Policy and Ethics in Digital Curation
INST 641 - College of Information Studies
University of Maryland, Fall 2019 (Aug 26-Dec 9th)
Instructor: Trevor Owens
trevor.johnowens@gmail.com

Catalog Description: Discussion of strategies to address intellectual property, privacy, security and other policy concerns raised by the curation of digital records and data.

Course Overview: Digital curation policy and ethics issues are now often front page news. As digital platforms become more and more central to our lives issues around what data is collected, how it is managed and secured, who can and can’t access it, and how it is used become increasingly critical. In this context, data managers, archivists, librarians, and others involved in data curation need to have a firm grasp of ethical, policy, and legal issues in digital curation. Bridging law, social science, computer science, library and information science, archival theory, and professional practice, this course provides an overview of policy and ethics issues in digital curation. The course also provides an opportunity to refine and develop skills for articulating thoughtful and nuanced contributions to research and analysis in these areas. In particular, the course focuses on copyright and intellectual property, privacy and surveillance, security and trust, accessibility, and labor and sustainability. In each of these areas, the course provides an opportunity to reflect and refine our understanding of the connections between the espoused professional values of librarianship and archival practice and ethical issues anchored in, neoliberalism, colonialism, and patriarchy.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of this course students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate a broad understanding of major information policy issues in the curation of digital records and data.
2. Describe why intellectual property, privacy, security, and access requirements exist, including how expectations and policies differ between cultures and contexts.
3. Evaluate policy opportunities and risks for curating digital records and data in professional and institutional settings.
4. Propose policy and technical approaches to digital curation challenges in areas such as intellectual property, privacy, security, and access.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of the technical and human resource dimensions of implementing and enforcing policy requirements for digital curation.

Course Requirements:
1. Fully participate in weekly online discussions
2. Complete required readings at the level of thorough preparation to discuss and critique readings each week
3. Complete all assignments on time
Disability Assistance: From the University's Disability and Accessibility Policy (http://ter.ps/c1o ) The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. The University of Maryland is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination. The University of Maryland provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals. Reasonable accommodations shall be made in a timely manner and on an individualized and flexible basis.

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the university’s Disability Support Service to help us determine appropriate accommodations. I will treat all information you provide me as confidential.

Academic Integrity: Unless otherwise specified in an assignment, all submitted work must be your own, original work. Any excerpts from the work of others must be clearly identified as a quotation, and a proper citation provided. Any violation of the university’s policy on Academic Integrity (http://ter.ps/c1p) will result in penalties, which might range from failing an assignment, to failing a course, to being expelled from the program, at the discretion of the instructor and the iSchool administration.

Assignments and Grading: The course is built around three areas of work described in the overview of assignments. Course grades are assigned based on the timeliness, completeness and quality of work in each of these areas according to the percentages described in the overview of assignments section below

Course Readings: Please read the required readings before the date for which they are listed. Getting the most out of readings is an important skill for understanding and responding to policy issues. Whether reading theoretical perspectives, persuasive arguments, or implementation studies, “close reading” is a valuable technique to learn for information policy and graduate school. Terri Senft has put together a wonderful primer on close reading, available here: http://tsenft.livejournal.com/413651.html All the readings, except Information Privacy Fundamentals for Librarians and Information Professionals are openly avaliable online. You can get access to the book from UMD libraries https://umaryland.on.worldcat.org/oclc/893652917

Syllabus Acknowledgements: This syllabus builds on previous versions of the course taught by Katie Shilton and Adam Kreisberg and also draws significantly from courses designed by Dorthea Salo on privacy, ethics, and surveillance. This syllabus is avaliable CC-BY 4.0 license: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode
Overview of Assignments

Assignments for the course are built around two primary functions. Everyone participating in the course will work to co-lead and participate in ongoing discussion of course readings through online discussions. Everyone will also have the opportunity to develop an analytical essay on an issue in digital curation policy and ethics and work with classmates to develop and refine that essay.

Co-leading Two Weeks of Online Course Discussions (25%)
Every student participating in the course will sign up to co-lead/facilitate discussion on two of the weeks in the course. We will sign up for who is leading discussions in the first week of the course. For the week you facilitate discussion you will need to author a 800-1200 word discussion post synthesizing key issues from the weeks readings. End your post with one to three questions that you think the readings raise that can serve as the basis of a substantive discussion In advance of the week, reach out to your co-lead/co-facilitators for the week to clarify which of you will focus on what aspect of the week’s readings. You need to have your post up by Monday at 8:00 PM ET. Once your post is up, you need to check it (and the other posts from your co-facilitators) on a daily basis to engage with and respond to ongoing discussions that develop.

