A Maturity Model for Reparative Description (MMRD)

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For more about this model and the larger trends of this study, see the article "Instituting a Framework for Reparative Description," published in *Archival Science* (https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-024-09435-z). The GitHub for this model can be found at https://github.com/stephanieluke/Maturity-Model-for-Reparative-Description.

Analyzing information from 21 interviews with individuals from 19 institutions in 2022 allowed for the development of a maturity model specific to the work of reparative description. This tool can be used for benchmarking, assessment, and continuous improvement both within and between institutions. The categories for this model include:

Leadership

Process

Implementation

Documentation

Metrics and Impact

Community Relationships

Sustainability

Support

Leadership

The people or entities who initiate and/or assume responsibility for reparative description efforts

1	2	3	4	5
The work is being led by one or two dedicated or enthusiastic people. If these individuals left the institution, the work would slow or stop.	There has been a concerted effort to create committees or task forces that will lead the work, but there is a lack of clear leadership and no or few processes to approve projects and decisions.	There are committees with clear leadership that have established their position, purpose, and processes as well as defined mechanisms to approve projects and decisions within or across departments.	There are committees with clear leadership that have established their position, purpose, and processes within the organization.	There are committees with clear leadership that have established their position, purpose, and processes within the organization at-large and within the larger community.

Process

The nature of processes and workflows that govern, plan, and direct reparative description efforts

1	2	3	4	5
Processes, workflows, and priorities are reactive and driven primarily through need, particularly user feedback.	Processes, workflows, and priorities are reactive and driven primarily through need, particularly feedback from users and internal stakeholders, such as affiliated departments or content providers.	Processes, workflows, and priorities are driven through a combination of need and strategic design. While feedback may continue to determine the majority of the work, there is basic short-term project planning that allows for a more systematic approach.	Processes, workflows, and priorities are driven primarily through strategic design. There are short-term and medium-term project plans for the work. There is consideration for sustainability, but no clear long-term solutions.	Processes, workflows, and priorities are driven through strategic design. Institutional and community partnerships inform the work through long-term project plans that give thoughtful consideration for the persistence and sustainability of the work.

Implementation

The mechanisms and procedures by which reparative description gets done

1	2	3	4	5
Collections are reviewed and recommendations for changes are made, but changes cannot be implemented without additional approval.	Implementation of reparative description happens on a small scale, but lacks an established mechanism for more consistent and sustained processes on a larger scale.	Implementation of reparative description is systematic and enacted on a consistent schedule, although it may still be limited to particular projects or collections.	Implementation of reparative description is systematically applied to all projects and collections, but is still a separate process from standard processing and description.	Implementation of reparative description is fully integrated with all processing and descriptive processes.

Documentation

Extent to which values, workflows, and procedures have been written down and shared

1	2	3	4	5
There is no documentation of the work.	There is some local documentation of the work, much of which is informal and internal.	There is local documentation of the work and, when feasible, the intention to make this formal and available to the public.	There is both local and formal documentation of the work, some of which, when feasible, is available to the public.	There is formal documentation of the purpose and objectives of the work as well as the processes, workflows, and decisions. If feasible, these are available to the public.

Metrics and Impact

Extent to which outcomes are measured and evaluated and the nature of those measures

1	2	3	4	5
There are no current metrics to measure the success of the work.	There are no current metrics, but staff may seek informal or anecdotal feedback from users or other staff.	There are current metrics, but only on a basic level, including quantitative data from staff reporting and automated processes or qualitative data largely composed of user-submitted reporting.	There are comprehensive (quantitative and qualitative) metrics collected at all points of interaction, but no set procedure for informing reparative work.	There is a robust system of metrics that measure impact both quantitatively and qualitatively. These metrics actively inform ongoing reparative work.

Community Relationships

Extent to which communities impacted by reparative description are involved in the process

1	2	3	4	5
There are no or few relationships with underrepresented groups and no consultation with these groups about the best way to describe materials or identities.		There are a few relationships with underrepresented groups. There may be consultation with communities, but these are initiated by the institution and don't allow for communities to have a sustained voice in description, processing, or collection development.		There is a strongly established culture of trust. There are established relationships with communities and groups and an active effort to cultivate new ones. Relationships are two sided, with sustained communication between institutions and communities.

Sustainability

Extent to which the reparative description efforts can be continued and repeated over the long term

1	2	3	4	5
There is a recognition of the value of reparative description, but the work is only happening on a small scale or occurring without commitments to expanding the scale of the work or creating systemic change.	The work is largely driven by work groups, task forces, or exploratory or early-stage committees. There is interest in expanding the scale of the work, but this is largely through a view of the work as terminal or project-based.	Formal committees are leading this work and establishing systems. There is a recognition that this work is not terminal, yet there has been little effort to make it a more embedded part of permanent workflows or staff duties.	Formal committees are leading this work through established systems and processes. Some employees may have begun to integrate the work into existing job duties.	The work has fully been integrated into the day-to-day work duties of multiple employees. It is no longer considered terminal but viewed as crucial to the success of the institution.

Support

Extent and nature of financial support or staff time allocated for reparative description

1	2	3	4	5
There is no financial support, training, or staff time allocated to reparative description.		There is short-term funding or staff time allocated to reparative description, such as grants or project/student positions. There is basic awareness among all staff that reparative description is taking place.		Funding and staff time for reparative description is built into regular operating expenses. There is training for all staff on the importance and impact of reparative description, including its emotional toll. There is support in the form of breaks or counseling for staff impacted by reparative work.