

Coalition Trees: the Roots, Trunk and Canopy of Commonality and Difference

As the representatives from the three sectors— archives, libraries and museums—sought to work together, it was important to recognize and appreciate the considerable diversity these organizations brought to the table, as well as their common purpose and intentions.

Using a large visual diagram of a tree, groups of representatives from each sector charted the values and principles that drive their institutions (roots), the needs and problems that each community of practice seeks to address (trunk), and the outcomes of their work (canopy).

A group discussion of commonalities and differences across sectors quickly led to the identification of a continuum of attributes that are **universal** (true for all); **shared** (true for some groups but not all, either two of the three sectors, or sub-sectors among the three); or **unique** (true or of distinct importance for only one sector).

	Universal	Shared	Unique
Products, processes, outcomes (“Canopy”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong learning, user engagement • Inclusion, access, infrastructure • Community partners, partnerships • Exhibits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families (museums, public libraries) • Gathering place (libraries, museums) • Environment for creativity and innovation, exploration (museums, archives (though not funded for this function), public and academic libraries) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards (archives) • Role as tourism engines (museums) • Workforce development at the community level (libraries)
Needs and problems addressed (“Trunk”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology • Glut of information or collections making it difficult for users to navigate • Lack of funding and other resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital forensics (archives and special library collections) 	
Driving values and principles (“Roots”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to information • Inclusive • Building communities, societies, civil society • Learning, education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chain of custody (archives, museums, academic libraries) • User defined meaning (archives, libraries) • Long-term preservation of unique assets (archives, museums) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story telling (museums)

Commentary on the exercise

ROOTS

For archives and museums, preservation and curation are foundational, the driving principle of the work. Preservation also occurs in libraries but not necessarily at the root. To clarify, not all museums do preservation, but even non-collecting museums support the importance of others doing it.

Museums are about story telling; archives lets material speak for itself.

In archives and museums, the chain of custody is a fundamental principle in collections management. Public libraries do not need to think about this; however, it is increasingly important in academic libraries as they build digital collections.

TRUNK

Technology is assumed for all sectors.

Archives is focused on digital forensics, or understanding the provenance in the creation of digital materials and information at the hard drive/hardware level. Museums are focused on digital art, determining the code or digital technology that created the art. These are examples of technology being both an opportunity and a challenge.

Resource (funding) issues are universal.

CANOPY

There are opportunities to interweave products and outcomes more tightly across sectors.

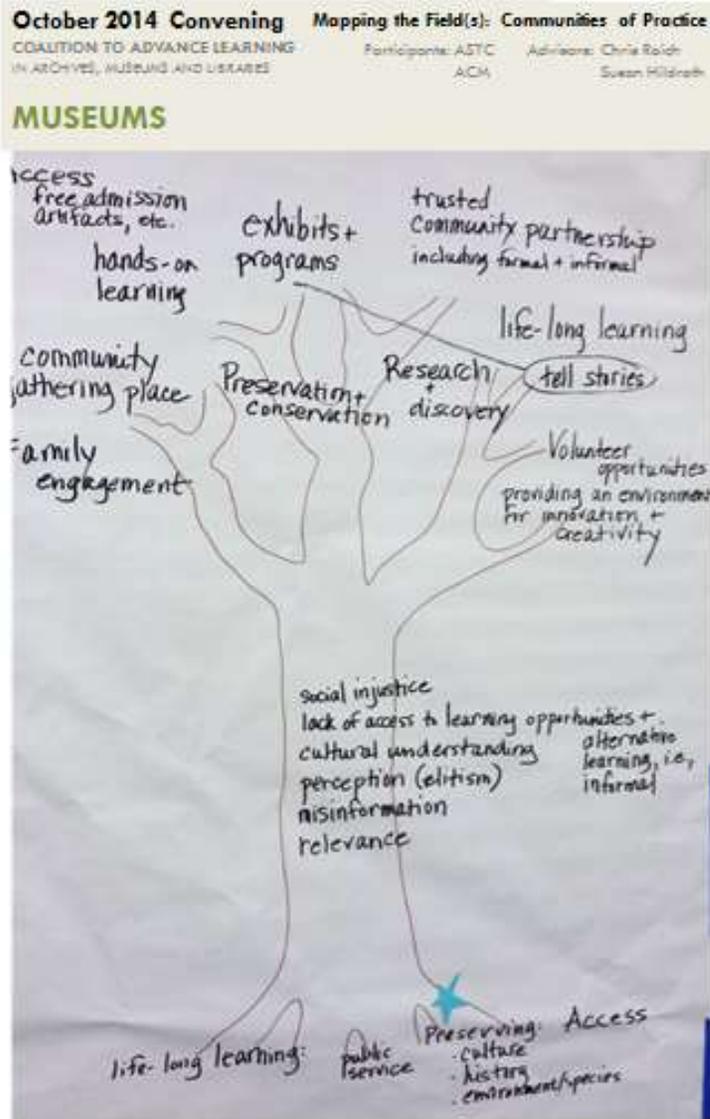
“Family” focus is strong for museums and public libraries.