A good discussion opening post will
1. Focus on a key theme that crosscuts several of the readings
2. Evaluate and consider arguments and evidence used to back up those arguments in the readings
3. Include direct quotes to the readings and analyze/interpret/evaluate those quotes
4. End by identifying 3-5 key questions raised by the readings for the class to discuss in the discussion thread.

Participating in Online Discussions (35%)
The online course discussion space is where we participate in the class. You should plan on reviewing the discussion board once or twice a week and engaging in substantive discussion there. You will need to make at least one substantive engagement with a post in the discussion threads each week. Engaging substantively with the discussion means:

1) Responding to issues/questions raised in the discussion post or thread
2) Drawing on and directly quoting/referencing the course readings or related additional reading or research you have engaged in
3) Advancing the discussion by opening up further questions for group discussion

In general, this kind of substantive engagement in discussion takes 150-300 words to pull off.
Analytical Policy Essay on an Ethical/Policy issue in Digital Curation (40%)
Each student in the course will propose, develop, and refine an analytical essay exploring the interplay of library/archives values at play relating to a specific issue area in digital curation policy.

To do this, you will need to select 2-3 values from either the SAA or ALA values lists and a specific digital curation issue. Your essay should ultimately be between 6,000-9,000 words, and it should engage with and respond to both readings from the course and additional relevant readings that you identify through a literature review.

Your goal for this project should be to produce a paper that, when fully developed, could be published in an academic journal like; IJDC, LRTS, or ILWP. A core part of library work is peer review, so for each phase of this project you are also going to read and provide comments to your fellow classmates on each of their research project deliverables.

1. Analytical Policy Essay Proposals (Due 9/23) - Give a pitch for your paper. What specific area of digital curation are you going to focus on and what 2 or 3 ALA or SAA values are you going to explore the tension between in that context. The essay needs an argument/thesis, and you also need to identify the areas of literature or scholarship you will engage with. This should be 500-1000 words. Post it to the discussion thread titled “Analytical Policy Essay Proposals.”
   a. Along with posting your own proposal, you need to read and review at least two other students proposed papers and provide comments on them in the following week.

2. Annotated Bibliography 10/21 - In support of the development of your paper you will produce an annotated bibliography. Identify 20-30 different relevant journal articles or books and organize them into 3 or 4 key areas related to the subject you intend to write your essay on. For each work, write a 3-5 sentences about it’s key points as they are relevant to the topic or issue you are working on. Post it to the discussion thread titled “Annotated Bibliographies”
   a. Along with posting your annotated bibliography, you need to read and review at least two other students annotated bibliographies and provide comments on them.

3. Full Paper Outline 11/11 - Develop a full outline of your paper. Consider many of the papers we have read for the course as good models for how to structure your paper. Post your paper outline to the discussion thread titled “Paper outlines”
   a. Along with posting your full paper outline, you need to read and review at least two other students outlines and provide comments on them.

4. Full Paper (Due 12/2) Submit your full finished paper. It should have a title, an abstract, be 6,000 to 9,000 words and include references in either Chicago style or APA. Email your finished paper to trevor.johnowens@gmail.com
Weekly Course Schedule

The course is organized around four broad areas; a foundational understanding of policy and ethics in digital curation, intellectual property, privacy and surveillance, Accessibility and Universal Design, and Digital Work, Labor and the Environment. Below is a guide to the weekly topics in each area.

1 Foundations for Ethics and Policy
   - 8/26: Getting started & class introductions
     ○ Assignment: by 8/28 sign up for weeks to co-lead discussion
   - 9/2: Exploring Policy and Ethics in Digital Curation
   - 9/9: Applying Ethical Thinking in Digital Curation
   - 9/16: Levels and Layers in the Conceptualizing Digital Policy

2 Intellectual Property
   - 9/23: Understanding Copyright
     ○ Assignment Due: Paper Proposal
   - 9/30: Intellectual Property Strategies for Libraries and Archives
   - 10/7: Working to Decolonize Intellectual Property

3 Privacy and Surveillance
   - 10/14: Privacy Fundamentals
   - 10/2: Developments in Privacy and Security
     ○ Assignment Due: annotated bibliography:
   - 10/28: Modes of Surveillance

4 Accessibility
   - 11/4: Accessibility & Universal Design
   - 11/11 Ability, Disability and Empathy
     ○ Assignment Due full paper outline
   - 11/18: Power and Control in Metadata, Search & Discovery

5 Work, Labor and the Environment
   - 11/25: Click workers, emotional labor, and precarity in information professions
   - 12/2: Digital Curation, eWaste and Climate Change
     ○ Assignment Due: Full paper
Course Topics and Issue Areas

The topics and readings for each area of the course are articulated below.

