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Cultural Heritage Information Management Forum

Keynote Presentation, Friday, June 5, 2015

9:15 - 10:10 AM

Keynote Presentation, Martin R. Kalfatovic

The Nature of Illumination: Cultural Heritage and the Technology of Culture

In both its creation and transmission, technology has driven our shared human culture. Libraries, archives, and museums (LAMs), in varying forms and modalities across time and culture, have proven to be the best, though too often fragile, vessels for the transmission of culture through both time and space. Over the past twenty years, new technologies have expanded the reach of our “memory institutions” while at the same time posing challenges to their relevance from the world at large. At the same time, long held practices around curation, selection, and use of LAM collections are being questioned from both inside and outside these institutions.

Increasingly, technology is providing the means to bring LAMs closer together, to unite dispersed collections, and to engage a new and wider audience that can enhance the institutional knowledge of these collections. Our cultural heritage professionals of today and the future will need not only a firm grounding in their subject areas, but also a deep and broad conversance in technology.

The reconciliation of historic missions, new audience expectations, and a seemingly relentless deluge of technological innovation need to be looked on not as existential threats, but as opportunities to evolve these natural extensions of humanity for survival in ages to come.