

Spring 2022

NEWSLETTER

SIGAH – DIGITAL



**Special Interest Group for Arts and Humanities (SIGAH)
Association for Information Science & Technology (ASIS&T)**



Message from the CHAIR

Greetings and happy spring to all SIG-AH members and to the broader ASIS&T community!

Well, we have pretty much made it through another semester, for those of us tied to academic calendars. So much has changed since the spring of 2020, and these changes continue to affect all sectors of our society. Many of us moved our work online rather quickly, and this trend seems to have stuck around for now. We at SIG-AH hope that you are all surviving and thriving through recent stressors and changes.

For me, it has been a very difficult year. My beloved father was diagnosed with cancer, went through six months of treatment, then passed away in March. This impacted my leadership of the SIG and fewer events were planned than usual because of it. I am very grateful to the other SIG-AH officers, Jeremy McLaughlin, Arjun Sabharwal, and Muhammad Tariq, for their support during this time and their efforts to keep things moving along in a positive direction. Despite these challenges, we had a wonderful spring symposium, which you can read more about in this newsletter.

One thing that we as a SIG have beefed up this past year is our newsletter. We went from a rather sporadic schedule to a more regular, four seasons schedule under the efforts of our newsletter editor, Dr. Muhammad Tariq. You will notice some differences in the design and columns as well with the addition of new sections. We have a section called "Meet the SIG-AH Member" wherein we highlight someone from the SIG. You may have seen us post calls for participation in this section. We are also adding another section called News & Views where SIG-AH members can share current research or projects, challenges, successes, events, and ideas relating to the arts and humanities in LIS. Are you going to present at the annual meeting? We'd love to hear about it and this section would be the perfect place for that kind of news as well.

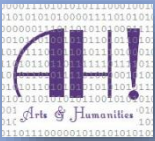
While these new sections are wonderful additions to the newsletter, we are admittedly having a hard time finding folks to willingly step forward and contribute to them. Our calls on iConnect and on social media have not garnered much, if any, response. We as SIG officers are not sure why, but this lack of participation and visibility for our SIG remains one of our greatest challenges. So far, we have had to reach out directly to individuals for content for the Meet the SIG-AH Member section.

We want you to know that this is not like submitting something to a conference or journal! This is a very informal column where you can talk about yourself, your education or work experiences, your participation in other arts and humanities-related work, your family, your hobbies, your pets – anything you would like the membership to know about you! It is a great way to gain visibility for your accomplishments, as well as a fun way for all of us to get to know each other better. Please consider sending in your bio the next time you see us call for submissions to the newsletter. We would really love to hear from you.

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As always, we are open to hearing your suggestions for increasing participation, for webinars or sponsored talks, or for other newsletter content or events that would benefit the SIG. We are planning to create our own small survey of the SIG-AH membership to see what it is you would like more of, as well as your ideas for new programming. Please do not be shy and send us your thoughts. Our SIG is one of the smaller ones within ASIS&T, but our following is loyal. We hope for more varied events, awards, and speakers to come and value your input. We are also looking for ideas to update our logo and to increase partnerships with other related SIGs.

If you missed our co-sponsored event with SIG-VIS last fall on anti-racist street art, or our recent spring symposium on singular object collections, please visit the archive of ASIS&T webinars to view the recorded presentations (<https://www.asist.org/meetings-events/webinars/>). And on that note, I wish you all a happy spring, a happy end of semester for those of you in education, and the best wishes for a peaceful and enjoyable summer!

Ann Graf
SIG-AH Chair



SIGAH Officers 2022

Chair

Ann Graf

Simmons University, Boston

Chair-elect

Jeremy McLaughlin

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Webmaster

Arjun Sabharwal

The University of Toledo

Newsletter Editor

Muhammad Tariq

COMSATS University, Lahore, Pakistan

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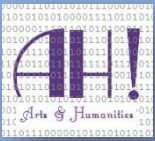
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Best practices of leadership and innovation in the institutes of Arts and Humanities

By Arjun Sabharwal

Understanding best practices of leadership and innovation in the arts and humanities should begin with understanding and welcoming the uniqueness of the institutes in these disciplines, as each organization presents a unique set of capabilities, histories, challenges, and experiences—all of these contributing to organizational identity—as a basis for understanding. While there may be benchmarks, standards, and outcomes for comparison across institutional and geographical boundaries, the unique characteristics of institutions may well yield highly disparate data with diverse contexts within which such data may have been generated. While goals may be aspirational and comparable among peer institutions, there may be little meaning in efforts to quantify everything. No two arts and humanities departments are the same just as their faculty and student populations represent diversity (ethnicity, race, religion, language, gender/sexual orientation, age, and profession—just to name a few). Understanding leadership and innovation, therefore, would also follow along similar lines of diversity because they evolve along very different curves. Adding information science and digital humanities to this extends the complexity of issues related to understanding leadership and best practices.

