Facilitating and Illuminating Emergent Futures for Archival Discovery and Delivery

The Final Report of the Lighting the Way Project

Dinah Handel and Mark A. Matienzo
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More information

More information on Lighting the Way, including links to all documentation, resources, and deliverables can be found on the project's website, located at https://lightingtheway.stanford.edu/.

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Executive Summary

Between September 2019 and August 2021, Stanford University Libraries facilitated *Lighting the Way: illuminating the future of discovery and delivery for archives*, with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The project focused on exploring how networks of people and technology impact archival discovery and delivery (how people find, access, and use material from archives and special collections). The project focused on engaging directly with practitioners – archives, library, and technology workers – involved in this work, across roles, job functions, areas of expertise, and levels of positional power. The project's goals included mapping the ecosystem of archival discovery and delivery; developing conceptual and actionable recommendations for technical, ethical, and practical concerns; building a shared understanding between practitioners responsible for this work; and activating a diverse group of project participants to adopt the recommendations and findings developed during the project.

The project engaged participants through two primary events: an in-person Forum of 71 participants held in February 2020, and a virtual Working Meeting with 52 participants held across four two-hour sessions in April-May 2021. The project's meetings applied methodologies and conceptual models used in human-centered design using participatory, generative facilitation methods like the Liberating Structures framework. These facilitation methods gave participants freedom to explore topics of interest within a common conceptual structure. These methods were chosen because of their use of engaging activities that could center the expertise of the Forum participants and maximize participation by using a variety of communication methods and modes. Our experience with these methods showed that participants could bring their individual experience to bear in collaborative exercises to develop future-oriented visions of how to transform archival discovery and delivery. Assessment of the Forum and Working Meeting demonstrated a high level of satisfaction across the two events, with a significant increase in participation satisfaction in the Working Meeting in comparison to the Forum. Project participants also contributed a set of ten chapters to *The Lighting the Way Handbook*, an edited volume including case studies, analysis of how standards and best practices impact archival discovery and delivery, and emergent opportunities that amplify existing efforts.

Through analysis of participant and project advisor feedback, the outcomes of individual facilitated activities, and the contributions to *The Lighting the Way Handbook*, the project team identified a set of insights across the project that resonate with larger professional trends. These insights include 1) viewing archival discovery as an ecosystem of systems and people; 2) the interconnection between collaboration, power, and organizational positioning of this work; 3) the value of care-focused, generative facilitation methods to strategic planning for archival programs; and 4) the importance of early-stage collaboration and communities of practice to support similar efforts.

With these insights in mind, the project team provides a set of four recommendations to sustain the work undertaken by the Lighting the Way project and to inform the evolution of archival discovery and delivery that require investment and practitioners to step into leadership roles: 1) develop new communities of practice that work in alignment with existing ones; 2) prioritize collaborative opportunities for strategy that explore new working relationships; 3) adopt and apply generative and care-focused facilitation methods to inform strategic planning; and 4) understand the resourcing required and value the labor necessary to undertake strategic opportunities. The project team will support this work through the creation of a new community of practice focused on exploring technical strategy for archives that will continue to apply the facilitated methods used in the project, and through other prospective engagement activities.

Introduction

Lighting the Way: illuminating the future of discovery and delivery for archives is a project focused on convening a series of meetings and activities to explore how networks of people and technology impact archival discovery and delivery in order toto develop a forward-looking agenda describing an ethical, equitable, sustainable, and well-integrated future for archives and special collections. The project was facilitated by Stanford University Libraries and funded by a National Leadership Grant for Libraries from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

This report focuses on four key areas. First, it provides an overview of the project's goals and objectives. It also describes the project's four primary activities (Foundational Research, the Forum, the Working Meeting, and *The Lighting the Way Handbook*). It reflects upon what the project team learned about undertaking strategic work around archival discovery and delivery. Finally, the report provides recommendations and opportunities for moving this work forward given the conclusion of the funded project.

Project background

Key concepts

Our project organized itself around a new understanding of the work and technical components necessary to ensure effective access and use of materials held by archives and special collections. This allowed us to develop a shared understanding across project participants and helped ensure that the project and deliverables remained aligned with the project's goals and objectives.

Archival discovery and delivery is how the Lighting the Way project describes what people, processes, and systems do to support finding, accessing, and using material from archives and special collections. While the project initially focused on integration between systems as its primary area of analysis, early project investigations and the discussions at the Forum led us to realize that this work is necessarily performed by people in a variety of roles – not just archives workers, but library workers, technology workers, and others with varying skill sets, areas of expertise, levels of responsibility, and positional power within their institutions. Part of the challenge is to determine how to effectively align the people, processes, and systems that fit into this broader function. It requires close collaboration across job roles and responsibilities, departments, and institutions, like other areas of work, but in some senses is the least understood in terms of other areas of archival systems integration given these complexities. "Archival discovery and delivery" is thus intended to underscore the complexity and interdependence of the work, and to take a more expansive view of this work than solely focusing on technical development and implementation completed and supported by a given IT service provider (cf. Shaw, Adler, and Dooley 2017).

Integration is the use of processes or tools to join systems to work together as a coordinated whole, which provides a "functional coupling" between systems. Inadequate integration for archival discovery and delivery not only impacts researchers, but can also impact archives, library, and technology workers responsible for those functions and systems. Integration also requires close collaboration across job roles and responsibilities, departments, and institutions, and thus fundamentally relies on people and their relationships as well.

Project activities, goals, and outputs

The project had two major categories of activities: meetings, and research and communications:

- **Meetings** included the Forum, a two-and-a-half day in-person event, and the Working Meeting, a series of four virtual facilitated sessions over six weeks focused on collaborative writing to produce contributions to the *Lighting the Way Handbook*.
- **Research and communications** included research to support the creation of foundational resources to provide background to participants, the *Lighting the Way Handbook* (containing short case studies about current or planned archival discovery and delivery efforts, position papers, and other written contributions from project participants), and peer-reviewed articles and presentations. An in-depth report about the Forum was also produced and disseminated within the community in November 2020 (Matienzo, Handel, et al. 2020).

These activities supported the project's goals, which were to:

- Map the ecosystem supporting archival discovery and delivery;
- Develop both conceptual and actionable recommendations for technical, ethical, and practical concerns related to archival discovery and delivery;
- Build a shared understanding between archives and technology workers undertaking this work; and
- Activate a diverse group of project participants to adopt the recommendations and findings developed during the project across institutional contexts, capacities, and software platforms.

The project had four primary deliverables:[1]

- **Foundational resources**, which resulted in materials provided to Forum participants intended to develop a common understanding of the project's goals, concepts, and structure. This included an overview of the project, an annotated bibliography, and a preliminary list of systems and terms, in addition to event "playbooks" (facilitator manuals).
- Two **project reports** (white papers), the **preliminary report on the Lighting the Way Forum** (Matienzo, Handel, et al. 2020) and the **final report** (this report). The Forum report synthesized information about the Forum design and structure, provided evaluation and analysis of the activities, and identified emerging themes and areas for potential focus.
- ***The Lighting the Way Handbook*** (Matienzo and Handel 2021), an edited volume of chapters written by Working Meeting participants and other contributors, including case studies, analysis of best practices and standards, and identification of emergent opportunities.
- **Presentations and webinars**, intended to share information about the project and engage archives and technology workers and other key stakeholders around these issues.

The project originally had a fifth expected deliverable, a **statement of principles** for front-end system architecture and integration, synthesized from the outputs of the Forum and Working Meeting. Given our analysis following the Forum and the shift to organizing an entirely virtual working environment for the Working Meeting in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we de-emphasized the intended group writing modality necessary to construct this statement of principles. Additional discussion of changes made to the project are described in the *Forum outcomes, evaluation, and impact on Working Meeting design* section below.

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[1] A full list of project deliverables including links and citations can be found in Appendix 1.

Primary audiences and principles

Participants represented the primary audiences and stakeholders for the project across multiple disciplines and job functions both within and outside the context of archives and libraries, in three complementary and inter-reliant groups:

- **Archives, special collections, and other library workers**, across job functions (e.g., technical services, public services and reference, metadata management, digital collections, and administration), position classification (e.g., support staff, credentialed professional), and type of institution (e.g., academic, public libraries, museums, historical societies, government archives, tribal archives).
- **Technology workers**, across job functions (e.g., software developers, user experience designers, product managers, systems architects, etc.), position classification, and type of institution (e.g. archives- or library affiliated, vendors, service providers, consortia, open source software communities).
- **People with interest or expertise in terms of legal and ethical issues in archives and special collections**, across areas of focus (e.g., intellectual property, inclusive description, cultural sensitivity, risk management, and open access).

This audience definition ensured that the project and its meetings remained focused on the needs and experiences of practitioners across these categories as much as possible. In addition, our project remained focused on providing opportunities for deeper collaboration and conversation between archives workers and technology workers. We recognized that archival discovery and delivery is supported by a wide range of responsibility and areas of expertise, across institutional contexts, levels of resourcing, and the types of communities we serve. We also acknowledged that people may be discouraged or excluded from these conversations both within their institution or in larger community settings based on their identity or systemic issues. To this end, we established a core set of principles for the project:

- We believe everyone from our core audiences has something to contribute; not everyone needs to be a self-identified expert.
- We focus on shared and holistic concerns and recommendations, rather than focusing on specific technologies or tools.
- We enable the adaptability of recommendations across contexts, communities, and levels of resourcing.
- We develop recommendations consciously as an inclusive expression of professional ethics and values.

