Boston University Libraries/OpenBU: Digital Archival and Preservation Internship

Overview

BU Libraries house more than 2.4 million physical volumes, over 45,000 current unique serials, and 77,000 media titles. We provide research tools and services that include library tutorials, library instruction from research basics to graduate-level classes, reference services in all our major libraries, access to digital resources, specialist consultations, and librarian-created guides with curated resources.

OpenBU, is our institutional repository, containing documents and publications authored or co-authored by BU faculty, students, and staff, and also research and teaching materials gathered by our community in the course of research.

OpenBU is an open access repository, which means that the full text of most works deposited in it is freely accessible to the world via the web at <http://open.bu.edu/>.

Potential Responsibilities and Opportunities

As an intern, you will be helping us digitize and deposit materials into OpenBU. Potential tasks performed in the course of the internship include:

- Helping make decisions as to priorities for digital collection development at BU
  - sitting in on meetings of the Digital Initiatives and Open Access division, if possible and appropriate
  - researching BU-affiliated web publications in danger of obsolescence/disappearance
  - conducting interviews with faculty
- Scanning paper-based materials on library scanners
  - ensuring adherence to best practices for archival digital image creation
- Creating detailed, formalized descriptions (metadata) for digital materials prior to their deposit into OpenBU
  - helping make decisions regarding what information is important to capture
  - working with the OpenBU metadata librarian to ensure consistency
- Organizing materials into OpenBU collections
  - making them as useful as possible to the users likely to be interested in these materials
- Automating any of the above descriptive work
  - students with intermediate to advanced technical skills, or the ability to learn them on the job, may have the opportunity to practice the use of regular expressions in creating item descriptions

Skills Gained

At the end of the semester-long internship, you can expect to have a stronger understanding of the following:

- Best practices for long-term archival and storage of digital materials (including the evolution of file formats)
- Issues around capturing descriptive data about digital objects, its influence on the discoverability of those digital objects, and the potential for its reuse in other contexts
- How search engines work
- Who the audiences for web-based archives are, how they expect to be able to interact with archive websites, and what they might want to do with the materials within
- Technologies, both hardware and software, employed in the course of digital library work
- Issues around organizing information for known and unknown audiences

**Professional Relevance**

Skills learned and practiced in this internship are applicable far beyond the library world. You will come away with a better understanding of the unique time we live in, in which so much of our cultural and intellectual heritage is being saved for future generations in a completely new medium. You will gain a new appreciation for the importance of backing up your computer, at home and at work. You will deepen your understanding of why not all file formats are created equal, and what you should do to ensure you can still open your notebooks in 25 years. And, of course, you will get a glimpse of what large-scale information management involves these days.

**Schedule**

Hours to be scheduled within the Monday through Friday, 9am to 4pm, time frame.