

Musetech: An Ideal Syllabus

In August 2017, we opened a survey to the museum and cultural heritage technology field with the single question below. We received just over 50 responses and from those, culled the answers into the broad topics below. These are accompanied by a few, but not all, of the direct quotes from the responses that we felt suggested the topic.

What key digital skills and literacies should form a common vocabulary among our staffs at all levels—including collections specialists, content producers and developers, and leadership—in order to drive digital transformation in our institutions?

At MCN 2017 in Pittsburgh we will hold a session (Friday, Nov 10, 8:45–9:45am) to further discuss and refine the syllabus, focusing discussion on the three questions below. We welcome further comments here in the doc, or feel free to contact us by email ([Greg Albers](#) & [Kathryn Cody](#)).

To Discuss:

- What are the three most important things that you wish your colleagues knew about this topic?
- How did *you* learn about this topic?
- Where would you point people to learn more about this topic?

Top Topics from Survey:

Critical Thinking in the Face of Relentless Change

- “Listening, researching, distilling, discarding”
- “what’s possible and what isn’t (and for what budgets) with today’s technologies”
- “An ability to keep up with technological change - not necessarily always doing something new
- “a clear recognition of the conceptual impact of a technological world”

Communicating to Our Audiences

- “knowing the appropriate balance of information and visual aesthetics”
- “narrating on the web”
- “An understanding of how to communicate to different audiences”
- “capacity to match media form (digitally driven) with messages”

Communicating to Each Other

- “persuasive writing and speaking”
- “Technical writing. It doesn’t matter if you can *do* the work if nobody can understand what it is that you’re doing!”

- “Ability to communicate clearly about the significance and other attributes of digital matters with colleagues and other people unfamiliar with digital matters.”

Creating, Manipulating and Managing Digital Images

- “An ability / willingness to capture content on a variety of devices (i.e., mobile or camera). Having the ability to capture content can lead to developing other skills”
- “This one's basic: an understanding of some of the fundamentals of digital imaging. How resolution works, how to crop an image, JPG vs. TIF, RGB vs. CMYK. Almost everyone in a museum, whether you're directly involved in digital initiatives or not, touches images at some point.”
- “Imaging formats and technologies”

Copyright, Licensing and Open Source

- “Copyright law! So many museum staff fail to understand even the most basic aspects of this and it impacts everyone at the museum.”
- “knowledge about open source strategies and how to maintain open source licensed software”
- “Copyright fundamentals, copyright management”

Databases

- “a brief training on database structure can go a long way in helping non-technical users understand new technologies.”
- “Basic database concepts, such as consistency and no special characters.”
- “Relational databases.”

Data Management

- “Appreciation for the value of having maximally clean data/content “
- “data protection and privacy”
- “data analysis and insights”
- “metadata standards”
- “metadata exchange - import, export, APIs”

Digital Fundamentals, or Everyday Tech

- “Basic computer skills - including a good understanding of packages such as Microsoft Office (or similar) - as well as things like basic shortcuts i.e. ctrl + C, to increase efficiency”
- “Support for using everyday technological tools”
- “File Naming and file types”

Digital Advocacy, or Everyone Tech

- “advocacy to staff and audiences”
- “ Having staff who champion digital skills is important.”

- “De-technologize and de-compartmentalize 'technology work' within GLAMs”
- “Include digital in all your work - don't separate it out!”

Outcome- and User-focused Development

- “To address problems from a requirements basis rather than a solution basis.”
- “Transformation happens by changing outcomes, not products. Start with what you want the outcomes to be and try to work backwards.”
- “defining audience/creating personas”
- “Design Thinking, of course! :)”

Agile Methodology and Project Management

- “Agile methodology - including agile management practices”
- “an agile workflow for certain projects--embracing the process of creating small projects with clearly stated goals, testing them, getting feedback, adapting to feedback through an iterative process.”
- “Project management -- we don't have to be the experts, but we need to be able to manage experts.”
- “If you are going to use a methodology like Agile everyone really needs to understand what it is, how it work and *why*”

UX

- “UX”
- “usability (see Steve Krug's work)”
- “specialized UX designers--digital experience curators”
- “UX basics”

Web

- “web publishing basics”
- “basic knowledge of current web technologies”
- “HTML ”
- “web design”