Conceptual design and facilitation

Guided by the project's principles, the project and its events were intended to be inclusive opportunities for collaboration, informed by the experience of the participants. During project conception and planning for its events, the project team was inspired by methodologies used in human-centered design (Dam and Teo 2018; LUMA Institute 2012). Based on the past experience of other facilitators and discussions with the project's participant advisors, the project primarily used methods drawn from the Liberating Structures (LS) framework (Lipmanowicz and McCandless 2014; n.d.). Drawing heavily from the Liberating Structures principle to "include and unleash everyone" (Lipmanowicz and McCandless n.d.), we selected facilitated activities for the Forum and Working Meeting that ranged from individual, silent reflection, to small group interaction, to large group interactions. The Liberating Structures model allowed the project team and facilitators to establish a balance between control and freedom and gave participants an active voice in steering the outcome of the activities.

Liberating Structures activities are also supported by a set of five design elements that help make their generic purpose and requirements clear. These include a structuring invitation (what the facilitator is asking participants to do), details on how participation is distributed, how groups are configured, required space and materials, and the sequence and allocation of time for each step. In addition to activities selected from the set of 33 established Liberating Structures methods, the project supplemented them with activities and patterns drawn from other sources. These included the *Virtual Liberating Structures Community Handbook* (n.d.), which supports facilitated online and hybrid meetings, as well as supplemental frameworks and Liberating Structures refinements (McCandless and Schartau 2018; Overeem 2020) and non-Liberating Structures sources that follow a similar set of design elements in their activity design (e.g., Gray, Brown, and Macanufo 2010). The project team and event facilitators evaluated all 33 Liberating Structures exercises, as well as comparable activities from these other sources, to identify those which would work best in the context of each session and considered the different goals and potential outcomes of each. Members of the project team and facilitators engaged in significant discussion while planning both events, identifying the benefits and drawbacks of a particular exercise.

The project team knew that inclusive methods were not sufficient, and the work of the project also needed to be informed by additional guidelines and expectations for participants and facilitators. To be truly transformational, our work needed to be conducted in a space that acknowledges the power dynamics of bringing together workers across professional contexts, roles, and job classifications, acknowledging institutional privilege, and the lack of representation of marginalized people within the archives, library, and technology sectors. This led to the development of a set of Community Agreements and a Code of Conduct, informed by work of other IMLS National Forum Grant projects like the Collective Responsibility project ("Code of Conduct and Community Agreement" n.d.), as well as other facilitation, political organizing, and technology groups (AORTA Collective 2017; Seeds for Change n.d.; Recurse Center n.d.). The Community Agreements defined a positive baseline and set of norms for interaction, and the Code of Conduct existed to draw a conscious separation from undesired and unacceptable behavior. The use of these facilitation methods, combined with the Community Agreements and Code of Conduct, allowed the project team and facilitators to set forth a care-focused set of principles for the project and our meetings informed by the understanding of affective responsibilities of archives workers (Caswell and Cifor 2016; O'Neill et al. 2017; Arroyo-Ramírez and Jones 2018).

Project participant categories

The project activities were undertaken by a diverse and overlapping group of participants across the library and archive professions:

- **The project team** of Stanford University Libraries staff, responsible for the high-level organization of the events, communications, and reporting.
- **Participant advisors**, who advised on the direction and goals for the project. Some participant advisors also reviewed applications for the Forum and served as facilitators at both events.
- **Facilitators at the Forum and Working Meeting**, who supported the events by identifying exercises, facilitating activities during the Forum, and groups over the course of the Working Meeting. Most, but not all, of the facilitators were participant advisors on the project.
- **Participants** in the Forum and Working Meeting and invited **contributors to the project Handbook**.

The project team met with participant advisors and facilitators on a regular basis throughout the project, and as needed in preparation for the project events.

Project activities

Foundational resources

The foundational resources for the project were intended to provide facilitators and participants with background and context to establish a shared baseline understanding of the project's definition of archival discovery and delivery. For the Forum, this included an environmental scan and literature regarding archival discovery, frontend system development, and systems integration to address the following research questions:

- What systems support archival discovery and delivery?
- How do those systems need to work together from a functional and technical perspective?
- Why is a specific institution or project integrating those systems? What push or pull factors do these systems present?
- How are those systems being integrated (e.g., data synchronization, APIs, etc.)?
- Who (from a staff perspective) is involved in specifying, developing or maintaining the integration work?
- Have there been specific successes or challenges with specific systems or integrations?
- Are there workarounds in place due to limitations in resources?
- What technical or institutional context shaped systems implementation and integration?
- Are any ethical or legal concerns represented in integration, and if so, what are they?

The contributors to the Forum's foundational resources prepared an annotated bibliography (also compiled into a public Zotero group), and a preliminary list of systems and related glossary of terms developed for Forum participants.[2] Key areas identified during this phase that informed the design of the Forum included the following:

- **There are a wide variety of systems that support archival discovery and delivery, and they are deeply interconnected even when not well-integrated.** While we think of discovery systems and digital library access systems as central to archival discovery and delivery, the reality is that many institutions supplement those systems with additional forms and workflows, request and rights management systems, and systems used to manage collections information and digital assets.
- **While accurately understood as technical work, systems integration for archival discovery and delivery is impacted by non-technical factors.** This can include resources and staffing, working relationships and institutional culture, and more. This relates to broader challenges experienced by the archives and library sectors impacting projects like finding aid aggregation (Allison-Bunnell 2019) and the challenge of supporting infrastructure through cycles of grants or other project-based funding.
- **Most archives workers are only familiar with the systems that they use individually, making broader strategic discussions more challenging.** This limited perspective makes it challenging for many to envision the broader possible connections between different systems. Practitioners also tend to focus on differences in implementation details when communicating with one another, which prevents them from connecting the dots and seeing deeper strategic connections. This is also further complicated by the reality that archives have limited access to technology workers, given that many archives do not have dedicated IT staff, rely on vendor support, or that defined staff roles like digital archivists only have partial allocations to work on such projects.
- **While archival discovery and delivery is rarely perfect or complete at any institution or repository, archives workers usually only report about work when given phases are complete.** These investigations demonstrated that many archives view their work on archival discovery and delivery as

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[2] These resources have been incorporated into the published version of the Forum playbook (Matienzo, Arnold, et al. 2020).

an iterative process, but many are averse to sharing information about work in progress. Coupled with the previous point, the reality is that producing shared visions for this work can be incredibly challenging.

These points informed the project team's decision to have the Forum focus on generative visions for archival discovery and delivery, while acknowledging past challenges and successes from the perspectives of practitioners responsible for this work. As a result, the project team shared the foundational research in this form as a starting point only, rather than a comprehensive resource as originally envisioned within the project proposal.

The Lighting the Way Forum

Lighting the Way: A National Forum on Archival Discovery and Delivery ("the Forum") was held across 2.5 days, from February 10-12, 2020, at Stanford University. The Forum had 71 participants selected from over 200 applicants in an open application process. This section provides a high-level summary of the Forum's goals, structure, and outcomes. For in-depth description of Forum design, evaluation, and its impact on subsequent project activities, consult the preliminary report on the Forum (Matienzo, Handel, et al. 2020).

Goals of the Forum

The Forum was designed to support information sharing and collaborative problem solving around archival discovery and delivery. The goals for the Forum were:

- **To allow participants to see, map, and build connections** – between one another, their work, the systems they rely on, and the communities they serve.
- To identify and organize around shared opportunities and challenges, identified by participants during group activities.
- **To provide a platform for engagement with the project**, leading to participation in other project activities (e.g., attending the Working Meeting or contributing to written products like *The Lighting the Way Handbook*).

Application process

As the first of the two primary project meetings, the Forum was intended to provide an entry point for prospective participants in the project. The project team prepared a call for participation and application informed by past IMLS National Forum Grant projects (Padilla et al. 2019; Young et al. 2019). The application gathered information about prospective participants, their responsibilities, their work related to archival discovery and delivery, and challenges and success they experienced. Given the project's focus on equity and inclusion, the application asked prospective participants whether they receive travel support from their employer, whether they would need travel support to participate in the Forum, whether they identified as a member of any underrepresented or marginalized populations, and whether their work directly or indirectly supports underrepresented or marginalized populations. Applicants were not asked to self-disclose any further additional information about marginalized aspects of their identity. Over 200 applications were evaluated by the Project Director and two participant advisors using a 25-point rubric. While the Forum was originally envisioned as a 2.5-day meeting of up to 50 participants, with 30 fully funded participants, the high response rate led the project team to expand the Forum to a total of 71 participants, including facilitators.

Forum structure

The Forum began with a set of plenary presentations intended to provide information about the project and to establish a shared baseline for understanding about the areas of investigation. In addition to project team presentations, plenary presentations included presenters selected from Forum participants, focusing on four primary themes:

- *The Evolving Systems Ecosystem*: What software and other systems do we use to make archival discovery and delivery possible, and how is that changing within institutional contexts?
- *Networks and the Big Picture*: What issues are impacting archives and libraries at the level of the sector, consortia, or beyond, related to discovery and delivery?
- *Ethical, Legal, and Cultural Concerns*: How have factors like privacy, cultural protocols, copyright, and others impacted our ability to address archival discovery and delivery, on a technical, operational, or strategic level?
- *Impacts on Public Services and Outreach*: How does archival discovery and delivery fit within the front-line work of library and archives workers focused on reference, outreach, public service, and community needs?