Information science at the very least represents diverse populations of information professionals (such as archivists and librarians) some of whom are also faculty in the various areas taught at their institutions, faculty pursuing various transdisciplinary ideas, and students from different socio-economic backgrounds. There is also a growing community of community archivists and citizen scholars formally or self-trained in the various areas of information science. Thus, imposing ideas of leadership and best practices may be challenging without imposing elitist expectations based on privileged positions taken on the field. The same is true for technologies adopted in privileged communities compared to those with no internet connection or limited accessibility. A well-endowed institution may, therefore, hardly be in a position to dictate best practices to those in disenfranchised and marginalized (mainly inner-city and rural) areas, but this is where outreach can succeed as long as funds and politics will allow. In most cases, there are limits to altruism: where there are funds there are politics.

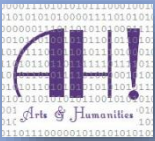
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Let's be realistic: those with resources hold the aces (and leadership). And I haven't even addressed the status of arts and humanities in politically repressed areas where freedoms of thought, expression, and speech are suppressed by totalitarian governments and ideologically anchored societies imposing harsh penalties on freedoms. How does discourse on leadership and best practices evolve in those areas where artists and thinkers can lose their lives for exercising forbidden freedoms?

Setting aside the political and social justice issues: there is one issue that all in the areas of the arts and humanities (including the digital humanities) may agree: access to professionally archived preserved primary sources. As paper, film, analog, and digital media all fade away, time is ticking, threatening humanities with the loss of data, information, memory, and access to play back analog media. Best practices in preservation would then require listening to those who have experience in remediating, preserving, and archiving old material for posterity, and where there is a shared understanding of these needs, partnerships involving sheared models of leadership can evolve across hitherto self-defined socio-economic boundaries. Again, no two regions are alike in this respect—one will succeed, the other will fail, and some may best stick with their status quo.

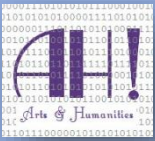
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The 2022 SIG-AH Annual Symposium

Documenting, Describing, Differentiating: Stories of Singular Object Collections

By Ann Graf

Our annual spring symposium was held this year on April 21 with the theme of singular object collections. While we may be familiar with some of the ways we give access to information across different formats, our goal with this year's symposium was to highlight ways in which one collection may differ in significant ways from another. An interesting way to do this was to focus on objects and the particular needs of certain types of objects. To this end, we invited three people who manage individual collections, from the personal to the professional, and we asked them to share some background about their collections, how they might organize and display them, and in general some of the salient features that became nodes of difference among them.

Lucas Petzold has a number of collections, but his main passion is for Buddha figures. He introduced us to a bit of the history of the Buddha, and the various styles of Buddha figures from different parts of the world. His collection focuses mainly on those from India, China, and Thailand. He shared many examples and described what the various postures of the Buddha, the dress, and accessories mean within their respective cultures. The styles, colors, countries of origin, materials, and even stories of acquisition become angles for description.

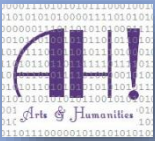


Recently retired professor of information science at Simmons, Michele Cloonan has been collecting cameos since she was in high school. Her collection now numbers in the hundreds and features modern, antique, and even ancient cameos. Again, we were treated to some background on cameos themselves, as well as on some of the theories that inform information science in general, and that can apply to the organization and description of various types of textual and object information. Cameos are often found created as or turned into jewelry, and, like Buddhas, display different features that are more common to certain time periods or locations. Modern cameos can cross boundaries and feature unusual materials and subjects besides the familiar woman's head in profile.

Moving through a range from amateur to professional, we ended with a presentation by Debbie Behan Garrett, the founder and director of the Virtual Black Doll Museum (<https://virtualblackdollmuseum.com/>). The museum "curates antique, vintage, modern, and one-of-a-kind Black dolls through photographs, detailed descriptions, links to additional references, and videos" (<https://virtualblackdollmuseum.com/about-2/>). She has numerous organizational categories for the dolls, including Antique Dolls, Vintage Dolls, Modern Dolls, and One-of-a-kind Dolls. Debbie shared her inspiration for starting the museum, citing a lack of black dolls when she was a child. Debbie is black, but she and her friends grew up with white dolls. When she became a mother, and then a grandmother, she realized the need to document and preserve the history of black dolls for future generations. Her collection is featured in the museum, alongside dolls owned by others. She carefully catalogs each doll, noting the name given to the doll by the manufacturer, the creator, maker, or designer of the doll, the year the doll was made and what it is made from, any marks on the doll that help to identify it, the height, clothing, and general description of the doll, and any other salient details about the doll's historical background, provenance, or presentation. Please visit her online museum to learn more about the collection and see hundreds of examples of black dolls.

If you were unable to attend in real time, please visit the archive of ASIS&T webinars to view the recorded presentations (<https://www.asist.org/meetings-events/webinars/>).





