

The One Thing You Cannot Do is Take

Fostering Local Models
of Listening in Archives

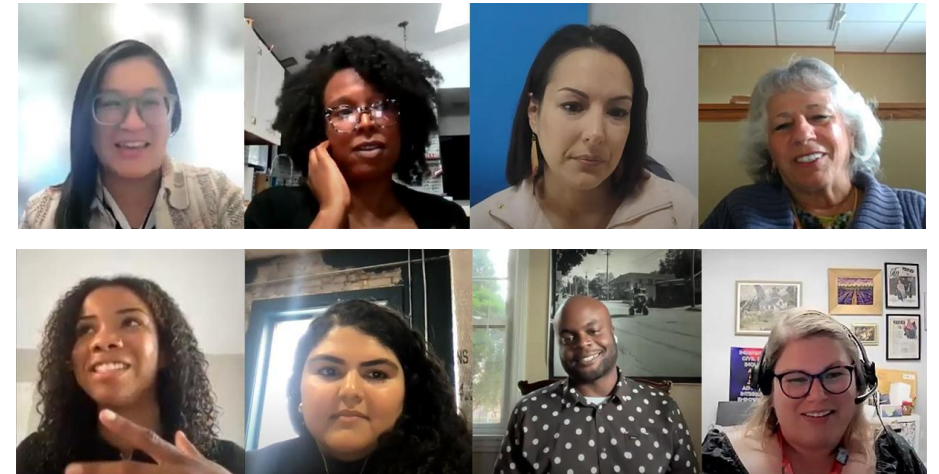
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Community Archiving: How to Begin?

Community archiving is often framed as a preservation practice but it is also a healing practice that can empower communities to tell their stories and histories based on their own lived experiences. Leading with listening is essential to support healing and build trusting relationships between communities and archivists.



Learning to Listen

Rethinking the Approach to Community Archiving

Inclusive Listening

Creating a **safe space**
for open dialogue

Inclusive Listening with Local Communities

- **Define “Local”:** City, neighborhood, or region?
 - **Build Inclusive Networks:** Leverage existing connections, hire community members!
 - **Communities Aren’t Monolithic:** Engage a variety of voices.
 - **Explore Community Connections!** Community mapping to build your network.
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Reframe your Mindset

Seeing the community
as the **expert!**

Reframe Your Mindset

Recognize and Valorize Community Memory Work

- Communities and families have existing and historical memory work practices
- Move away from the “best practices” approach of the archiving profession/PWI

Reframe Your Mindset

Trust Building Comes First

- Your initial meeting should not center on what you want to take away or borrow from a community

Reframe Your Mindset

Decenter Your Institution/Role

- Consider that you may not be the right face for the project and might need a community liaison - pay them!

Reframe Your Mindset

Adopt a Service Mindset

- Your institution should be responsive to the needs of the community
- Offer options for services your organization can provide along the way, big and small

Start the Conversation

Leading with **Humility,**
Curiosity, and **Openness**

Starting the Conversation

How has the Community been Preserving their History?

- What kind of archiving practices are they currently using?
- What have they already done in the past?

Starting the Conversation

What are the Community's Concerns?

- What challenges and problems have they experienced?
- Are there risks involved in archiving certain stories?
- Who should be able to access these histories and how?
- What questions do communities have about archival practices?

Starting the Conversation

What Stories does the Community want to Tell?

- How best to capture those stories?
- Who is appropriate to capture those stories?
- The community drives the narrative, not the archivist.

Starting the Conversation

What Services can your Institution offer a Community? (rather than what a community can give you)

- What can institutions offer in return?
- Adopting a community-first service mindset
- Consider your institution's custodial and non-custodial services: digitization, storage, supplies, hosting platforms, consulting services, etc.

Bringing it all together

- Commit to a long-term partnership
- Maintain effective communication throughout process
- Ensure that you follow through with the project goals
- Give something back in a meaningful way

Implementing a local model of listening


- Different for every region and institution
- Embraces contingency, diversity, and locality
- Start where you are
- Defining the local for your institution
- Mapping your community

Community Mapping

Start where you **are**



Q&A



*Learning to
Listen* video:
[https://tinyurl.com/
communityarchiving](https://tinyurl.com/communityarchiving)



Thank You!

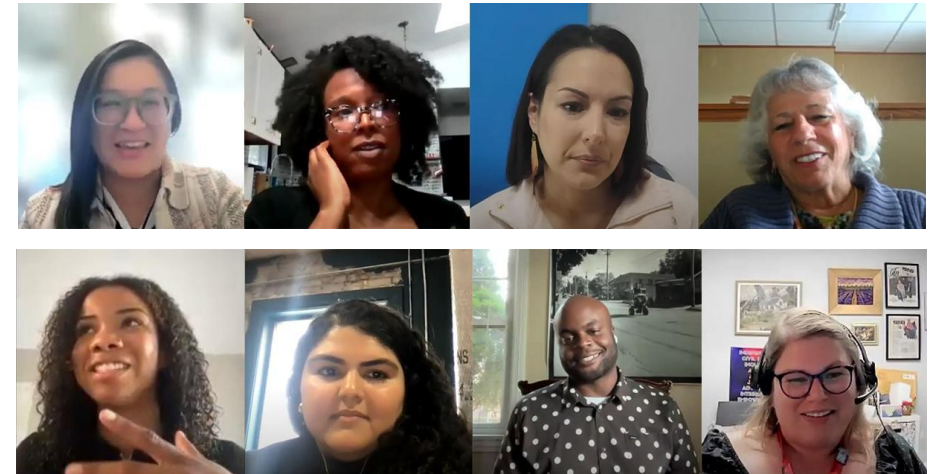
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