The presentations were held in the first half of Day 1 and were also live streamed using a Zoom webinar and YouTube Live and were recorded and made available through the Stanford Digital Repository.[3]

The remainder of the event, starting in the second half of Day 1, included facilitated breakout activities to achieve the Forum goals. Building on the conceptual design of the larger project, the Forum's design focused on activating *lateral thinking*, a concept developed by Edward de Bono, which allows for indirect and creative approaches to problem solving to arise through disrupting constraining thought patterns (Dam and Teo 2018). The Forum was intentionally designed to have a "flow" following design ideation workshops, leveraging a process that guides participants through three modes of thinking: *divergent thinking* (generating a large number of ideas), *emergent thinking* (building from and upon past ideas), and *convergent thinking* (sorting, clustering, and evaluating ideas). Subsequently, the afternoon of Day 1 started with divergent activities intended to set the stage and develop Forum themes. Day 2 focused on emergent activities, intended to support participants in examining, exploring, and experimenting in the problem space. Day 3 focused on convergent activities intended to move participants towards conclusions, decisions, and both individual and collective action.

The Forum's collaborative activities were drawn mostly from Liberating Structures and *Gamestorming* (Gray, Brown, and Macanufo 2010; "Gamestorming" n.d.), a secondary source of design-focused "games" intended for creative engagement. Both sources were chosen because of their use of engaging activities that could center the expertise of the Forum participants and maximize participation by using a variety of communication methods and modes. The activities also allowed the project team and facilitators to structure activities around groups of varying sizes, allowing for time for individual reflection, small group discussion, and larger interactions between groups and across the entire Forum. In addition to these activities, facilitators used daily retrospective sessions (Gorman and Gottesdiener 2010) to gather feedback and evaluate the day's activities and outcomes based on responses from participants. A full description of the Forum's activities are included in the Forum report (Matienzo, Handel, et al. 2020, 11–23), and are supplemented by the facilitator playbook for the Forum (Matienzo, Arnold, et al. 2020), which describes the flow and structure of the facilitated activities.

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[3] See Appendix 1 for the full list of presentations and links.

Forum outcomes, evaluation, and impact on Working Meeting design

The primary outcomes of the Forum are documented in the Forum report (Matienzo, Handel, et al. 2020), which reported on the Forum's design, the outcomes of its individual activities, its evaluation, and recommendations for next steps. The project team evaluated the Forum through insights gathered from the daily and closing retrospective sessions and using the results of a participant feedback survey sent out electronically following the Forum's closing. Using these sources, the project team subsequently synthesized themes identified from the Forum's activities (Matienzo, Handel, et al. 2020, 23–43). Participants articulated the value of interacting with one another given the variety of backgrounds and roles. Feedback on the methods and activities were generally positive, although some expressed initial discomfort with the structure. Several participants identified an issue with a perceived lack of focus or "scope creep" given the Forum's expansive definition of archival discovery and delivery and the assumption that more practical technical concerns were going to be discussed. This also related to feedback that clearer articulation of the Forum and its goals may have been beneficial. Participants also noted that days often felt demanding and overly full, and that some topics were hard to discuss with nuance. Nonetheless, the Forum also gave people an opportunity to see and make connections across participant roles, and to establish mutual recognition of "shared struggles" in supporting archival discovery and delivery despite differences in type or size of institution or across specific systems used.

The Forum report's synthesis identified a number of emerging themes, including emphasizing collaboration across roles and structures and addressing cultural challenges within organizations to improve collaboration; focusing on structural change through archival labor; developing larger collaborative networks and communities of practice; sharing information about archival discovery and delivery with colleagues at earlier points in the development process; and understanding the impact of term labor on archival discovery and delivery. Participants also identified opportunities for developing shared technical requirements, such as for "virtual reading rooms" to support mediated access to digital archival materials and identified a desire to use care-focused facilitation methods as used in the Forum. Specific areas for continued investigation are described further in the list of ideas drawn from the 25/10 Crowd Sourcing and Who/What/When Matrix activities (Matienzo, Handel, et al. 2020, Appendices 4 and 5).

As intended, The Forum served as a catalyst for further development of ideas and potential collaborations for the Working Meeting. The COVID-19 pandemic proved challenging for the project as the Working Meeting was also intended to be held in person. The project team used the Forum report's conclusion to identify the needs to make changes to allow for virtual participation with a clearer scope. Over time, the project team refined the definition used for archival discovery and delivery, and deemphasized the centrality of technical integration, as exemplified through the development of common specifications or application programming interfaces. Instead, the feedback from the Forum participants made it clear that understanding and providing opportunities for collaboration was an area in which the project could provide value. The Working Meeting was initially intended to both allow for the development of chapters for *The Lighting the Way Handbook* focused on integration, as well as to develop a generalized "statement of principles" to support archival discovery and delivery. With the evaluation and feedback from Forum participants in mind, the project team restructured the Working Meeting to focus on smaller groups for collaboration, rather than having solely larger plenary sessions. The project team also chose to change the structure of the Working Meeting to be organized in multiple sessions spread across six weeks, rather than a set of back to back sessions. These factors were intended to provide an inclusive and accommodating structure for participation in a time of considerable uncertainty.

The Lighting the Way Working Meeting

The Working Meeting was conceived as a way for Forum participants and community members to continue thinking about the themes that emerged at the Forum, with the goal of producing a written contribution that described the present state or future opportunities in archival discovery and delivery. The project team again used a call for participation to identify interested applicants.[4] Because attendance at the Forum was not a prerequisite, and Forum attendance also did not guarantee that applications would be selected, the project team held office hours to address questions from prospective applicants. Groups ranging in size from three to nine participants responded to the CFP with 250-word abstracts on their proposed topics.

Nine groups with a total of 52 individuals were selected by a subset of the Working Meeting organizers, out of a pool of 24 applications with a total of 100 individuals. Each group was assigned a facilitator who would work with them throughout the Working Meeting. Two additional groups were encouraged to consider merging with a selected group and agreed to do so given the similarity in their topics. Each of the nine groups were assigned a designated facilitator. In addition to the nine selected groups, the project team invited a tenth group of participants to provide a written contribution without synchronous participation in the facilitated sessions. The number of facilitators for the Working Meeting was limited, and this decision was made to avoid overextending facilitators in the manner that impacted Forum facilitators.

Goals

As described to participants and applicants, the Working Meeting had three goals:

- to explore topics related to archival discovery and delivery (using facilitated activities);
- to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for collaboration with groups organized by topic; and
- to facilitate the creation of written contributions that describe both the present state and future opportunities (the basis of *The Lighting the Way Handbook)*.

When synthesized, the combined goal of the Working Meeting was that each group would work iteratively towards a written contribution using facilitated methods, with each session intended to deepen the group's understanding of their topic and their ability to work collaboratively.

Planning and structure

Planning for the Working Meeting was a collaborative process that took place in the months leading up to the event. Facilitators and the project team met regularly to review possible exercises, discussed their placement within the overall structure of the Working Meeting, and created the guides and artifacts for facilitators to use during the sessions. The Working Meeting was organized as four two-hour sessions held on Zoom. The first and last sessions were plenary sessions with randomized breakout rooms for small group discussion, and the second and third sessions were scheduled separately for each group and their facilitator, with activities intended to support the groups in their thinking and writing. The Working Meeting Sessions used a variety of facilitation methods drawn from Liberating Structures as well as activities drawn from its associated community of practice and additional sources ("Virtual Liberating Structures Community Handbook" n.d.). Assessing and selecting exercises took great care and discussion amongst the project team and facilitators, especially to ensure that the exercises would complement the virtual format of the Working Meetings.

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[4] A copy of the call for participation is included as Appendix 3.

The structure of the sessions was further informed by the adoption of *strategy knotworking* (McCandless and Schartau 2018), a refinement and application of Liberating Structures that applies its methods and structure to inform strategic planning through an iterative exploration of six areas of focus expressed as questions. Each session focused one or two of these six questions through the use of the facilitated activities, and facilitators were given some discretion to adapt sessions as needed for each group. Table 1 provides an overview of how specific strategy knotworking questions mapped to selected exercises.[5] Additionally, facilitators had leeway when it came to each session, and were able to adjust depending on how the group responded to a particular exercise.

While planning the exercises took considerable time and effort from the project team and facilitators, using these methods enabled deep and sustained engagement with the project's objectives and goals, even beyond the end of the Working Meeting. Participant groups were encouraged by the facilitators and project team to address and incorporate elements of the six questions of strategy knotworking in some manner within their submissions for inclusion in *The Lighting the Way Handbook*, although groups did not otherwise have specific structural requirements to follow. Throughout the Working Meeting sessions, participants self-organized to complete the work on their submissions published within this volume.

