

Redefining the DAM Team at Carnegie Hall

Kathryn Gronsbell
Digital Collections Manager
Carnegie Hall
IEN DAMS | January 24, 2018

I'm Kathryn Gronsbell, Digital Collections Manager in the Carnegie Hall Archives. I'm going to share how over the last 6 years we've redefined what Team means in support of our digital asset management strategy.



When you think of Carnegie Hall, you may think of something like this scene, a classical music venue or our historic building. But the Hall actually has been a center of cultural and political expression since it opened in 1891, holds multiple performance spaces, and we present and provide a venue for many different types of music and art. Since its transition to a not-for-profit institution in 1960, Carnegie Hall has continued to deepen its commitment to music education and community programming. Capturing and managing the scope of this history falls onto...



The Carnegie Hall Archives, which were established in 1986, and include over 300k physical items acquired over the past 30 years. I handle the digitization and management of this diverse set of materials, and we are working to make it available to our staff and to the public via our DAMS.

Clockwise from top-left: Ticket to opening night festival (1891), Nina Simone flyer (1963), Sun Ra flyer (1968), Toscanini flyer (1943), Beethoven manuscript (undated), Photo of Andrew Carnegie (right) onstage during National Arbitration and Peace Congress (1907), Buffalo Philharmonic flyer (1974/75), Seeger manuscript with CH dedication (1991). All provided courtesy of Carnegie Hall Archives.

DAM, by Archives

Digital Collections

- Digital Collections via DAMS
 - Historic material
 - Event + publicity images
 - Media
- Informed by:
 - Archival principles
 - Sustainability + preservation initiatives
- Users:
 - Internal (staff)
 - External (partners, researchers, general public)

- I want to start out by putting our DAM strategy in context.
- CH is a performing arts NPO, and the Archives are a department. The Archives leads DAM with support from other departments.
- Specific challenges for Archival practices in organizations whose primary focus is not preservation, and support is limited to a small team.
- The material in the system could have been created today or a century ago. It's a unified discovery layer telling the story of Carnegie Hall as making history every day.
- The system implementation and procedures are informed by archival principles, including authoritative metadata practices, process history and documentation, and best practices for stewards of cultural heritage material. Archival DAMS that serves many different types of audiences.
- We do this to represent an accurate and comprehensive account of CH's history.
- We launched to staff in October 2017, and are in the process of selecting materials for public access to be available within the next year.

Scaling from 'Project to Program'

- Originated with grant
 - **"Digital Archives Project"**
- Formalized activities
 - **"Digital Collections"**
- Initiative encompasses DAM:
 - Policy
 - Staffing
 - Procedures
 - Budget
 - Technology
 - Integration

- Started with grant-funded Project to Program
- Effectively communicate value of project activities, and how to translate perspective that into mission-critical to decision makers.
- Effort worthy of support.

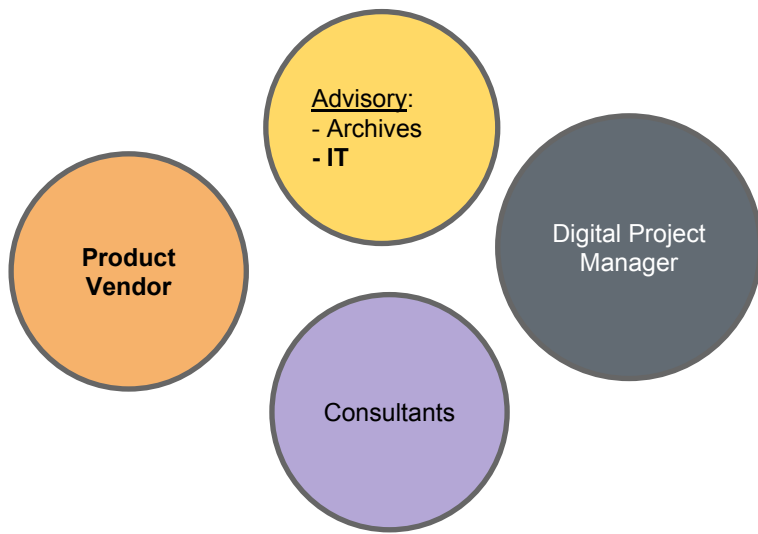
Converting Stakeholders into Caretakers

- **Passive to active** involvement
- **Prioritize relationships** over dictated role
- **Demonstrate how investments** translate into into returns

