

## **Transcript: A Role by Any Other Name: Advertising and Recruiting for Digital Asset Management on Library and Archives Job Boards Lightning Talk**

### **Slide 1**

Our presentation is titled, “A Role by Any Other Name: Advertising and Recruiting for Digital Asset Management on Library and Archives Job Boards.”

### **Slide 2**

I’m Dana Reijerkerk, the Knowledge Management and Digital Assets Librarian at Stony Brook University Libraries. I am Kristen Nyitray, Director of Special Collections and University Archives, and University Archivist at Stony Brook University Libraries.

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While Digital Asset Management or D-A-M, DAM, is an established discipline with a discrete functional role in the corporate sector and in Big Data curation, its emergence as an essential activity in library and archival operations is a relatively new development. In an annual snapshot report of information science career trends, the San José State University School of Information published ‘Digital Asset Manager/Coordinator’ as a representative Library and Information Science or LIS job title and ‘Digital asset management systems’ as a representative LIS job skill. In libraries, functional DAM processes encompass a spectrum of activities such as e-resource management of licensed content, standardizing data and metadata across systems, and generating benchmarks for assessment. Examples of digital assets in LIS environments include digitized and born-digital special collections, institutional email communications, archived web pages and e-journal backfiles.

Given the growth of DAM work in the LIS profession, our analysis aimed to clarify concepts that have yet to be codified by relevant professional organizations. Our study considered seven research questions related to assessing the state, scope and attributes of positions with DAM roles.

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We collected full-time job postings for DAM positions on several popular library and archive job boards between January 1st and June 30th, 2022. We signed up for job alerts for job sites, such as ALA JobLIST and Archives Gig and used keywords to search ads for ‘digital’ in job titles; we also searched for jobs associated with DAM work without ‘digital’ in the title; and DAM tasks in the position description. The keywords we used were obtained from the Society of American Archivists’ ‘Dictionary of Archives Terminology’ and the American Library Association’s ‘Glossary of Library and Information Science’. We excluded posts that were primarily dedicated to other work, such as metadata creation, e-resource management, and scholarly communication. We also excluded duplicate or reposted positions. We downloaded a copy of each ad as a PDF and created a shared Google Sheet to organize findings. We captured data points from each ad including position title; type of organization (such as a gallery or archive); its nonprofit status; faculty and/or tenure-track status; salary ranges; education; reporting line; department or division; and responsibilities.

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We used Voyant Tools, a free, open source text analysis tool, to analyze the word frequencies in all advertisements and to perform a content analysis on the scope of work, position expectations, education and salaries. The figure on the left illustrates the top words in job titles. The word size indicates a higher frequency. The figure on the right shows a collocation of words used in the hiring objectives section of the postings; the words in blue are most frequently located in close proximity to the words in orange.

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The study identified 98 job postings with DAM roles over the six-month period. Seventy-five jobs were posted by academic or research organizations and 23 by private companies. Employers were primarily located in the United States, and institutions in New York State posted the highest number of job advertisements. There was only one fully remote position posted.

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Five themes emerged from the analysis.

#### Theme 1: Lack of ‘digital asset manager’ title in position descriptions

In our study, the exact title ‘Digital asset manager’ was rarely used for position titles; it only appeared in one post. Most DAM titles included the word ‘digital’ in combination with the words ‘archivist’, ‘asset,’ and ‘preservation’. The most common DAM position title was ‘Digital Archivist.’

#### Theme 2: Variability in educational background

Across all sectors, the degree level and field of study varied greatly. Positions commonly stated the requirement of a bachelor’s degree or master’s or graduate degree. Of the 63 positions requiring graduate education, 36 specified a degree had to be accredited by the American Library Association (ALA). Also, membership in a professional organization was a desired credential.

#### Theme 3: Emphasis on soft skills and technical skills

The advertisements placed emphasis on communication skills, ability to work with diverse groups across an organization’s hierarchy, and technological competency. There was a demand for high-tech skills in computer and information systems, and in system-specific knowledge. Examples of technological hard skills include programming, statistical analysis, systems management, and data analytics.

#### Theme 4: Centrality of DAM work

Many DAM positions are described as collaborators across department lines. However, a majority of positions are not dedicated to DAM; rather they include DAM as just one facet of overall responsibilities.

#### Theme 5: Salary ranges are below market value for DAM roles

Salaries for digital asset managers are the same as or less than the mean annual salary for librarians and archivists. Most positions only required a bachelor’s degree.

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#### **Findings**

- There is an emergence of DAM within and beyond LIS contexts.
- There is a lack of authority control in defining DAM work in library and archive settings.
- Job-seekers need more portfolio-building experiences.
- DAM work for librarians and archivists can be found in diverse institutions, job titles, and duties.

**Among our recommendations are:**

- Librarians can expand their career horizons in jobs outside of LIS.
- It is important to monitor job advertisements for trends in skilling up.
- For equity, libraries and archives should codify the scope of DAM work.

**Our final takeaway is that**

- Increasing the presence of DAM positions across all sectors affirms the value of DAM.

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If you would like to get in contact with us after our talk, you can email us at these addresses. Thank you again to the New York Archives Conference for the opportunity to present our research and to each of you for attending.