

Kamryn Wies

Smithsonian—Biodiversity Heritage Project

When I learned of the amazing opportunity to intern at the Smithsonian Libraries, I instantly knew I wanted to be a part of it. I was lucky enough to be chosen to be the Biodiversity Heritage Library In-Copyright Intern. I knew the BHL was a digital library but, having no previous experience with a purely digital collection, I couldn't begin to start making a guess. What I ended up doing was so much cooler than anything I could have anticipated. I got to spend the whole week pushing my attention to detail and love of consistency to the limits. Now that may sound boring to some but this is the kind of thing I do at home for fun.

Because BHL is a digital library, copyright plays a huge role in their work. Some of the materials being digitized are still under copyright, which means that the BHL has to get permission, in writing, for the materials to be added to their collection.

Getting permission is just step one. Some copyright holders ask that there be what's called a "moving wall" (or embargo). In academic publishing, access is sometimes only allowed to paid subscribers so publishers may not want their most current materials to be made accessible for free (see [Wikipedia](#) for more information). This can be a one year moving wall or even a fourteen year moving wall. It all depends on the wishes of the publisher.

BHL wants to make sure they can provide as much access as possible and having the option for a moving wall available to a publisher allows for that. The issue with having a bunch of publications that all have different moving walls is you then have to keep track of and keep up with them every year.

BHL manages this process by using an issue tracking system (again, see [Wikipedia](#) for more information). They create 'issues' for each publication title that has a moving wall in order to make sure it is being updated every year as appropriate. My first task was to make sure all of the permissions titles that had moving walls (about 60 of them) had open and up to date issues in the tracking system. I also had to make sure that there was an issue for each title because some publications had multiple titles and each title needed an issue created for it. I really loved this. Making sure information is accurate across multiple platforms (issue tracker, BHL website, permissions titles spreadsheet) and consistently formatted means that work can run easier, no matter who in the world is using the system.

Once I completed that introductory task, I moved on to the process of 'reconciling moving walls'. I had to review each moving wall issue in the tracking system to make sure they were up to date. For example, if a title had a 3 year moving wall, 2013 should now be in BHL. I checked BHL to make sure the title was in the collection. Then reviewed the title for any gaps in the journal run or if we were missing the new year allowed due to the moving wall. If there were any missing materials, I had to find out which of the Contributor libraries had the missing materials and ask them to digitize it. There were so many little steps and details to pay attention to and I had fun delving into each issue.

This was a project that may have been created to help the BHL keep on point with their digitization of new materials but it was built with me in mind: someone who can easily work across multiple platforms and screens, has an acute attention to detail and strong desire to achieve consistency. This week was so interesting and informative. I had so much fun not only doing the project for the BHL but meeting all the different people who make the Smithsonian Libraries run smoothly. We did tours of multiple libraries and learned so much about the collections and how the librarians help the researchers. I can only hope that when I graduate I find a job that is as much as fun as this internship has been.

Matthew Noe

National Library of Medicine—NLM Learning Resources API Project

During this year's Alternative Spring Break at the National Library of Medicine, I worked primarily with Sarah Helson, a librarian in the Bibliographic Services Division, on evaluating and creating documentation for the NLM Learning Resources Database (<https://learn.nlm.nih.gov/>). When completed, this database will be the home location for all of NLM's learning resources – which range from interactive tutorials to Medical Library Association webinars. Creating the user documentation – essentially a “how to” guide for searching the database – was an excellent opportunity to put my coursework (particularly LIS 621 and 625) to work in a practical, valuable way. I look forward to seeing the completed database when it goes live and hope to continue to build upon the new professional relationships made over the course of the week.

Ash Skipper

Smithsonian—Artists' Files Project

For the Alternate Spring Break, I interned at the American Art Museum/National Portrait Gallery Library. I worked on updating the online records of the Artists Files for the artists that created book art. Book art includes art that is created from books or in the shape of books. After I made sure that the online records were updated, I created vertical files for those artists who did not have a file. Finally, I researched the artists online for artist statements, biographies, mentions of the artwork that the Smithsonian has, etc. Not only did I have fun working on this project, but I learned a lot. My supervisor also had plenty of great advice on what I can do to further my studies. I now know for certain that I want to study more art history. This was a great experience!

Megan Lucy

Smithsonian—Scholarly Communication

For Alternative Spring Break 2016, I worked in the Scholarly Communications department of Smithsonian Libraries under the supervision of Alvin Hutchinson. The opportunity to work inside the Smithsonian and see behind the scenes of this world famous museum system fulfilled a lifelong dream for me. Smithsonian Libraries has 21 branch libraries, 5 of which we were able to tour. I was also able to tour three of the Smithsonian Museums, the Museums of Natural History and American History, and my favorite, the National Museum of the American Indian.