Meet the SIGAH Member

Jeremy L. McLaughlin

Jeremy is the Chair-Elect of SIG AH and is excited to be working with the SIG and its members once again in the coming year. He just finished his second year as a PhD student in the Center for the History of Print and Digital Culture in the iSchool at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Jeremy studies epistemological and material concerns in the print and visual cultures of the history of science and technology in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century North America. In addition to the development of quantitative methods in book history and aspects of the intersection of book history and digital humanities, he continues to do research related to scholarly communications and historical bibliometrics.

After his own experiences on the speech team at Longwood University, Jeremy is a volunteer coach with the University of Wisconsin Speech and Debate society and is currently the PhD student representative on the iSchool PhD Committee. He enjoys teaching and working with graduate and undergraduate students on issues relating to academic success and professional development

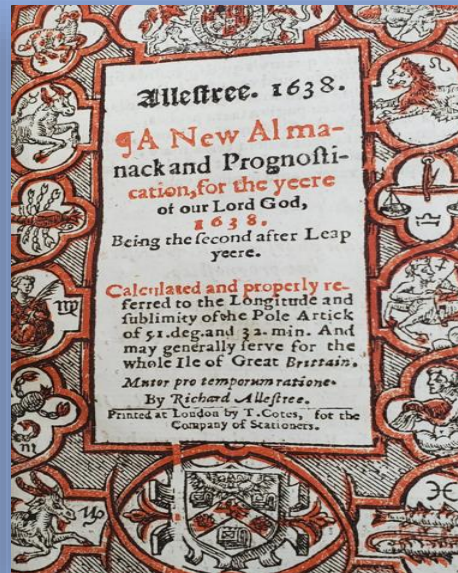
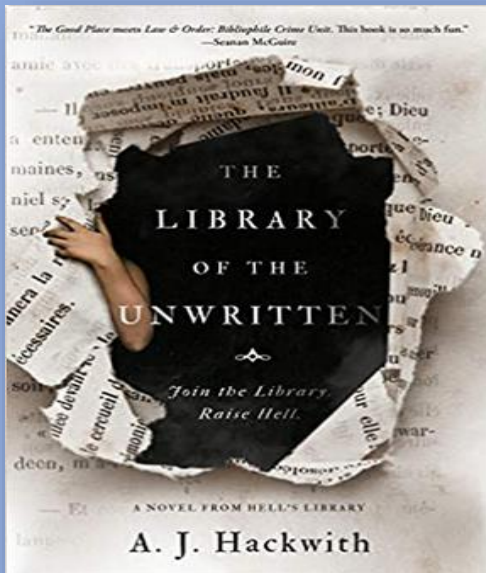
While pursuing his MLIS, Jeremy was very active in ASIS&T as a New Leader, Chair of two Special Interest Groups and a Student Chapter, and in Association leadership development. He was Chair of SIG-AH from 2014-16 and helped to develop the Symposium for Information and Technology in the Arts & Humanities in 2015 (the presentation videos for the first 2 years of this event [are on YouTube](#) and the slides for the first 3 years are [available on figshare](#)).

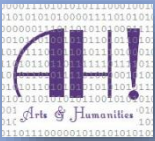


Prior to returning to academia, Jeremy had a career working in sales and support for library technology and content vendors. This included working with major bibliographic management tools, historical primary resources, research management and author profiling systems, EDT, and library collection management and content discovery platforms.

Jeremy loves to travel and visit museums, art galleries, and cultural institutions in the United States and abroad whenever possible. Before the pandemic, his last extensive vacation was in October 2019 when he spent 10 days in Greece touring archaeological sites around the country and enjoying the museums in Athens. His second favorite destination (because Greece quickly became the first) is either Amsterdam or Edinburgh in Scotland.

Jeremy lives in Madison, WI where he is still slowly adapting to Midwest winters and a lack of any major season between Winter and Summer. In addition to avoiding most forms of social media, he enjoys hiking, the Marvel Cinematic Universe, and reading fantasy novels as an escape from the stresses of being a Doctoral student.





SIGAH Views & News

- **Participate as Co-Chair in an International Conference**

Dr. Muhammad Tariq was nominated as a Co-Chair for ASIS&T 24-Hour Global Conference, which was held on April 26-27, 2022.

This is the first ever conference of its type, organizing by Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T), USA. Renowned speakers and panelists from around the globe have participated and shared their thoughts with the audience. The conference had invited talks, long and short papers and panel discussions on different topics.

Dr. Tariq also honored to lead the Asia/Pacific Region, consisting of 61 countries of the world. It was very good opportunity to learn, share and network with the professional of the world. The conference details can be accessed through the below link:

<https://www.asist.org/meetings-events/24-hour-global-conference/>



Call for Participation

for next SIGAH Issue – Summer 2022

You can send your proposals for the following columns:

- ✓ Opinion Papers
- ✓ Your success stories
- ✓ Meet the SIGAH Members
- ✓ SIGAH News & Views
- ✓ Anything you want to publish in SIGAH Newsletter

For **Feedback**, please send your emails to:

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