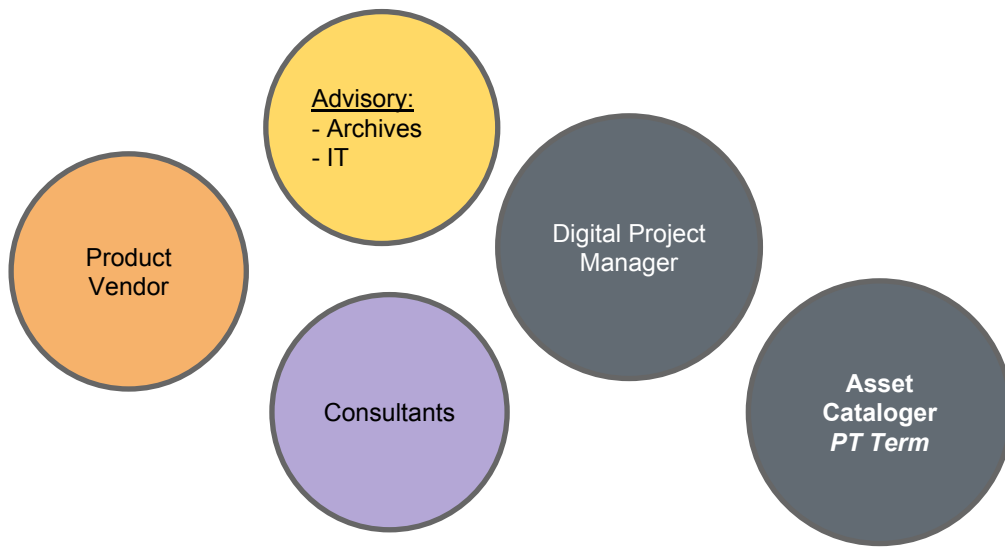
- Passive to active involvement
 - Asking more of individuals, however perferfially involved, to be agents supporting the strategy
- Redefine “team” to leverage how individual roles support central directive
 - Erase the lines and flatten the hierarchies to solicit the most useful feedback from individuals, regardless of department, position, or assumed involvement with the work.
- Identify, evaluate, and activate relationship and investments from non-traditional contributors who may have previously been a few tiers away from central team
- Connect with folks who do not have explicit responsibilities in the initiative to determine how they can support the work and what benefit they derive from that investment



