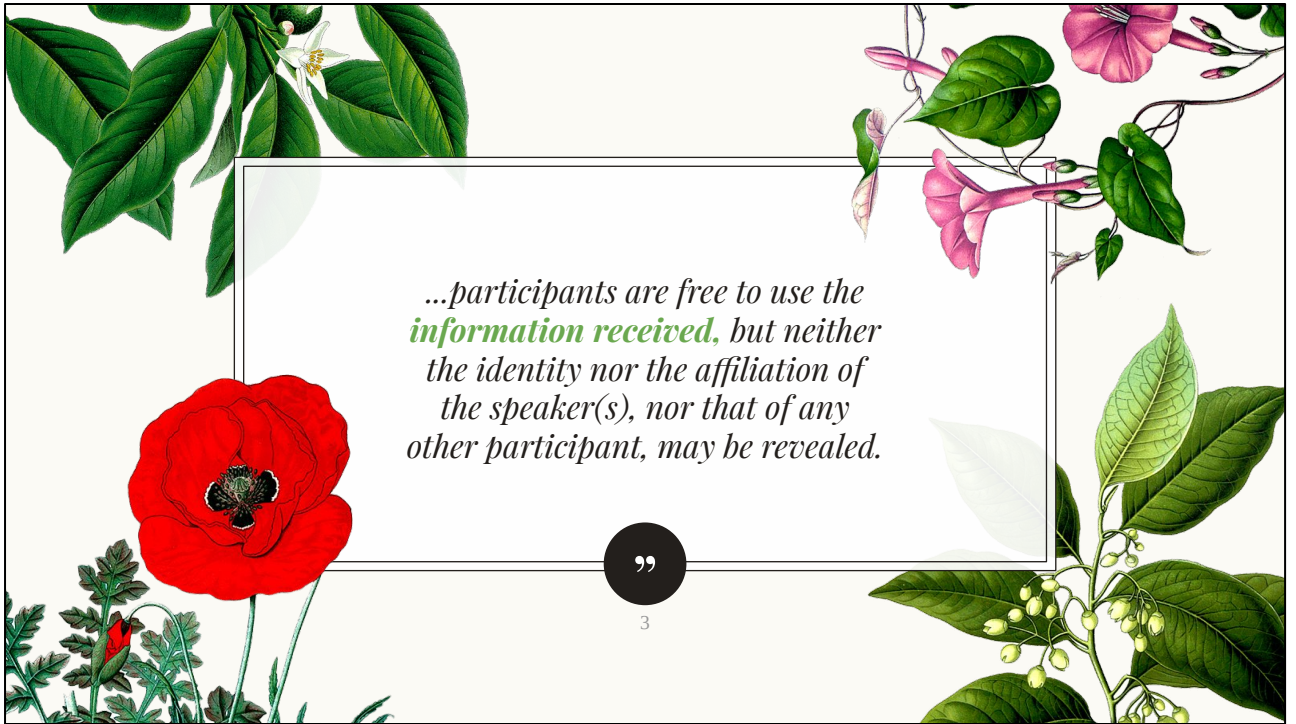


Here's the rough agenda for our time together. To begin, I am going to cover some logistics, then provide a little bit of local context (and what prompted this session!). At that point, I will provide a little background on just some of the ethical questions and considerations that come with linked data. All told, this will take 5-10 minutes.

After, we will divide into breakout sessions.

During the breakout session, we will have time for collaborative discussion and notetaking. We'll have 30 minutes here.

We'll conclude with an exit discussion.



*...participants are free to use the
information received, but neither
the identity nor the affiliation of
the speaker(s), nor that of any
other participant, may be revealed.*

”

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Before we begin, we want to reiterate that this session is not being recorded OR live-streamed, so as to allow us the most freedom and flexibility to discuss our experiences and thoughts. Paloma gave us an excellent introduction to the code of conduct, which we will be abiding by.

However, we are also asking everyone to operate by Chatham House rules. In essence, participants are welcome to use the lessons learned in this discussion, but you are discouraged from revealing the identity of the speaker(s) or their affiliations. This can also be summarized as “Take the lesson, but leave the details,”



Ground Rules

**Use “I”
statements**

**Acknowledge
the difference
between intent
and impact**

**No one knows
everything;
together we
know a lot**

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We have some requested ground rules to increase openness of discussion and create a safe space.