Table 1. Applying strategy knotworking to Working Meeting activities

Session	Format	Strategy knotworking focus	Activities
1	Plenary	*Purpose* What is the fundamental justification for the existence of our work?	Spiral Journal (individual activity) Impromptu Networking (mixed breakout groups) Purpose to Practice/"Exploring Purpose" (group)
2	Group	*Context* What is happening around us that demands creative change?	Context Map
		Challenge What paradoxical challenges must we face to make progress?	TRIZ
3	Group	*Baseline* Where are we starting, honestly?	What, So What, Now What? Generative Relationships STAR (optional)
		Ambition Given our purpose, what seems possible now?	Impact/Effort Matrix Optional discussion time
4	Plenary	*Action and evaluation* How are we acting our way toward the future, evaluating what is possible as we go?	Lightning talks (plenary presentations; 1/group) 4x4 Writing (individual activity) Conversation Café (mixed breakout groups) Retrospective (plenary; asynchronous)

Working Meeting outcomes and evaluation

As with the Forum, the project team asked Working Meeting participants and facilitators to provide feedback through both retrospectives at each session and a feedback survey hosted on the Qualtrics platform and distributed by email. The survey received a total of 35 responses from a pool of 65 individuals (52 participants, 4 invited contributors, and 9 facilitators), or a response rate of approximately 53.8%. Feedback questions

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[5] For a detailed discussion of the activities held within the Working Meeting, see the Working Meeting Playbook (Matienzo et al. 2021)**.**

included an evaluation to calculate Net Promoter Score, quantitative questions on participant interest and experience, and qualitative questions including what the participants liked most or least about the Working Meeting, what they learned at the Working Meeting, the most valuable outcome of the project, and an open-ended feedback question.

Overall, quantitative feedback indicated a high-level of satisfaction with the Working Meeting, with Net Promoter Scores indicated as excellent (77.14). This quantitative feedback can be seen in more detail in Appendix 3 to this report. Satisfaction with Working Meeting goals was reasonable across categories. Participants were reasonably satisfied with "exploring topics related to archival discovery and delivery" and "providing a welcoming and supportive environment for collaboration." There was less satisfaction with the Working Meeting's goal of "facilitating a written contribution within a group setting", with approximately 6% of respondents each indicating they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied. Participants also indicated that they were reasonably satisfied with both the facilitators and the collaboration tools used (Zoom, Google Jamboard, Google Docs). Participants were reasonably satisfied with the facilitated activities in both the plenary sessions and the group sessions, although one participant indicated they were somewhat dissatisfied with the plenary facilitated activities.

Both the feedback surveys for the Forum and the Working Meeting included quantitative questions to capture performance measure statements inspired by the "Learning" agency-level goal for IMLS. These questions focused on whether the events and activities better prepared participants to improve archival discovery and delivery at their organization, collaborate across roles, and to grow their expertise in support of community needs. While both the Forum and Working meeting were overall seen as largely successful from a capacity building standpoint, the project team has compiled a detailed comparison of these performance measure statements between the Forum and the Working Meeting. The performance measures demonstrate that the Working Meeting was more successful at building the capacity of participants to better serve this work (see Table 2).

As was done with the Forum, the project team identified themes from feedback survey, as described in the following subsections. These themes resonated with past feedback provided by Forum participants and provided additional areas for investigation by the project team.

What people liked most about the Working Meeting

Participants enjoyed the use of facilitated activities and exploring new ways of collaborating and writing. They appreciated the ability to engage with colleagues across institutions and to help drive the project forward and reflected positively on the ability of having shared goals that could be advanced in a structured manner. As with the Forum, some participants expressed some initial skepticism about the facilitation methods but felt that the experience and its outcomes were positive. Some participants also appreciated the ability to make meaningful connections with colleagues, to hear about work in progress, and to have an opportunity to be energized by work going on within archives. Other participants also noted that the blend of topics was well-chosen, and that it felt important as these were pressing issues for the field.

Table 2. Comparison of IMLS performance measures gathered through feedback surveys

	Forum (71 participants, 389 webinar attendees)			Working Meeting (65 participants)
	Participants only	*Webinar attendees only*	*Both groups*	
[Event] has better prepared me to improve archival discovery and delivery at my organization				
Strongly agree	6 (12.77%)	8 (17.02%)	14 (15.79%)	9 (28.13%)
Somewhat agree	30 (63.82%)	17 (36.17%)	47 (49.47%)	16 (50.00%)
Neither agree nor disagree	8 (17.02%)	17 (36.17%)	25 (26.32%)	4 (12.50%)
Somewhat disagree	2 (4.26%)	3 (6.38%)	5 (5.26%)	2 (6.25%)
Strongly disagree	1 (2.12%)	2 (4.26%)	3 (3.16%)	1 (3.13%)
Total Responses	47	47	94	32
Non-Responses	4	22	26	3
[Event] has better prepared me to collaborate with people across different roles/professional fields				
Strongly agree	18 (38.30%)	7 (14.89%)	25 (27.37%)	16 (50.00%)
Somewhat agree	18 (38.30%)	15 (31.91%)	33 (34.74%)	12 (37.50%)
Neither agree nor disagree	10 (21.28%)	17 (36.17%)	27 (28.42%)	4 (12.50%)
Somewhat disagree	1 (2.12%)	5 (10.64%)	6 (6.32%)	0 (0.00%)
Strongly disagree	0 (0.00%)	3 (6.38%)	3 (3.16%)	0 (0.00%)
Total	47	47	94	32
Non-Responses	4	22	26	3
[Event] has helped me grow my expertise to improve archival discovery/delivery for the communities my organization serves				
Strongly agree	10 (21.28%)	8 (17.02%)	18 (20.00%)	12 (37.50%)
Somewhat agree	23 (48.94%)	20 (42.55%)	43 (45.26%)	14 (43.75%)
Neither agree nor disagree	8 (17.02%)	14 (29.79%)	22 (23.16%)	5 (15.63%)
Somewhat disagree	5 (10.64%)	3 (6.38%)	8 (8.42%)	1 (3.13%)
Strongly disagree	1 (2.12%)	2 (4.26%)	3 (3.16%)	0 (0.00%)
Total	47	47	94	32
Non-Responses	4	22	26	3

What people liked the least about the Working Meeting

The most notable theme identified in participant feedback had to do with challenges around writing, including meeting deadlines or feeling that they were intruding on the experience of the facilitated sessions. The project team realized that many of the deadlines were somewhat aggressive but continually communicated a willingness to negotiate for extensions as needed with participant groups. Others noted the desire for more time in sessions, or that the pacing felt rushed. Some participants identified that they wished for more unstructured time in sessions; in response, another participant noted achieving that aim was difficult because unstructured time was not always used effectively when it was provided. Relatedly, some participants also felt the lack of serendipity as would have been experienced in in-person meetings, and that the plenary activities to allow participants to engage across groups felt "forced." Finally, there was a significant desire for more cross-communication across groups to gather feedback.

What people learned at the Working Meeting

As with the Forum, participants learned how similar challenges faced by archives, library, and technology workers were across institutions, including around time, labor, budget, and other resourcing issues. Participants also reflected that they learned the value of strategic planning and how facilitated exercises can benefit the work they do, and that they saw it was an opportunity to help prevent "reinventing the wheel." Some archives workers in small programs also recognized that their institutions give them unique strengths. Several participants indicated that they learned broadly more about collaboration and were surprised that they could collaborate with people they did not know well. A few participants also noted that they valued learning more about upcoming work at other institutions as well and valued getting early insights into the work underway.

What people saw as the most valuable project outcomes

Participants described the process and written outputs of the Working Meeting and the project as the most valuable outcomes. Many hoped for national attention on *The Lighting the Way Handbook* and other project reports, as they may provide models for archival discovery and delivery. This work was viewed by many participants as critical to advance archival discovery and delivery in terms of needed changes in technology, policy, and best practices. Some participants also noted that continued collaboration, and "spinoff" projects or grants related to the work of groups would be beneficial. Still others noted that the Working Meeting raised the bar for collaboration, and that the structures in the project were valuable to organize future collaborations. One respondent noted the value of the project providing facilitation training based on the models used in the project. Several participants also communicated the hope that the program would continue past its current funded phase, as it provided a space for practitioners to meet and work together. This included hosting meetings, shared lists of projects, or development of interest groups or communities of practice to sustain this work.

The Lighting the Way Handbook

The Working Meeting was intended to give groups an opportunity to collaborate within a defined structure to produce contributions for *The Lighting the Way Handbook: Case Studies, Guidelines, and Emergent Futures for Archival Discovery and Delivery* (Matienzo and Handel 2021). The process of creating and soliting contributions to for *The Lighting the Way* Handbook resulted in ten contributed chapters written by Working Meeting participants and an additional group invited to participate. The *Lighting the Way Handbook*'s themes, and subsequent chapters, are as follows.

Case Studies: This section comprises case studies of work related to archival discovery and delivery within an institution. While each case study has an institutional focus and acknowledges completed work or the current state within an institution, they also acknowledge future work to come, or areas for broader consideration related to archival discovery and delivery.

- Renee Pappous, Hannah Sistrunk, and Darren Young, "Connecting on Principles: Building and Uncovering Relationships through a New Archival Discovery System"
- Stephanie Becker, Anne Kumer, and Naomi Langer, "Access is People: How Investing in Digital Collections Labor Improves Archival Discovery & Delivery"
- Martha Anderson, Max Eckard, Melanie Griffin, Emiko Hastings, Deb Kulczak, Chris Powell, Olga Virakhovskaya, Caitlin Wells, and Katrina Windon, "Facilitating Seamless Access Through Collaborative Workflows, Advocacy, and Communication"

Assessing and Applying Standards and Best Practices: This section focuses on chapters that engage specifically with standards and best practices that impact archival discovery and delivery.