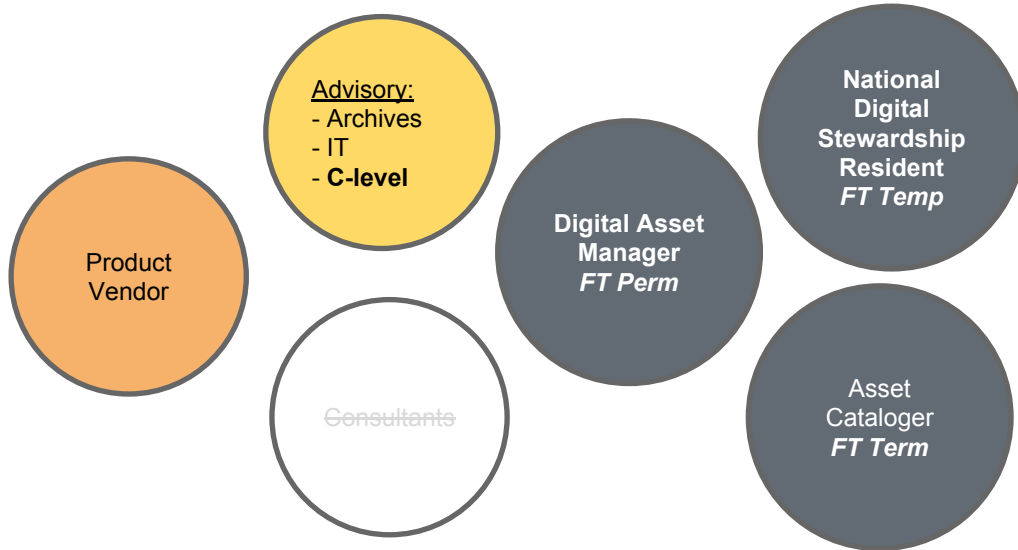
2012



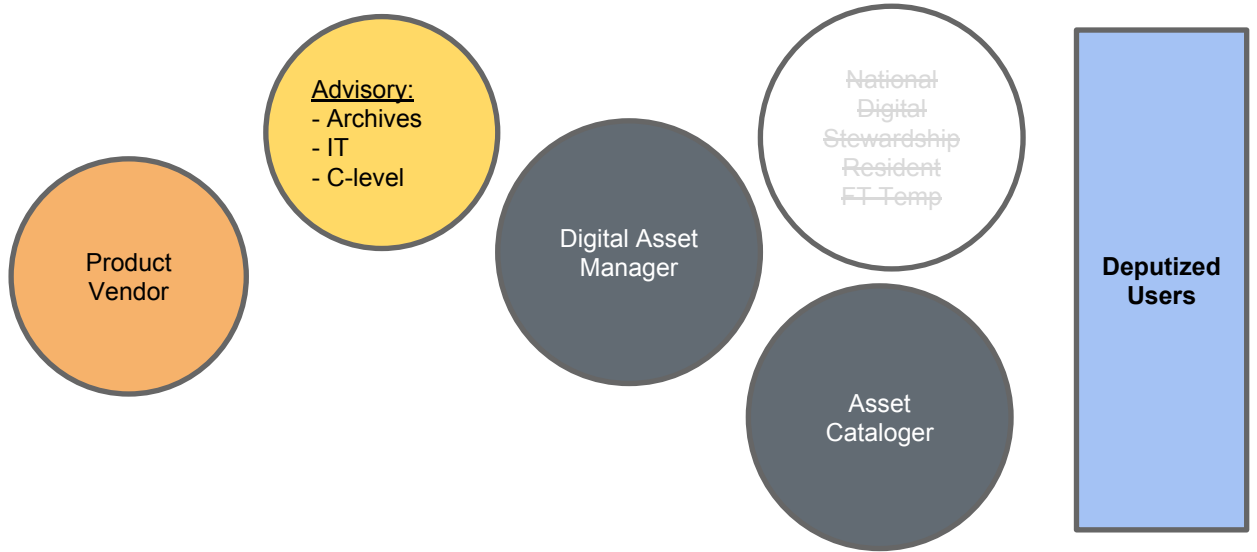
2013



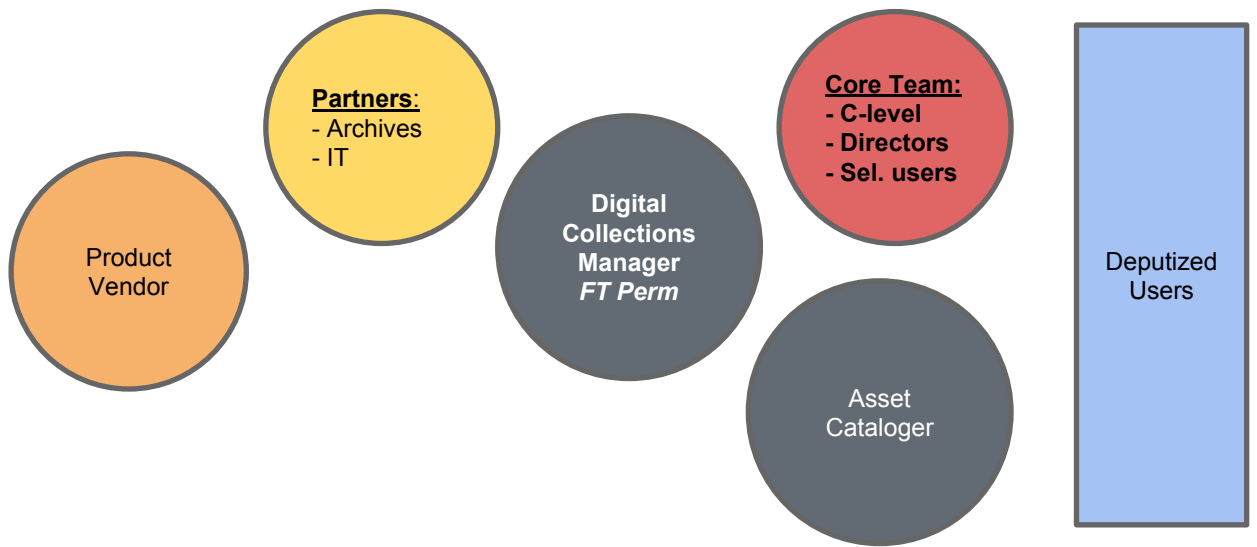
2014



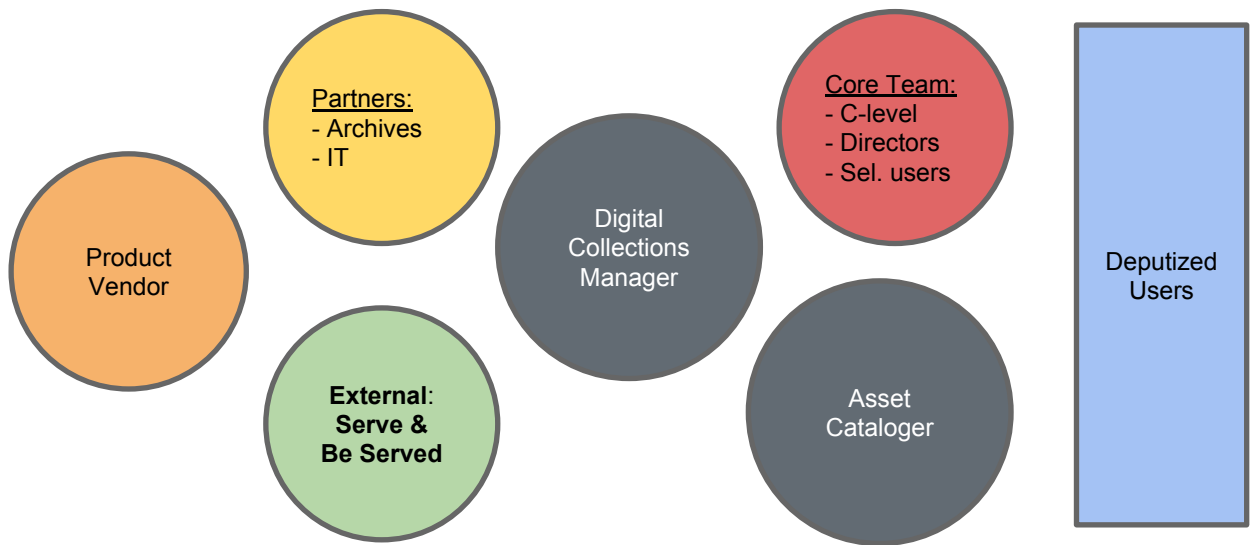
2015



2016



2017



Looking forward...

Challenges

- Quantity
- Structure +
Prioritization
- Culture

Top 3 - Cooks in the kitchen - there's just a lot to handle and process

- Must allocate time for PM and people management
- Must be able to effectively communicate expected outcomes and delivery timeline
- Brevity
 - "Easier" to work with 1 person than 100.

Challenges

- Quantity
- Structure + Prioritization
- Culture

Benefits

- Achievable
- Scalable
- Informed decision-making

Top 3

- Reality. We don't have the organizational resources to expand FTE to support critical aspects of the projects
- Applicability. We want to have input from different perspectives. We want "dumb questions" - they make us ask ourselves smart questions. The system serves many different types of needs - we need representatives of those needs to have ownership and participate in the system improvement and policy decisions.
- Extension of teammates means ability to identify tasks and create smaller groups to address.

Challenges

- Quantity
- Structure +
Prioritization
- Culture

Benefits

- Achievable
- Scalable
- Informed
decision-making

**Collaboration builds trust,
trust builds momentum.**

- Communication. More people means more communication management. Also means, when done well, increased transparency into decision making and visibility which benefits us in prioritization.