1 Foundations for Ethics and Policy

Exploring Policy and Ethics in Digital Curation

We start things off by exploring a set of broadly related sets of issues and questions on the ethical and policy basis of digital curation work. As you work through the readings this week, think about how they situate the work of librarians, archivists and other forms of digital curation work in context of different ethical and policy questions. Central initial concepts for us involve the ethics of care, discussion of the function of maintenance and repair, the role of policy in system design, questions about the possibilities of professional neutrality and questions about how digital collections connect with our identities and at the most base level, key questions about the ethical standing and perspective of institutions of memory.

1. Information Maintenance as a Practice of Care an Invitation to Reflect and Share (2019). https://zenodo.org/record/3251131#.XQ_369NKjUI
4. Privacy, Security, and Digital Inequality How Technology Experiences and Resources Vary by Socioeconomic Status, Race, and Ethnicity https://datasociety.net/output/privacy-security-and-digital-inequality/ (Focus on the summary of findings on pages 1-13)

Applying Ethical Thinking in Digital Curation

We all have tacit concepts of what ethics is. As part of delving deeply into questions about policy and ethics in digital curation, it is critical that we develop a sophisticated understanding of different ways of approaching and thinking about ethics and technology. This week we will focus on exploring multiple approaches to framing ethics in information work. Along with that, we will
 delve into the professional ethics and values espoused by librarians and archivists and explore some of the history of the development of the role of privacy as one of those values.


Levels and Layers in the Conceptualizing Digital Policy
Policy exists and is enacted at multiple levels. This week is about coming to understand the distinction between these levels of policy and to understand how policy is enacted, managed, and sustained. We will explore some aspects of federal law and regulation, of how policy work around technology happens in the White House, and is enacted in federal agencies. Along with that, we will look at some specific areas of more local policy; digital preservation file format policies, policy driven system design, and digital collection development policy from the Library of Congress. Across all of this, consider Star’s “Ethnography of Infrastructure” as a tool for mapping across these different policy systems, which in Star’s approach serve as a form of social infrastructure.
2 Intellectual Property

Understanding Copyright
Copyright is an essential part of the world’s intellectual property system. The objective of this week is to come to understand some of the background on what copyright is and how it works and what it’s relationship is to work to manage and provide access to digital information. Along with reading some foundational work on copyright, we will read summaries of a series of legal cases on copyright and libraries published by the Association of Research Libraries.

1. Owning the Past (chapter in Digital History) [http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/copyright/](http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/copyright/) (note you need to use the tabs in the sidebar to navigate)
3. U.S. Copyright Office: Circular
   a. 1: Copyright Basics. [http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ01.pdf](http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ01.pdf)

ARL summaries of recent copyright lawsuits
3. Authors Guild v Google, Inc: https://web.archive.org/web/20170805124227/http://www.arl.org/focus-areas/court-cases/2469-authors-guild-v-google-inc

Intellectual Property Strategies for Libraries and Archives
This week we focus on some of the intellectual property strategies that libraries are engaging in to ensure their support for the rights of creators and support the use of collections by their users. This includes exploration of the role of fair use, the development of rights statements, the development of creative commons licensing, and discussion of libraries work to support the open data imperative for federal research.


**Working to Decolonize Intellectual Property**

The global intellectual property system was developed alongside colonialism. As a result, key aspects of the ownership of knowledge are at odds with many of the frameworks of indigenous peoples and have functioned as part of systems of oppression. This week is focused on exploring challenges and emerging methods and approaches for decolonializing work involving intellectual property. These explorations illustrate tensions between access to information and indigenous knowledge. They also explore issues around consent that exist beyond simply the rights that cofer from ownership of materials.


2. Digitization, Access and Context - Not All Information Wants to be Free: The Case Study of On Our Backs http://eprints.rclis.org/32463/

3. 'Chuck a Copyright on It': Dilemmas of Digital Return and the Possibilities for Traditional Knowledge Licenses and Labels https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/mar/article/view/2169


5. The new discovery doctrine: Some thoughts on property rights and traditional knowledge https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1184&context=cl_pubs

3 Privacy and Surveillance

Privacy fundamentals
Information and data privacy are increasingly important parts of our lives and are increasingly the subject of legal and technical policy regimes. This week we devote to reading Information Privacy Fundamentals for Librarians and Information Professionals. The book provides an excellent overview of the varied and interrelated areas of privacy law and policy that are critical for digital curation policy.