- Jodi Allison-Bunnell, Maureen Cresci Callahan, Gretchen Gueguen, John Kunze, Krystyna K. Matusiak, and Gregory Wiedeman, "Lost Without Context: Representing Relationships between Archival Materials in the Digital Environment"
- Sarah Dorpinghaus, Cory Lampert, Rebecca Pattillo, and Kyna Herzinger, "Maximizing Good: An Inquiry-Based Approach to Minimal Description for Online Archives"
- Stefana Breitwieser, Amanda Demeter, Sophie Glidden-Lyon, Amanda Murray, Lori Myers-Steele, and Kate Philipson, "Playing to our Strengths: Self-Assessment Criteria for Access and Discovery in Small Archives"

Emergent Opportunities: This section focuses specifically on exploring new opportunities. While each chapter within this section acknowledges and leverages past work related to archival discovery and delivery, they also advocate for more exhaustive and programmatic work in their areas of focus. These chapters also strongly advocate for situating this work in relation to community engagement and development.

- Kelli Babcock, Regine Heberlein, Anna Björnsson McCormick, Elizabeth Russey Roke, Greta Kuriger Suiter, and Ruth Kitchin Tillman, "The Power of Parallel Description: Wikidata and Archival Discovery"
- Katherine Crowe, Katrina Fenlon, Hannah Frisch, Diana Marsh, and Victoria Van Hyning, "Inviting and Honoring User-contributed Content"
- Faith Charlton, Christa Cleeton, Alison Clemens, Betts Coup, Zoë Hill, and Jessica Tai, "A Call to Action: User Experience & Inclusive Description"
- Elvia Arroyo-Ramírez, Annalise Berdini, Shelly Black, Greg Cram, Kathryn Gronsbell, Nick Krabbenhoeft, Kate Lynch, Genevieve Preston, and Heather Smedberg, "Speeding Towards Remote Access: Developing Shared Recommendations for Virtual Reading Rooms"

In addition to the sections and chapters listed above, *The Lighting the Way Handbook* also includes an introduction to the volume written by its editors to contextualize its creation, synthesize connections across the chapters, and to share programmatic recommendations about areas for future work. The volume was published online in October 2021.

Lessons learned

Over the course of the project, the project team leveraged Forum and Working Meeting participant and facilitator feedback along with consultations from participant advisors to set its strategic direction. The process of facilitating two events and editing *The Lighting the Way Handbook* has also been informative for the project team to understand the issues facing archives and technology workers in improving archival discovery and delivery. This section of the report synthesizes these insights from across the two years of the project.

Archival discovery and delivery as ecosystem

Archival discovery and delivery requires the integration of many people with varying expertise, as well as many kinds of systems, workflows, and tools, and its growing complexity suggests we should view it as an ecosystem. The Lighting the Way project provided a unique perspective to frame archival discovery and delivery as an approach of shared responsibility across archives, library, and technology workers rather than approaching these projects as siloed technical initiatives. The definition of archival discovery and delivery resonated with project participants and encouraged a broader view of the types of systems, processes, and work to implement and sustain it. Following Weber (2017), the project viewed archival discovery and delivery as relying on an "ecosystem of systems" in a wide variety of functional roles. Participants in both the Forum and the Working Meeting indicated that they were surprised by similar challenges across institutions. Contributions to *The Lighting the Way Handbook* also illustrated the emerging complexity of these systems, and the collaboration necessary to develop and maintain them across a wide range of responsibilities, roles, and parts of an organization. The institutional realities of working relationships across departments can have a significant impact on the efficacy of archival discovery and delivery.

Collaboration, power, and organizational positioning

Collaboration is essential between archives and technology workers and is impacted by both power relationships and the cultural norms between collaborating parties. Emerging needs for collaboration must further impact the organizational positioning for this work. Effective archival discovery and delivery, as well as transformational change, requires deep collaboration. Participants at the Forum and Working Meeting both recognized that they often faced structural challenges to collaboration. The discussion of the impact of resource allocation on tactical and strategic progress identified a disconnect between senior leadership and administration with those responsible for this work and their day-to-day lived realities. Many of the contributors to *The Lighting the Way Handbook* elucidated the importance of making work more transparent and have advocated for shared responsibility, but challenges remain to have this work be understood and resourced appropriately.

Working Meeting participants provided positive feedback on the facilitation methods to help identify, understand, and potentially address issues around these power relationships, but doing so with senior leadership and administration requires a substantial amount of trust. Through exercises like Context Mapping, participants came to a shared understanding of the various factors that influence archival discovery and delivery, identifying how technical challenges are influenced and transformed by trends in research and scholarship, the political climate broadly, and resourcing and prioritization of work at different institutions. Many participants made the connection between how institutional priorities are set and communicated and the impact that has on resource provisioning for discovery and delivery of archival collections.

Participants also identified the wide variety of roles that need to be engaged for programmatic work around archival discovery and delivery. Accordingly, there is an ongoing need to engage colleagues with relevant

expertise and knowledge across these initiatives. Despite considerable research on archives and recordkeeping systems as sociotechnical systems, this also suggests that the sociotechnical contexts of archives and special collections qua workplaces are overlooked (Matienzo 2021). As Shaw, Adler and Dooley (2017) describe, collaborating with technology staff in particular can be challenging given cultural differences across units. While activities may be constrained because of these realities, there are nonetheless opportunities to improve and identify new models to undertake shared responsibilities for these programs. This also may mean creating new governance structures for work or changing the organizational positioning of the work to ensure that it is supported such as the creation of new service teams or units charged with this responsibility.

Facilitation and strategic planning using care-focused methods

Strategic planning for archival programs is essential, and care-focused and generative methods such as those used within the Lighting the Way project are of great value to archives, library, and technology workers. Accordingly, these practitioners must undertake responsibility to apply these methods within their own institutions. Throughout the project, participants were highly appreciative to have the time and space to explore challenges and opportunities in relation to archival discovery and delivery. The innovative facilitation methods used by the project allowed participants to engage, think, and respond to the challenges of archival discovery and delivery in new ways. In particular, the exercises enabled participants to explore and draw conclusions about archival discovery and delivery that were based on their lived experiences as practitioners. Participants also remarked on the practicality and focus of the Forum and Working Meeting. Both events enabled participants to envision new possibilities, plant seeds and grow ideas, and consider what actions must be taken to ensure progress is made, outside of the institutional or organizational environment. For groups in the Working Meeting who were from the same institution, the events offered time away from logistics planning and problem solving for institution-specific needs to focus on larger themes in their work. Participants in both the Forum and the Working Meeting indicated that they were surprised by similar challenges across institutions. Contributions to The Lighting the Way Handbook also illustrated the emerging complexity of these systems, and the collaboration necessary to develop and maintain them across a wide range of responsibilities, roles, and parts of an organization.

Participants described the challenge of setting aside time to undertake similar work within their own institutions. While the project did not explore this gap in depth, there are clear questions about why such efforts have not been prioritized. However, as Blumenthal et al. (2020) describe, lack of strategic thinking and relevant advocacy will have a generational impact that leads to this work being inadequately supported over the longer term. Given the mostly positive experiences, participants noted a desire to learn more about the generative facilitation methods drawn from Liberating Structures and other sources. Even with the focus on preparing submissions for *The Lighting the Way Handboo*k during the Working Meeting, the activities were not perceived as being solely solution-oriented. Instead, throughout both events, the focus was to think through significant themes in archival discovery and delivery and propose new ways to support emergent work.

Furthermore, although the events were highly structured, the structure fostered an environment of freedom and creativity where group and individual purpose could be explored and value was placed on the process and discussion, as much as the output or result. Unlike more traditional methods of facilitation, in which one person is the facilitator guiding the group through an exercise, Liberating Structures requires input and direction-setting from all participants. A more traditional approach to facilitating the Forum and Working Meeting might have included less actively facilitated exercises, and more time spent in small discussion groups working through different prompts provided by the facilitators, or more plenary presentations. It would have been a challenge to achieve the goals of the project using these traditional methods, because of the pressure it would place on facilitators to keep the momentum of the conversation going, the lack of overall direction for each goal or session, and the absence of creatively-produced artifacts, like the drawings, diagrams, lists, and maps made

as part of the facilitated activities. Instead, the facilitators and project team ensured that exercises were structured to foster participation, and the creative thinking and input from participants furthered the work. The participants' contributions are what made the exercises and the project's activities meaningful and were fundamental in the project achieving its goals. Finally, the Liberating Structures framework also allowed for a shift in power dynamics, demonstrating that the deep knowledge amongst a group is much more impactful than one individual at the front of a room. Following the Working Meeting, one participant remarked that the project "set new expectations for what the environment should be like in professional settings." This environment is supported not only by the facilitation framework used, but also through the supporting role played by the project principles, Community Agreements, and Code of Conduct to define a clear set of norms for collaboration and interaction. Providing our profession with innovative and engaging ways to think through shared challenges, in ways that recognize and respect labor and ensure care of all participants, is essential to enact emerging archival futures.

