

Call for Applications: The Marshall McLuhan Centenary Fellowship in Digital Sustainability at the UofT iSchool Digital Curation Institute



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF INFORMATION
Digital Curation Institute

The Digital Curation Institute (DCI) at the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto is an interdisciplinary research unit led by Prof. Christoph Becker. It unites leading researchers in digital curation in a broad, inclusive perspective on the field, with the aim to provide a vibrant space of investigation, exchange and discussion (<http://dci.ischool.utoronto.ca>).

The DCI is calling for applications for a one-year funded Fellowship in the area of 'digital sustainability'. Applications are due **by Mar 15, 2017** (see below).

Sustainability - the capacity to endure - has become a crucial concern of our data-intensive society. It needs to be addressed jointly across multiple disciplines and perspectives around information, computing, technology and society. A very abstract concept at first, sustainability brings central questions in our information society to the fore. It urges us to take a longer-term perspective on the entanglement of social, cultural, and technical questions in systems design and strive to simultaneously advance environmental, social, economic, individual, and technical goals. These perspectives don't emerge from incremental technical progress.

The term "digital sustainability" aims to scope this fellowship in an intentionally broad sense that unites key concerns of interest for the DCI and offers connections to many disciplinary perspectives. The capacity of *digital resources* to endure is a key focus of digital curation activities. At the same time, sustainability has become a [central challenge in the design](#) of information systems and software-intensive systems in general, where it draws our attention to the capacity of communities, socio-technical systems, processes, or ecosystems to endure.

Curation activities in turn are crucial for data-intensive research, in particular historical or longitudinal inquiry. For example, they are central to the environmental sciences and equally at the heart of understanding social and economic sustainability. Well-curated, usable, understandable data are [essential](#) in exploring our place in the universe, sustaining humanity and the environment, promoting and improving public health, engaging cultural values, enabling future technologies, preserving past and future cultural heritage, and advancing prosperity - key challenges emphasized in the [Strategic Research Plan of the University of Toronto](#).

For this Fellowship, we are seeking a curious individual who pursues creative friction and synergies across disciplinary boundaries, especially those between the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and engineering, design, computing and technology.

The Fellowship will be awarded on a yearly basis. It can be offered to an academic faculty member (at any level), adjunct instructor, industry professional, graduate student, or postdoctoral fellow. Each of the categories will be given equal consideration. Only one Fellowship will be awarded each year.

What do Fellows gain from being a fellow?

- **Funding:** A stipend of **\$10.000 CAD**.
- **Community:** The Fellow will be integrated into the intellectual life at the DCI and the Faculty of Information. As part of this, the Fellow will be given the opportunity to be significantly involved with the organization of the funded lecture series at the DCI, which brings leading international guest speakers to Toronto.

- **Support network:** Embedding into the social and intellectual fabric of UofT, the Faculty of Information, the Digital Curation Institute, and the McLuhan Centre for Culture and Technology provides a unique support network within a vibrant and growing intellectual environment
- **State-of-the-art facilities:** The Fellow will have full access to the new lab for data-intensive approaches to digital curation with cutting-edge collaboration, visualization and data-intensive computing technology. The lab is located in the newly redesigned Inforum at the iSchool.
- **A platform** for discourse, community and visibility through the involvement in the organization of the lecture series and the opportunity to hold lectures and workshops at the DCI and the McLuhan Centre for Culture and Technology.
- **Recognition:** The fellowship will be awarded annually through a competitive process, and announced and promoted publicly.

What kind of research project should the fellow conduct?

In the spirit of the trans-disciplinary nature of sustainability, there is no restriction on the type of research or approach followed. Applications and proposals from a broad range of backgrounds and focus areas are welcome. However, we expect that the Fellow's proposed research project will demonstrate direct relevance to some of the following topical areas:

- the role of curation in data-intensive research
- systems thinking and sustainability
- digital archiving
- digital preservation
- digital curation
- the nature of digital, computational objects, and their capacity to endure
- data curation in the humanities
- concerns of sustainability in the design of sociotechnical systems
- born-digital data and objects as future cultural heritage
- the social, economic, environmental, technical and individual sustainability of digital curation
- the social, economic, environmental, technical and individual sustainability of ICT systems
- sustainability design (see www.sustainabilitydesign.org)
- conflicts between short-term goals and long-term concerns in sociotechnical systems
- long-term thinking *within* the design of information and communication technologies
- the sustainability of social communities, institutional practices and "cultures" of curation
- critical aspects of digital curation and sustainability that go beyond standard definitions

If you are interested in the fellowship and are unsure whether your interests align with the research conducted at the DCI, please contact christoph.becker@utoronto.ca.

Selection process: All applications must be sent to christoph.becker@utoronto.ca with the subject "Application to DCI fellowship" and should contain (1) A CV, (2) A brief research proposal (2 single-spaced pages plus references), and (3) Two reference letters, sent under separate cover by the writers. All applications will be reviewed by the Director of the DCI and two additional faculty members at the iSchool. **Applications are due by March 15, 2017.** Applicants will be notified in April 2017.

The University of Toronto is strongly committed to diversity within its community and especially welcomes applications from visible minority group members, women, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities, members of sexual minority groups, and others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas.

Detailed terms

This is the second year of the 7-year Fellowship program. The inaugural Fellowship is currently held by Prof. Ian Milligan, University of Waterloo (see the [announcement](#)).

Period: The fellowship period runs from 1 July to 30 June each year. In this round, the fellowship starts in July 2017.

Naming: The fellowship is called,

- if it is held by a professional or an academic, "the Marshall McLuhan Centenary Fellowship in Digital Sustainability at the UofT iSchool Digital Curation Institute",
- if it is held by a post-doctoral fellow, "the Marshall McLuhan Centenary Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Digital Sustainability at the UofT iSchool Digital Curation Institute",
- and if it is held by a graduate student, "the Marshall McLuhan Centenary Graduate Fellowship in Digital Sustainability at the UofT iSchool Digital Curation Institute".

Expectations: During the period of the Fellowship, the fellow will be expected to

- Give one lecture and/or workshop at the Digital Curation Institute,
- Give one lecture in the McLuhan Centre for Culture and Technology (e.g. in the Monday Night Seminar Series),
- Acknowledge the Fellowship in research output (including presentations, publications, software, data, standards and other intellectual property) resulting from this period,
- Be present on site at the Digital Curation Institute for an agreed period during the fellowship period (a minimum of three months is expected),
- Take part in the organization of two lectures or workshops as part of the DCI lecture series,
- Contribute to the intellectual life of the DCI and the Faculty of Information, and
- Submit an activity plan at the start of the Fellowship and an activity report at the end.

Timing and arrangements will be mutually coordinated between the Fellow and the DCI Director.