

Tori Maches

DIGITAL ARCHIVIST

Led by the LAUC-SD Mentoring Committee, Librarian Profiles offer background information and career-related advice from UC San Diego librarians to MLIS students and graduates.

Which institution did you earn your MLIS or other graduate degree?

University of California, Los Angeles

Do you currently or did you ever hold a professional library position related to the focus you pursued in graduate school?

Yes

Did you have work experience at any level in a library of any type prior to attending library school?

Yes

Do you have another advanced degree(s) in addition to any MLIS?

No

Did you focus on a particular area of librarianship while earning your MLIS?

Yes, archives (coursework) and digital preservation (work/internship experience)

Beyond the MLIS, do you feel that any additional advanced degree is essential to success in your current position?

No

What are some of your current tasks and responsibilities?

- Make born-digital archival materials discoverable and available to researchers
- Ensure that files saved in obsolete file formats or obsolete storage media can be opened on modern computers
- Lead the Library's web archiving work
- Provide technical expertise for digital projects within the Library
- Provide technical support for incoming transfers of digital material to Special Collections & Archives

What are some skills or core competencies you feel are essential to success in your current position?

- Troubleshooting
- Using command-line tools
- Research
- Coding/scripting to automate tasks
- Repurposing tools from other fields to meet your needs

What do you like best about being a librarian or about your current role or responsibilities?

I love the variety of subjects and formats I get to work with. My role is as a technical/format expert, so I might work with 40-year-old word processor files from a poetry collection one day, and campus records from last year the next. I also love the puzzle-solving aspect of my job - every collection has its own needs and issues, and troubleshooting those issues is a lot of fun. My favorite part of my job, though, is seeing people use materials I've made discoverable and accessible! It's a great feeling to know that you helped someone find information they needed.

What do you like best about working in an academic or university setting?

I love the openness of an academic (especially public university) setting - you're encouraged to share your work and compare notes with colleagues outside your library, and the materials and collections you work on will eventually be accessible to anyone who wants to learn from them.

What is something that you think contributed to you getting your first professional job following graduate school for your MLIS?

I think it was a combination of work experience and luck. I happened to go to library school at a time when many institutions were starting to formalize their digital archives programs, so libraries were hiring graduate students/interns to help develop and implement these tools and workflows. Since my program didn't offer many digital archives courses, most of my training was through these positions. This gave me opportunities to have more responsibility and work at a higher level than students typically do, and a skillset that was in high demand when I graduated.

What is your advice to MLIS students seeking or entering their first professional library position?

Library jobs can be exciting, challenging, and rewarding, but they're still jobs. Being an early-career library professional is hard. Not having a life or sense of self outside your work is a quick and easy way to burn out - you're more than your job!

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Please contact me to further discuss my work or background.
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