 - Helpful in situations where departmental directives conflict, or resources are very limited.
 - Collaboration builds trust, trust builds momentum.

Thank you.

Kathryn Gronsbell

kgronsbell at carnegiehall dot org

REFERENCED WORKS + RESEARCH

- [Beyond the Repository: Integrating Local Preservation Systems with National Distribution Services](#) IMLS LG-71-16-0135, Northwestern University (2018)
- [From Project to Program: Advocating for Sustainable Digital Preservation](#). Shira Peltzman (2016).
- [Help Joy help you. On the unusability of internal systems](#). Leisa Reichelt (2014).
- [The Maintainers conference](#) (2016, 2017): "concepts of maintenance, infrastructure, repair, and the myriad forms of labor and expertise that sustain our human-built world".
- [Staffing for Effective Digital Preservation 2017](#) - National Digital Stewardship Alliance (NDSA).
- [Towards Strategies For Making Legacy Software Curation-ready](#). Alexandra Chassanoff (2017).
- [The Organization Ontology](#) (W3C Recommendation 2014).
- Special thanks to Bethany Nowviskie (DLF) for sharing research and perspective related to her work on [The Graceful Degradation Survey: Managing Digital Humanities Projects Through Times of Transition and Decline](#) (2010), with co-author Dot Porter (p. 192)

Alot of work in academic and professional fields around organization sustainability within cultural heritage and non profit organizations, specifcally archives, libraries, and museums.