The importance of early-stage collaboration and communities of practice to support facilitated strategic planning

Sharing and collaborating on early stage work is valuable for archives, library, and technology workers. Many participants underscored the importance of sharing early-stage work with a thoughtful and engaged group, rather than only reporting out when a project or initiative has been completed. Sharing emerging strategies for enhancing archival discovery and delivery earlier and more often expands the opportunities for collaboration and insight from others, especially given that so many themes identified in the project are shared by multiple institutions. Collaborative and community-developed strategies help ensure the results have a wide-ranging and useful impact across different institutional and professional settings. Throughout both events, participants recognized the opportunity to start or continue thinking about issues that impact archival discovery and delivery, rather than a mandate to resolve them fully. The recognition that dedicating spate to iterate on ideas over time and share in-progress work is a newer concept for the field overall. It diverges with the typical conference or paper publication cycle of initiating and completing a project in one's own workplaces, and then sharing the results with an audience outside of one's institution. Lighting the Way demonstrated that it is essential to share and collaborate across different job functions and institutions, in the early stages of work, to ensure the growth of emergent futures within the archival profession and amongst information workers.

Participants also stated that they hoped to see additional opportunities, provided by the project or otherwise, to collaborate in a similar manner. Many participants acknowledged that both events were a germination of ideas, and to allow for them to continue growing, ongoing discussion and the establishment of a community is needed. Feedback from the Working Meeting showed that there is a desire to continue thinking about these topics, including calls for a "part three" of the project where participants share updates on their topics. Participants were also eager to make spaces for continued collaboration in their respective workplaces and professional communities using techniques from the project's events.

An unintended outcome that emerged from the Forum and Working Meeting was a "train the trainer" experience, where the participants learned these facilitation techniques firsthand through doing them. The connection between the overall positive reception of these techniques and the resulting productive outcomes of the exercises were recognized by participants and the project team. Our community of participants were longing for tools like Liberating Structures to support strategic planning, goal-setting, and operationalizing new ideas. By the end of the Working Meeting, the project team realized the necessity of building leadership and innovative facilitation and collaboration skills within a group of engaged participants to move archival discovery and delivery forward. Techniques used at the Forum and Working Meeting have the potential to make

developing strategic plans, engaging in cross-institutional collaborations, and driving mission and value-aligned work participatory and more equitable.

Recommendations and next steps for the project

As Lighting the Way concludes its funding period, the project team has developed a set of recommendations to sustain this work across the sector. Grant funding has allowed the project to advance some of this work across the last two years, but much of the work to improve and sustain archival discovery and delivery is still in its formative stages. Accordingly, additional investments of time and resources are necessary to actualize some of the promise shown by the project and its participants. Many project participants have inquired whether we will be seeking additional funding to continue the project's model, indicating some reluctance to step into a leadership role. Lighting the Way was intended to be a project to provide a foundation, and subsequently, the recommendations listed below require effort and commitment across sectors from individuals responsible for archival discovery and delivery to step into leadership roles to support this work. Nonetheless, the project team also wants to apply its expertise and network to help sustain this work. The project team has also therefore identified a set of next steps to support some of the recommendations to leverage and expand upon the work undertaken during the last two years.

Recommendation 1: Develop new communities of practice to support archival discovery and delivery that work in alignment with existing ones to ensure they are sustainable. A community of practice is a group with shared or common interest in an area of technical knowledge or professional activity. Throughout the project, participants identified a wide range of extant communities of practice, such as sections of the Society of American Archivists, the Digital Library Federation's Born Digital Access Working Group, the BitCurator Users Forum, and those that exist in support of specific software platforms. Nonetheless, participants also noted that there are clear gaps in the landscape of communities of practice, and that Lighting the Way provided an opportunity given its broad understanding of archival discovery and delivery. Contributors to *The Lighting the Way Handbook* also identified opportunities to create new communities of practice to focus on areas such as user experience and user studies for archival discovery, and to support the development of shared requirements for virtual reading rooms. However, given the many communities of practice that exist, they can be challenging to sustain. To best capitalize on these opportunities, it is essential to define a clear focus, mandate, and relationship to other communities. The Lighting the Way project intends to create a community of practice to support technology strategy for archives through the creation of an email list and regular community calls (see Recommendation 2). While its primary focus will be on archival discovery and delivery, we expect that this may change or expand with time given the multiplicity of needs involved. We have also heard a similar interest in a potential community of practice focused on facilitation. We will identify opportunities to collaborate with existing communities of practice on an ongoing basis.

Recommendation 2: Prioritize collaborative opportunities to inform strategic planning for archival discovery and delivery that explore new working relationships. One of the early challenges identified by the project team was that despite dissatisfaction with the current state of archival discovery and delivery, archives and technology workers often shared information about technical initiatives once development or implementation was deemed "complete." Participants in both the Forum and the Working Meeting confirmed the value of sharing information at earlier stages, especially when there was potential for recognition of shared challenges across institutional boundaries. As a practitioner-focused project, Lighting the Way sought to provide an opportunity for strategic planning informed by the practical experience and knowledge of the participants. However, Working Meeting participants noted the difficulty of setting aside time for strategic work within their own institutions. As Blumenthal et al. (2020) describe, a lack of strategic thinking and subsequent advocacy have a generational impact that leads to work being inadequately supported long-term. To this end,

practitioners need access to regular opportunities to undertake this kind of strategic planning in collaboration with others. The project team therefore plans to convene an open series of regular informal virtual meetings on Zoom for this emergent archives and technology strategy community of practice with facilitated conversations and activities. Prospective participants will be encouraged to share information about their plans and challenges, to demonstrate improved working relations and new organizational models, and to serve as potential facilitators for future meetings.

Recommendation 3: Adopt and apply generative and care-focused facilitation methods to inform strategic planning efforts. As indicated earlier, Forum and Working Meeting participants found the use of generative facilitation methods valuable and appreciated the project's reliance on care-focused and inclusive approaches. While a few participants were familiar with facilitation frameworks like Liberating Structures, most were not, and many described a desire to learn more about the methods used. The Working Meeting demonstrated the transformative potential of applying such generative methods for collaboration given the resulting publication of *The Lighting the Way Handbook*. We hope to see a broader level of adoption of these methods given the positive experiences of project participants. Nonetheless, there is a clear desire and need for additional training and resources for generative facilitation to support strategic planning for archival programs. The project team, potentially in collaboration with Working Meeting facilitators, intends to publish an open access article to better contextualize the facilitation methods used and to provide guidance on how to develop an inclusive hybrid or virtual workshop where these methods are applied. This publication will also describe the value of supporting guidelines like the project's Code of Conduct and Community Agreements in structuring these facilitated spaces. In addition, we will use these methods and share guidelines on facilitation for the newly created communities of practice.

Recommendation 4: Understand the resourcing required and value the labor necessary to undertake strategic opportunities to improve archival discovery and delivery. Throughout the project, participants identified that strategic investment in archives-related initiatives should align with operational needs, and that these should be planned in resource-sensitive ways. Resource allocation for archival programs, however, has been a multi-generational challenge (Levy and Robles 1984; Tansey 2016; Blumenthal et al. 2020). Despite substantial advocacy efforts, there is still a systemic misunderstanding of the level of resourcing needed to sustain archival programs. As contributors to *The Lighting the Way Handbook* indicate, this itself is a threat to transformational change in archives, as much of it relies on temporary positions and grant funding. Many have identified term labor as a potential cause of this under-resourcing and misunderstanding by resource allocators. However, it may also be seen as a symptom thereof given how deeply rooted these forms of austerity are within archival programs and their larger organizational contexts (Rizzo 2021). Undertaking transformational work in archival discovery and delivery thus requires a commitment to longer-term planning and that the organizational context will be able to sustain the work for the future. Capacity planning and cost modeling, such as the recently-developed Total Cost of Stewardship framework (Weber et al. 2021), will also be central to inform that archival programs and their partners are not overextended in their effort to support archival discovery and delivery.

Conclusion

Across its two-year term, the Lighting the Way project focused on convening two gatherings – one in-person, one virtual – dedicated to exploring emergent futures for archival discovery and delivery using inclusive and participatory facilitation methods. This framing allowed participants and the project team to investigate factors how archives, library, and technology workers collaborate to support the ability of people to find, use, and access archival materials. The project activities culminated in the publication of this report, as well as *The Lighting the Way Handbook*, an edited volume with chapters written by project participants. Throughout the

project, participants emphasized the value of care-focused methods for facilitation, the importance of committing time to strategic planning for archives programs and finding new spaces or communities of practice for collaboration. Participants also began to view technical challenges to archival discovery and delivery more broadly as having social and cultural factors, allowing them to view it as a broader ecosystem impacted by collaborative structures that exist to support it. To enact the future of archival discovery and delivery and to support strategic planning for archival programs, we provide four recommendations: 1) develop and sustain new communities of practice; 2) prioritize collaborative opportunities to inform new working relationships; 3) adopt and apply generative and care-focused facilitation methods; and 4) understand the resourcing and value the labor necessary to make and sustain these changes. The project team intends to support these recommendations through the creation of a community of practice focused on technology strategy for archives, leveraging the proven facilitation frameworks used within the project. We hope to collaborate broadly with other communities of practice to sustain this work and to build a stronger set of relationships to allow these emergent futures to flourish and impact how people find, access, and use archives and special collections.