- Use I statements-- speak from your lived experiences
- Acknowledge the difference between intent and impact -- in our group, we will attend to the impact of our words and actions.
- No one knows everything, but together we know a lot. -- especially in your breakout sessions, we encourage you to look to the members in your group to see what we can learn from each other.
 - On a personal note, this is the ground rule I am most excited about



Facilitators



Hanna Bertoldi

*Data Entry,
Research, and
Integrity Lead;
Bowdoin College*

Peggy Griesinger

*Head of Metadata
Initiatives,
University of Notre
Dame*

Mikala Narlock

*Digital Collections
Strategy Librarian,
University of Notre
Dame*



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I know we were introduced already, but just in case you missed it, we are your facilitators who will be running the breakout rooms.

In full disclosure, this session was inspired by a recently accepted chapter proposal we submitted to a volume entitled “*Ethics and Linked Data*”

We are also joined by two LD4 facilitators, Paloma and Christine. Given the size of this group we will have 3 break out rooms. Paloma and Christine will remain in the main room -- if you experience any issues or are disconnected, you can return to the main zoom link and you will be sent back to your break out room



So let's start with what prompted us to begin this investigation and asking these big questions.



Marble

- 3-year grant
 - Unified discovery of digital collections
 - Art museum, rare books, university archives
- Extensive user testing, both internal and external

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At the university of notre dame, where Peggy and I currently work and Hanna recently worked, we were part of a three year grant to create a unified discovery platform for digital collections. Drawing content from the campus art museum and the university library, which included rare books and university archives. It is important to note that the developed system harvests metadata directly from source systems. Our team maps source metadata to unified fields and does some work with linked data to expand searches (which Hanna and Peggy can talk about in more detail if you're interested!)

In the development of this product, especially for the user interface, there was extensive user testing. While this includes what you might expect from campus users-- students, faculty, and staff-- it is worth noting that this system was also tested with internal stakeholders, namely library and museum faculty and staff, who we anticipate will leverage this system in their daily tasks.

While some of the feedback was about design, we received a lot of comments about the metadata on the site. While the users might not have called it that, because we harvest metadata, there were some jargony terms that really threw our users -- for example, two-dimensional non projected medium as an item format-- which we renamed.



But the other thing we found, almost universally, was that users really wanted MORE information. They wanted more robust descriptions, they wanted a pretty extensive cataloging of items, especially in archival records, and, most importantly for today's conversation



Users wanted personal information

Race and ethnicity

What art can I use to celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month on social media?

Can I browse all digitized African American literature?

Gender and sexuality

I want to view all works--art and literature--from LGBTQ+ creators.

How many works do you have by women artists?

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They also wanted more personal information about creators and about depictions OF certain identity groups.

These were the kinds of questions we received-- now, I've only highlighted race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, but other identity affiliations could be religious belief, national origin, or able-bodiedness.

As you've probably noticed, and as was brought up in the Smithsonian's presentation earlier in the conference, is that these questions are all about 'otherness,' specifically otherness from the perspective a heteronormative white phallocentric worldview (<https://ld42021.sched.com/event/joA8/how-do-we-do-this-glams-modeling-out-data-from-the-artists-files-to-the-zs-zebra-genomes-kai-ri-zhongguo-ren-zulu-kingdom-in-the-smithsonian-institution>)

But these are questions we received, and continue to receive, constantly.

POLL-- If you are comfortable, in that chat: Tell us which types of users might request information about contemporary creators at your institution? Staff, students, faculty, researchers, content experts, etc?



Let's talk just a little bit about some of the ethical concerns and questions that come with the requests for personal information.



Is user-centered design in **conflict** with cataloging ethics?

User-centered design

a process for managing digital projects that focuses on the users and their needs

Catalogers' judgement

defined by Jennifer M. Martin (2021) as "the considered application of professional experience to cataloging decisions"