1. Information Privacy Fundamentals for Librarians and Information Professionals (an eBook copy is available via UMD libraries
   https://umaryland.on.worldcat.org/oclc/893652917

Developments in Privacy and Security
Privacy and security issues relating to private information are critical parts of digital curation work. This week we explore how social media data presents new kinds of privacy and ethics questions. We also explore some of the challenges that exist around how and where personally identifiable information is created and managed. Along with this we read a bit about how data privacy functions in the web via security certificates.

1. Ethics of Social Media Research: Common Concerns and Practical Considerations
   https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3942703/
2. Ethical Considerations for Archiving Social Media Content Generated by Contemporary Social Movements: Challenges, Opportunities, and Recommendations
3. What do security certificates actually do?"
   https://duck.co/blog/post/227/what-do-security-certificates-do
4. Myths and fallacies of personally identifiable information
5. “Unmasked: what 10million passwords reveal about the people who choose them.”
   https://wpengine.com/unmasked/

Modes of Surveillance
Increasingly, digital tools and systems are leveraged to track and survival users. Some of this is done with the intention of benevolence, but most of these forms of tracking are at odds with ethical values for privacy and social responsibility. This week we explore a range of related issues to surveillance in both technologies of the web and technologies like bodycams.

1. Fitzpatrick. Always Watching The linked history of privacy and surveillance in America.
   https://www.thenation.com/article/in-americas-panopticon/
2. Regan and Jesse. “Ethical challenges of edtech, big data and personalized learning: twenty-first century student sorting and tracking”

   https://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2015/10/the_doxing_trend.html


6. Morse, Jack. “Why the iPhone X’s Facial Recognition Could Be a Privacy Disaster.”

   https://doi.org/10.1045/may2017-becker

4 Accessibility

Accessibility & Universal Design
Enabling equitable access to users with different abilities is not only important ethically it is also a legal requirement. This week we explore some of the key components of section 508 compliance and more broadly discuss the ethical imperative to work toward universal design of digital curation systems and infrastructure.

1. Web Accessibility, Libraries, and the Law
   https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/ital/article/view/3043


4. An empirical investigation into the difficulties experienced by visually impaired Internet users

Ability, Disability and Empathy
Continuing with last week’s discussions of accessibility, this week we explore connections between universal design in the humanities, discussion of empathy in human centered design, and some explorations of ways to support the blind and visually impaired in the use of information and library and museum systems.

   http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/44
4. Using Coyote To Describe The World
   https://mw18.mwconf.org/paper/using-coyote-to-describe-the-world/

Power and Control in Metadata, Search & Discovery
All aspects of digital library systems are connected to issues of power and control and that relates directly to their usability and accessibility. This week we explore feminist perspectives on search, critiques of the way that commercial search represent black women and girls, issues that emerge in assumptions about character encoding and non-english languages, as well as issues about the way that colonialism and patriarchy intervene around issues of naming and categories of gender.

   http://ivc.lib.rochester.edu/google-search-hyper-visibility-as-a-means-of-rendering-black-women-and-girls-invisible/
3. Care, code and digital libraries: embracing critical practice in digital library communities
5 Work, Labor, and the Environment

Click workers, emotional labor, and precarity in information professions
Digital infrastructure presents a range of ethical and policy issues for the nature of digital work. This week we explore interactions and issues related to “click work” and the harsh realities of new forms of digital information labor like content moderation. From the library and archives context, it is also important to situate changes in labor resulting from precarity which are tied up in longstanding issues relating to the visibility of information work and assumptions around vocational awe for library and archives professions.

1. Click workers - Employment and Regulation for Clickworkers

2. Commercial content moderation: digital laborers’ dirty work
   https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1012&context=commpub

3. Precarity as a political concept, or, Fordism as exception

4. Vocational Awe

5. Intersubjectivity and Ghostly Library Labor

   https://escholarship.org/uc/item/734342sr

7. Digital Refuse: Canadian Garbage, Commercial Content Moderation and the Global Circulation of Social Media’s Waste
   http://wi.mobilities.ca/digitalrefuse/

**Digital Curation, eWaste and Climate Change**

Information management and digital curation have environmental impacts. This week we explore discussions about how green digital content work is, issues facing archives and climate change, and broader questions about sustainability in the face of global anthropogenic climate change.


https://doi.org/10.1080/15487733.2015.11908146.


5. Toward Environmentally Sustainable Digital Preservation  
https://americanarchivist.org/doi/10.17723/0360-9081-82.1.165