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Appendix 1: Project deliverables

List of primary project publications

Lighting the Way project website. https://lightingtheway.stanford.edu/

Matienzo, Mark A., Dinah Handel, Josh Schneider, and Camille Villa. "Lighting the Way: A Preliminary Report on the National Forum on Archival Discovery and Delivery." Stanford University Libraries. November 2020. https://purl.stanford.edu/rt078dm2196

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Dinah Handel and Mark A. Matienzo. Facilitating and Illuminating Emergent Futures for Archival Discovery and Delivery: The Final Report of the Lighting the Way Project. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Libraries. November 2021. https://doi.org/10.25740/jm302fq5311

Forum and Working Meeting facilitator and participant resources

Mark A. Matienzo, Hillel Arnold. Dinah Handel, and Josh Schneider. "Lighting the Way Forum Playbook: A Resource for Facilitators, Notetakers, and Vendors." Lighting the Way: A National Forum on Archival Discovery and Delivery, Stanford, CA, February 10-12, 2020. https://doi.org/10.25740/nx655rf2881

Mark A. Matienzo, Hillel Arnold, Dinah Handel, and Josh Schneider, facilitators. "Lighting the Way: A National Forum on Archival Discovery and Delivery facilitator slide deck." Lighting the Way: A National Forum on Archival Discovery and Delivery, Stanford, CA, February 10-12, 2020. https://purl.stanford.edu/gt921ck4066

Mark A. Matienzo. "Lighting the Way Working Meeting Overview." (Presentation to supplement the Working Meeting call for proposals.) February 27, 2021. https://purl.stanford.edu/px466xk7252

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Mark A. Matienzo and Dinah Handel. "Lighting the Way Working Meeting Worksheets." Lighting the Way Working Meeting, April-May 2021. https://purl.stanford.edu/fj408hy6215

List of presentations by project team members

Mark A. Matienzo and Camille Villa. "Lighting the Way: illuminating the future of discovery and delivery for archives." Digital Library Federation Forum, Tampa, FL, October 15, 2019. https://purl.stanford.edu/pz232fg1727

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Mark A. Matienzo, Audra Eagle Yun, Hillel Arnold, and Tom Cramer. "Developing a Community-Based Strategic Agenda for the Transformation of Archival Discovery and Delivery." Coalition for Networked Information Membership Meeting, Washington, DC, December 9, 2019. https://purl.stanford.edu/qq075gd5297

Mark A. Matienzo. "Lighting the Way: imagining futures for archival discovery and delivery." Transforming Knowledge, Transforming Lives: A Virtual Summit, University of California, Irvine, May 1, 2020. https://purl.stanford.edu/cj363ky3407

Mark A. Matienzo, Hillel Arnold, Dinah Handel, Josh Schneider and Camille Villa. "Designing the Future of Archival Discovery and Delivery: The Lighting the Way Forum." Society of American Archivists Research Forum, August 5, 2020. https://purl.stanford.edu/wr046sv8628

Elvia Arroyo-Ramírez, Mark A. Matienzo, Shira Peltzman and Charlie Macquarie. "Hidden depths: Illuminating the extent of invisible systems, born-digital, and collections management work." BitCurator Users Forum, October 13, 2020. https://purl.stanford.edu/wk631br1041

Mark A. Matienzo. "The Care and Maintenance of Archival Innovation: The Lighting the Way Working Meeting as incubator for a sociotechnical investigation of archival discovery & delivery." Society of American Archivists Research Forum, July 21, 2021. https://purl.stanford.edu/pc554pt4811

Dinah Handel, Mark A. Matienzo, Sophie Glidden-Lyon, Kate Philipson and Shelly Black. "Lighting the Way: Improving discovery and delivery for archives and special collections." OCLC Research Works in Progress webinar, July 27, 2021. https://purl.stanford.edu/dy984bt0167

Lighting the Way Forum plenary presentations

Presentations from the Lighting the Way Forum on February 10, 2020 were organized into five groupings or themes, most with dedicated question and answers sessions. All presentations were livestreamed and recorded with speaker consent.

Introductory presentations

Mark A. Matienzo and Tom Cramer (Stanford Libraries). "Welcome, logistics, and acknowledgements." https://purl.stanford.edu/mv885mk1216

Mark A. Matienzo and Camille Villa (Stanford Libraries). "The Lighting the Way Project and National Forum." https://purl.stanford.edu/dv339rx4339

The Evolving Systems Ecosystem

What software and other systems do we use to make archival discovery and delivery possible, and how is that changing within institutional contexts?

Trevor Thornton (North Carolina State University). "Developing an integrated technical infrastructure for archives at NC State." https://purl.stanford.edu/qb052kj0451

Lori Myers-Steele (Berea College). "We Are In It Now: Persevering in the Evolving Systems Ecosystem." https://purl.stanford.edu/gx295qj8615

Kim Pham (University of Denver) "Vertical collaboration in a digital collections ecosystem." https://purl.stanford.edu/hq192ky4619

Anna Trammell (Pacific Lutheran University)."Taking the Plunge: When Improving Access and Discoverability Means Walking Away from Your Existing Systems and Starting Over." https://purl.stanford.edu/pr103tf2767

"Question and answer session: The Evolving Systems Ecosystem." https://purl.stanford.edu/dr447sn0505

Networks and the Big Picture

What issues are impacting archives and libraries at the level of the sector, consortia, or beyond, related to discovery and delivery?

Adrian Turner (California Digital Library). "Toward a National Archival Finding Aid Network." https://purl.stanford.edu/kv589hn5123

Merrilee Proffitt (OCLC Research Library Partnership) "A look at trends in academic libraries: are archives lighting the way, or left in the dark?" https://purl.stanford.edu/qt647gg7872

"Question and answer session: Networks and the Big Picture." https://purl.stanford.edu/hp835pn9690

Ethical, Legal, and Cultural Concerns

How have factors like privacy, cultural protocols, copyright, and others impacted our ability to address archival discovery and delivery, on a technical, operational, or strategic level?

Amanda Whitmire (Harold A. Miller Library, Hopkins Marine Station, Stanford University). "Student work, copyright and FERPA: how what you don't know might FERP-YA." https://purl.stanford.edu/bg405cn7261

Tanis Franco (University of Toronto Scarborough). "A Critical Perspective of Access and Privacy in Archives: A Sri Lankan Archive Case Study." https://purl.stanford.edu/qv848kx4545

T-Kay Sangwand (UCLA Library). "Embargoed information: (imperfect) approaches to ethical archival access in Cuba." https://purl.stanford.edu/wp525cy3737

Greg Cram (The New York Public Library). "Feeling Around a Dimly Lit Room: Towards a Virtual Reading Room." https://purl.stanford.edu/yv187wv5370

"Question and answer session: Ethical, Legal, and Cultural Concerns." https://purl.stanford.edu/cs334km7975

Impacts on Public Services and Outreach

How does archival discovery and delivery fit within the front-line work of library and archives workers focused on reference, outreach, public service, and community needs?

Genevieve Preston (San Bernardino County Historical Archives). "San Bernardino County Historical Archives and The Arrowhead Online Portal." https://purl.stanford.edu/kq234ry7019

Daisy Muralles (University of California, Santa Barbara). "Aeon Office Hours & Open Archives Sessions." https://purl.stanford.edu/nd901zk5193

Heather Smedberg (University of California, San Diego). "Pulling the Door Open Together: Collaborative Development of a Virtual Reading Room Service." https://purl.stanford.edu/rz180xn4072

Sara Guzman (Himdag Ki - Tohono O'odham Nation Cultural Center & Museum). "Providing Access on Tohono O'odham Nation." https://purl.stanford.edu/zb349td2077

"Question and answer session: Impacts on Public Services and Outreach and Concluding Remarks." https://purl.stanford.edu/xf785jv6306

Appendix 2: List of project participants

Core Project Team, Stanford University Libraries

Primary Project Team: Mark A. Matienzo, Assistant Director for Digital Strategy and Access and Project Director; Dinah Handel, Digitization Service Manager; Camille Villa, Digital Library Software Developer; Supavadee Kiattinant, Administrative Associate

Additional support from: Claudette Castillo, Grant and Financial Program Administrator; Tom Cramer, Associate University Librarian and Director, Digital Library Systems and Services; Franz Kunst, Archivist; Sally DeBauche, Digital Archivist; Glynn Edwards, Assistant Director, Department of Special Collections; Josh Schneider, University Archivist

Participant advisors

Amelia Abreu, UX Night School; Hillel Arnold, Rockefeller Archive Center; Elvia Arroyo-Ramírez, UC Irvine; Dorothy Berry, Harvard University; Audra Eagle Yun, UC Irvine; Max Eckard, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Amanda Ferrara, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University; Geoff Froh, Densho; Julie Hardesty, Indiana University; Linda Hocking, Litchfield Historical Society; Sara Logue, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University; Sandra Phoenix, HBCU Library Alliance; Gregory Wiedeman, University at Albany, SUNY

Forum participants

Facilitators have been *italicized*.