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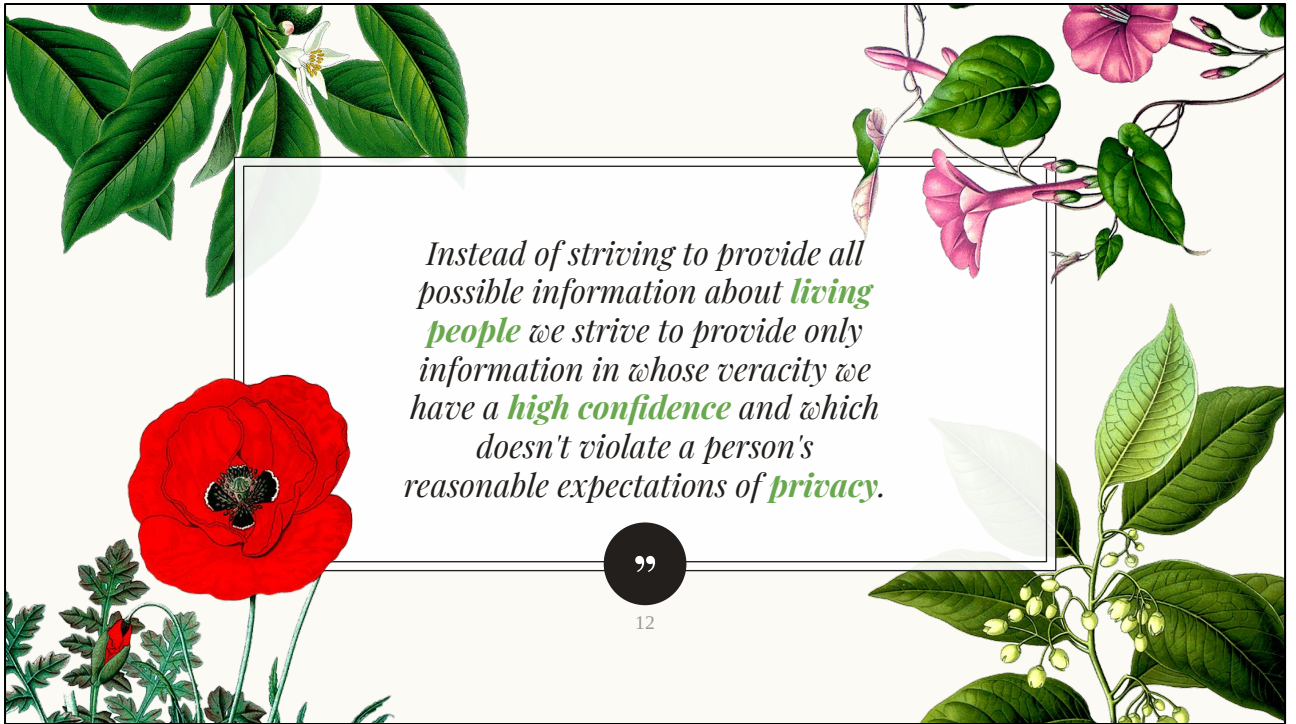
For those who are not familiar, User centered design is a concept taken from software engineering practice and applied to cultural institutions, and in some cases, still considered a radical approach. This often looks something like user stories, personas, and other features that really prioritize the end users' needs. This is also a type of design that really encourages building with your community, not just for them.

POLL: If you are comfortable and know the answer, tell us in the chat: Does your institution embrace a user-centered design approach to digital projects?

We are going to pair that with Cataloger's judgement, which is defined as the considered application of professional experience to cataloging decisions.

These are foundational practices for our respective specialities! BUT. Both of these practices are based on the experience of the professional (and the user), which means implicit biases can very easily come through during these decidedly non-neutral acts.

There are certainly times when a cataloger's judgement and a user-centered design might be in alignment (for better or worse, we can debate :)). But, when they are in conflict, what do you prioritize? User-centered design and addressing their needs/wants for personal information? Or cataloger's judgement?



*Instead of striving to provide all possible information about **living people** we strive to provide only information in whose veracity we have a **high confidence** and which doesn't violate a person's reasonable expectations of **privacy**.*

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Another concept we want to introduce is the ethical responsibility to protect the privacy of living authors and artists. This quote from Wikidata:Living people explains the sentiment shared among (radical) library and museum catalogers have towards the identities of living authors and artists.



Now we're going to divide into breakout rooms (30 mins). Your facilitator will walk you through some discussion questions. Please remember the ground rules and code of conduct.



When we return from the breakout sessions, groups will be invited to report back on their discussion, and, if possible, answer this question:

Exit discussion--feel free unmute and use chat !



Session Resources

Notes and resource list: <https://bit.ly/LD4-users-ethics>

Marble project documentation: <https://osf.io/cusmx/>

Ethics Slack channel:
<https://2021ld4conference.slack.com/archives/C026STD9278>



Contact information

Hanna Bertoldi: h.bertoldi@bowdoin.edu

Peggy Griesinger: mgriesi2@nd.edu

Mikala Narlock: mnarlock@nd.edu