More importantly, though, Alternative Spring Break provided me with an important opportunity to clarify my academic path and career goal. I am only four classes into the MLS program, and had not quite decided on an academic track yet. Additionally, I am trying to build a bridge between my current career in academic administration and faculty advancement and a possible future career in academic libraries. The exact structure of that bridge was not always certain to me. At the Smithsonian, I worked on an institutional repository and database of Smithsonian scholars. Seeing the similarities between this database and the databases I work with at University of Kentucky clarified for me the importance of computer science and information systems to the future of both academic libraries and universities. I came away from the experience with the hope of pursuing an Information Systems academic track. It is amazing that in only one week's time, I received such clarity and learned so many important things that will truly impact my career.

Teresa McGinley

National Library of Medicine—Assessing Publisher Supplied Information PubMed

Emily and I worked with the PubMed Central group. They are trying to standardize the process of reviewing publishers for addition to the PMC repository. So our project was two-fold, the first was to evaluate multiple publishers using preset questions. Secondly, we evaluated the review questions to make sure they were appropriate and understandable to reviewers. It was definitely a lesson into the questionable practices and ethics of some publishers out there, predatory and not. We also learned a lot about publication ethics standards and organizations. This project was a lot of fun because we had to sleuth out answers, which led down rabbit holes of information more often than not.

Emily Elkind

National Library of Medicine— Assessing Publisher Supplied Information PubMed

We did indeed work to verify information provided by publishers about various types of materials. I am unable to elaborate beyond this point, but I can say that the experience is wonderful and provided me with an entirely different view of the work I am doing in the library system and helped me use one of my strengths: handling detailed information.

On Wednesday, because the metro was shut down for maintenance, I explored Chinatown and went on a tour with the interns at the Smithsonian to learn about the rare books kept in the Museum of Natural History. We learned that some people could request the exact same book either in black and white pictures or in color pictures, but the books would look very different. Often, people with less money could cover the book with slim paper or, if they had more money, they could cover it with leather. Also, in the early days of printing, copper plates were used to help people to put the pictures in with the text. The same book could have the pictures placed in different areas of the book. Rather than having a title page, the book was signed off with the author's name and the date it was finished. Overall, the rare book room was an extremely interesting experience.

The last two days were spent working on the same project that I began earlier in the week. I enjoyed the experience very much and enjoyed meeting everyone. I am glad that I had the chance to go and work there for a week. It was fantastic, and I would recommend it.

Bailey Schrupp

Smithsonian—Advancement

I was afforded the opportunity to intern with Smithsonian Libraries for a week in the Advancement Department, as part of the schools Alternative Spring Break program. Before coming to the Smithsonian I knew very little about the Libraries, another than there were many of them, and I knew nothing about advancement for the libraries. However, the Advancement team quickly helped to demystify how they contributed to the libraries. Given my background in Environmental Law, I was able to work on a project geared towards helping with funding for the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL). Through research and a series of meetings I was able to find out how important the BHL is to the scientific community, especially researchers, and how the advancement team helps to keep it funded. I did not just learn about Advancement for one library however, I learned about advancement and its importance for all libraries. On a lighter note, during my time at the Smithsonian Libraries I, along with other UK interns, were given tours of some of the amazing Libraries of the Smithsonian. Some highlights included seeing a page of the Gutenberg Bible and Euclid 3-D geometry book from the Dibner Library and a piece at the Cullman library which included an article on Unicorns from a 1550 animal encyclopedia. Also since we were housed in the Natural History Museum, so our group was able to explore the museum every day, which was nice to me able to take our time and really appreciate the exhibits.



Myself and the "Lucy" exhibit at NMNH

Cat Staley

Smithsonian—Social Media

Even though it was only for five days, my internship with the Smithsonian Libraries was packed with diverse and hands-on experiences. I worked with their social media department to review departmental guidelines and policies for various social media platforms; to craft Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram posts highlighting their Artists' Book and Africa exhibit; and to brainstorm ideas for promoting SIL during National Library Week. It was eye-opening to see how a national institution manages and organizes their outreach efforts. My supervisor also took me to meetings with different programs and project coordinators so I could see "behind the scenes" and meet a variety of individuals who contribute to the library's mission and success. Everyone I encountered was eager to answer my questions and discuss their roles in the library with me. Some of the trip highlights included touring various library branches. My favorite was the Dibner Library of the History of Library and Technology, where the Head of Special Collections showed us collection treasures and educated us about the library's preservation efforts. I got to experience all of this while surrounded by the culture and cherry blossoms of Washington, D.C.! I definitely encourage future students to take advantage of this energizing and educational opportunity.