Amelia Abreu, UX Night School; Valerie Addonizio, Atlas Systems; Sean Aery, Duke University Libraries; Carla O. Alvarez, University of Texas Libraries; Krystal Appiah, University of Virginia; *Hillel Arnold, Rockefeller Archive Center; Elvia Arroyo-Ramírez, UC Irvine*; Anne Bahde, Oregon State University, Special Collections and Archives Research Center; Erin Baucom, The University of Montana - Missoula; Stephanie Becker, Case Western Reserve University; *Dorothy Berry, Houghton Library, Harvard University*; Rose Chiango, Philadelphia Museum of Art; Elena Colón-Marrero, Computer History Museum; Greg Cram, The New York Public Library; Katherine Crowe, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution; *Michelle Dalmau, Indiana University*; Sally DeBauche, Stanford University Libraries; Kira Dietz, Virginia Tech; Kate Donovan, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Sarah Dorpinghaus, University of Kentucky Libraries; *Audra Eagle Yun, UC Irvine; Max Eckard, University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library*; Glynn Edwards, Stanford University Libraries; Danielle Emerling, West Virginia University; *Amanda Ferrara, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library Princeton University*; Tanis Franco, University of Toronto Scarborough; Geoff Froh, Densho; Katie Gillespie, Atlas Systems; Kevin Glick, Yale University Library, Manuscripts & Archives; Sara Angela Guzman, Tohono O'odham Cultural Center & Museum; Wendy Hagenmaier, Georgia Tech; *Dinah Handel, Stanford University Libraries*; DeLisa Minor Harris, Fisk University; Aaisha Haykal, College of Charleston/Avery Research Center; Michelle Herman, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Carrie Hintz, Rose Library, Emory University; *Linda Hocking, Litchfield Historical Society*; Shane Huddleston, OCLC; Noah Huffman, Duke University; Nancy Kennedy, Smithsonian Institution; Emily Lapworth, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Charlie Macquarie, University of California, San Francisco; Jenny Manasco, American Baptist Historical Society; *Mark A. Matienzo, Stanford University Libraries*; Anna McCormick, New York University; Giordana Mecagni, Northeastern University Archives and Special Collections; Daisy Muralles, Special Research Collections, UCSB Library; Lori Myers-Steele, Berea College; Lisa Nguyen, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford University; Donovan Pete, Indigenous Digital Archives; *Christie Peterson, Smith College Special Collections*; Kim Pham, University of Denver; Sandra Phoenix, HBCU Library Alliance; Chris Powell, University of Michigan Library; Genevieve Preston, San Bernardino County Historical Archives; Merrilee Proffitt, OCLC; Caitlin Rizzo, Pennsylvania State University Special Collections; T-Kay Sangwand, UCLA; *Josh Schneider, Stanford University Libraries*; Bethany Scott, University of Houston Libraries; *Sarah Seestone, Stanford University Libraries*; Heather Smedberg, UC San Diego Library; Trevor R. Thornton, NC State University Libraries; Althea Topek, Tulane University; Anna Trammell, Pacific Lutheran University; Adrian Turner, California Digital Library; *Camille Villa, Stanford University Libraries*; Jennifer Vine, Stanford University Libraries; Amanda Whitmire, Stanford University Libraries; Amy Wickner, University of Maryland; *Gregory Wiedeman, University at Albany, SUNY*

Working Meeting facilitators

Hillel Arnold, Rockefeller Archive Center; Audra Eagle Yun, UC Irvine; Max Eckard, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Dinah Handel, Stanford University Libraries; Wendy Hagenmaier, Georgia Tech; Julie Hardesty, Indiana University; Linda Hocking, Litchfield Historical Society; Mark A. Matienzo, Stanford University Libraries; Gregory Wiedeman, University at Albany, SUNY

Working Meeting participants/Handbook contributors

Jodi Allison-Bunnell, Montana State University; Martha Alvarado Anderson, University of Arkansas; Elvia Arroyo-Ramírez, UC Irvine; Annalise Berdini, Princeton University; Stephanie Becker, Case Western Reserve University; Shelly Black, North Carolina State University; Stefana Breitwieser, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; Maureen Cresci Callahan, Smith College; Faith Charlton, Princeton University; Christa Cleeton, Princeton University; Alison Clemens, Yale University; Betts Coup, Harvard University; Greg Cram, The New York Public Library; Katharine Crowe, Smithsonian Institution; Amanda Demeter, Tacoma Community College; Sarah Dorpinghaus, University of Kentucky; Max Eckard, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Katrina Fenlon, University of Maryland; Hannah Frisch, University of Maryland; Sophie Glidden-Lyon, La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club; Melanie Griffin, University of Arkansas; Kathryn Gronsbell, Carnegie Hall; Gretchen Gueguen, PALCI; Dinah Handel, Stanford University Libraries; Emiko Hastings, Clements Library, University of Michigan; Regine Heberlein, Princeton University; Kyna Herzinger, University of Louisville; Zoe Hill, Harvard University; Nick Krabbenhoeft, The New York Public Library; Deb Kulczak, University of Arkansas; Anne Kumer, Case Western Reserve University; John Kunze, California Digital Library; Cory Lampert, University of Nevada Las Vegas; Naomi Langer, Case Western Reserve University; Kate Lynch, Princeton University; Diana Marsh, University of Maryland; Mark A. Matienzo, Stanford University Libraries; Krystyna Matusiak, University of Denver; Anna McCormick, New York University; Amanda Murray, Documentary Heritage and Preservation Services for New York; Lori Myers-Steele, Berea College; Renee Pappous, Rockefeller Archive Center; Rebecca Pattillo, University of Louisville; Kate Philipson, Documentary Heritage and Preservation Services for New York; Chris Powell, University of Michigan Library; Genevieve Preston, San Bernardino County Historical Archives; Elizabeth Russey Roke, Emory University; Hannah Sistrunk, Rockefeller Archive Center; Heather Smedberg, University of California, San Diego; Greta Kuriger Suiter, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Jessica Tai, Yale University; Ruth Kitchin Tillman, Penn State University; Victoria Van Hyning, University of Michigan; Olga Virakhovskaya, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; Caitlin Wells, Special Collections Library, University of Michigan; Gregory Wiedeman, University at Albany-SUNY; Katrina Windon, University of Arkansas; Darren Young, Rockefeller Archive Center

Appendix 3: Working Meeting call for participants

The Lighting the Way project team requests proposals from groups of around 3 to 6 participants to participate in a series of online meetings and collaborative activities over the course of six weeks, starting the week of April 19, 2021. Each working group will develop a written contribution of 5 to 10 pages, exploring topics related to improving archival discovery and delivery, intended for inclusion in a larger handbook compiled and published by the Lighting the Way project team.

To apply, please complete an application form, including a 250-word abstract of your proposed topic and list of your potential group participants, **no later than March 15, 2021**. Participants will be notified by March 29, 2021 if selected to participate.

These contributions are intended to build on the work of *Lighting the Way: A National Forum on Archival Discovery and Delivery*, held at Stanford University in February 2020, which focused on information sharing and collaborative problem solving to improve discovery and delivery for archives and special collections. The Forum provided rich opportunities for discovering points of convergence, which can be explored in the Preliminary Report on the Forum. Topics generated by Forum participants may provide a starting point for proposals, but applicants are welcome to propose topics that are not represented in the Preliminary Report appendices.

Some possible topics for exploration drawn from the Preliminary Report include:

- Virtual reading rooms, or providing remote access to archival collections in a sustainable manner
- User experience and discoverability of archival materials
- How institutions or projects have integrated systems and software supporting archival discovery and delivery
- Integrating archival description with other access and fulfillment systems, including for digital collections
- Copyright policies and practices

Written contributions may take the form of:

- Case studies of archival discovery and delivery in local contexts
- Proposals of new or emerging models of archival discovery and delivery
- Analysis or position papers on key components and/or systems in archival discovery and delivery
- Analysis of a specific project or collaboration involving archival discovery and delivery, or opportunities to collaborate across institutions
- Discussion of institutional workflows and systems implicated in archival discovery and delivery

While we ask prospective participants to provide 250-word topic abstracts, we recognize that topics may evolve in focus as their group engages in the working meeting. We do not require topics to be fully fleshed out, but we ask contributors to identify areas for exploration as they explore the ideas or focus described in the proposed topic. The working meeting and collaborative writing are intended to allow groups to develop their topics over the course of the working meeting.

If you have a proposal for a group but have not identified fellow participants, please indicate this in your proposal. The project team and participant advisors will help identify collaborators as needed, and encourage potential collaborators to share prospective topics in a shared spreadsheet.

Selected participants are asked to commit to a series of four two-hour synchronous working meetings held over six weeks, and to both meet and work asynchronously with their groups to produce an initial draft of their written contribution during this period. Written contributions will be compiled following this period for inclusion in the project's handbook on archival discovery and delivery; as such, we ask prospective participants to agree to license their potential contributions under the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC-BY) version 4.0. All participants are also expected to follow the project's [Community Agreements and Code of Conduct](#) in all project activities.

Frequently asked questions about the CFP

- **Can group participants be all from one institution, or across multiple institutions?** Yes, we will consider submissions both from groups with participants solely at a single institution or across multiple institutions.
- **Does every group member need to submit an application?** No; one applicant should be designated for as a "lead contact" for the time being. We ask only for contact information for other members of your proposed group.

Contact us

More information on the Lighting the Way Working Meeting can be found on the [project website](#). If you have any questions or feedback about the process, please contact the project team at lighting-the-way-team@lists.stanford.edu, or Mark Matienzo, Project Director, at matienzo@stanford.edu.

Appendix 4: Working Meeting quantitative feedback summary

Please see the secondary file listed at https://doi.org/10.25740/jm302fq5311.