All sectors share in their use of public space for exploration and learning. Public libraries see themselves as engines of innovation, creating opportunities for individuals within the community; academic libraries have learning commons and innovation-breeding spaces. These things may be of value to archives but not necessarily to their funders.

The phrase “workforce development” is used by public libraries, academic libraries, and archives, but there are distinctions in the focus ranging from community economic development to professional development. Museums are engines of economic development to bring in revenue to community.

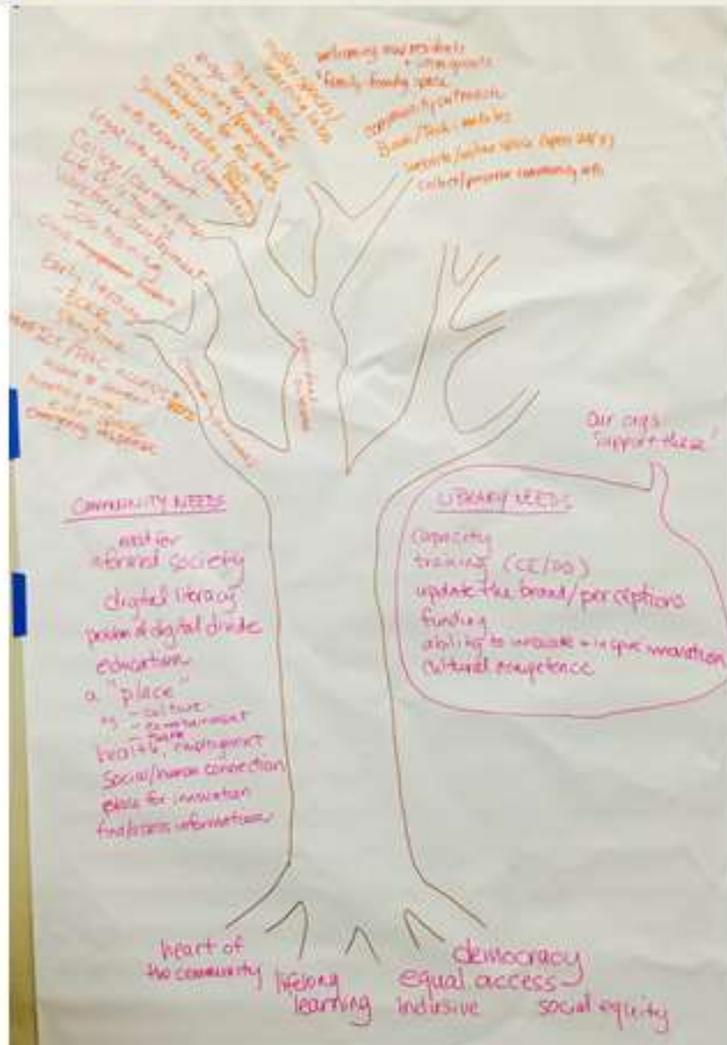
For museums, exhibits are primary. Libraries and archives may also have exhibits but it is not as strong a focus for the discipline. Think of an exhibit as an “access mechanism.”

