An Introduction to The Carpentries

The Carpentries is a non-profit organization and global community dedicated to building capacity in data and computing skills through two-day hands-on in-person or virtual computational workshops. The organization is composed of three communities: Software Carpentry, Data Carpentry, and Library Carpentry, each of which focus on skills relevant to a particular audience. Library Carpentry was created to teach new skills and competencies for the modern research library, and connect librarians in a global, inclusive community of educators.

About Library Carpentry Workshops

Like Software and Data Carpentry, Library Carpentry workshops use the pedagogical practices of live coding, pair programming, discussion, and exercises to create a safe and collaborative space to learn important concepts in computing and data. Generally requiring no prior software experience, Library Carpentry workshops cover the tools, techniques, and best practices to: work with data, automate repetitive tasks, support world-class research, and deliver data-savvy, team-based services to the academic and wider community. The curriculum is openly available and collaboratively designed to meet the needs of a wide variety of library staff and can be customized for a particular workshop audience. Workshop attendees might include:

- A cataloging librarian learning OpenRefine software to quickly review and clean metadata spreadsheets, allowing them to save countless hours.
- A digital archivist learning Git and GitHub to version control and publish digital humanities projects so they can preserve and provide access to new forms of scholarship
- A data librarian learning unix to collaborate on large files with researchers, allowing them to offer a new service to the research community
- An assessment librarian learning best practices for working with data so they can organize and assess library-class data to prove the impact of library instruction on student outcomes

How Librarians Can Get Involved

The best way to get started is to attend a Library Carpentry workshop! Upcoming workshops are listed on the Library Carpentry website. Don't see one listed? Why not host a workshop at your institution? Hosting a workshop allows you to experience what it takes to organize a workshop, to see the discussions between instructors to determine the appropriate lesson material for your audience, and perhaps even adopt some of our pedagogical techniques in your own skills training efforts. You can read more about hosting workshops in The Carpentries Handbook. In addition to Library Carpentry workshops, many librarians have hosted Software and Data Carpentry workshops for their research communities. Sharing a training event with your research clients is a great opportunity for networking with your faculty. If our teaching methodology resonates with you, you can also apply to be a workshop instructor and learn best practices for research-informed teaching with our international community. If working on resources and lessons is more suited to your capacity, you may be interested in becoming a lesson Maintainer. This is a great way to get a sense of how we build our lessons and keep them up to date. And if you're looking for a more formal engagement with the Carpentries community, your organization could become a Carpentries member institution.