Gallery of Sector Trees



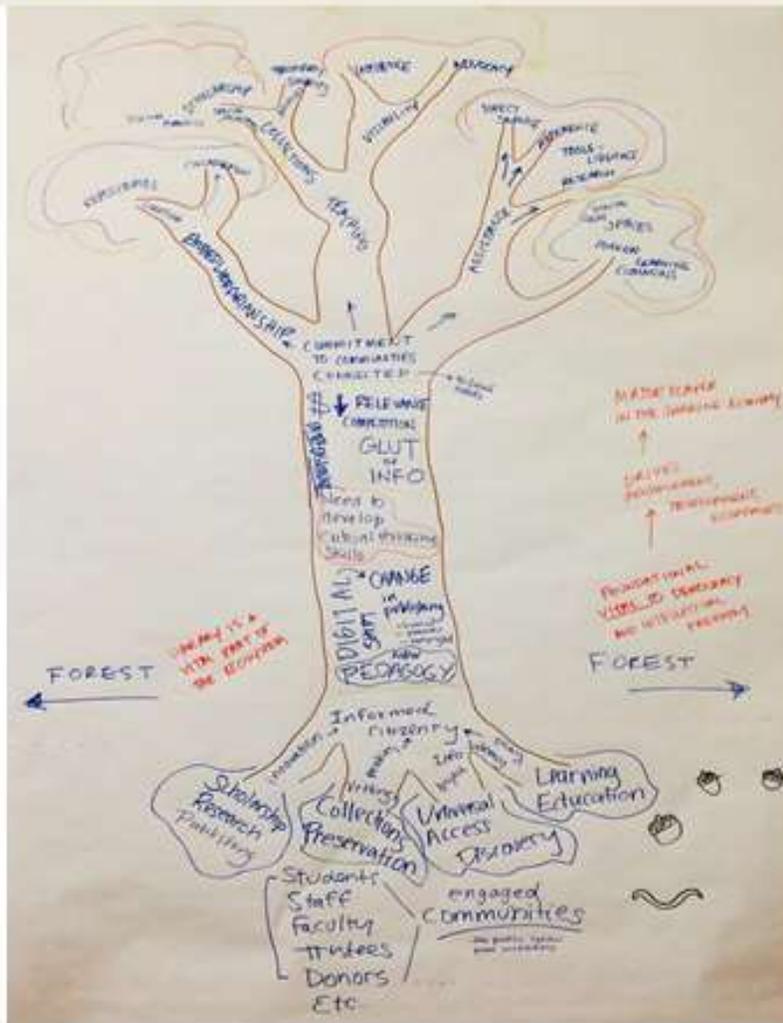
October 2014 Convening Mapping the Field(s): Communities of Practice
 COALITION TO ADVANCE LEARNING IN ARCHIVES, MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES
 Participants: PLA Advisor: Amy Gibson
 ULC
 YASLA
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LIBRARIES-1



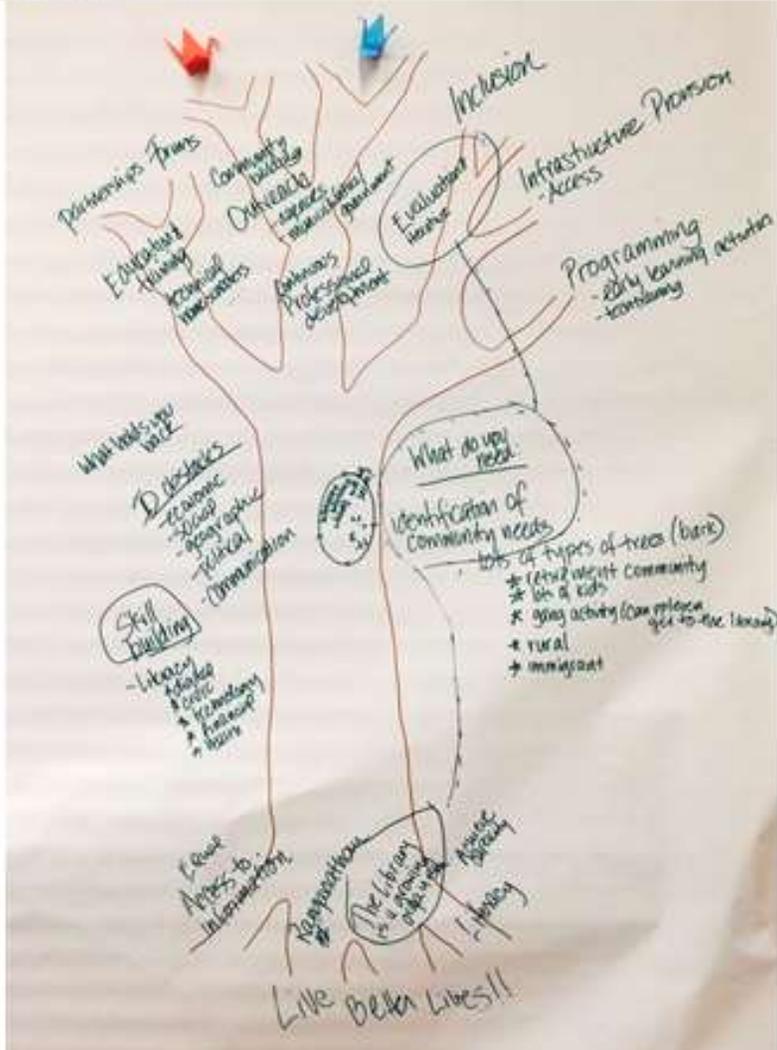
October 2014 Convening Mapping the Field(s): Communities of Practice
 COALITION TO ADVANCE LEARNING IN ARCHIVES, MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES
 Participants: AUSA Advisor: Timothy Owens
 AEL Oryette Hill
 ACEL
 Educopia

LIBRARIES-2



October 2014 Convening Mapping the Field(s): Communities of Practice
 COALITION TO ADVANCE LEARNING
 IN ARCHIVES, MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES
LIBRARIES-3

Participants: COSLA
 SLA
 Califa
 Advisor: Mauna Meiri



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