

# CONSTRUCTING A VALUES-BASED FOUNDATION FOR METADATA JUSTICE WORK

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Metadata Librarian  
Oklahoma State University  
go pokes!

Introduce discussion leaders

Been engaged in metadata justice work directly for the past 3 years, and indirectly for my entire life. I previously worked at the University of Oklahoma with an amazing group of folks that started the Learning & Working Group on Metadata Justice.

I'm a poet, a mother, a partner, and a neurodivergent, disabled, white woman. The view I bring to this work is both complicated and highly privileged, as I'm aware that so many of the systemic problems in our work are tied to the twin systems of capitalism and white supremacy; systems which, however much I hate them, I have benefitted from for most, if not all, of my life.

But I wouldn't be here if I didn't think there was good work to be done by anyone willing to engage in this work with care.

which brings us to ...



SECRET  
TITLE

# GROWING WITH CARE TOWARDS PRINCIPLED METADATA JUSTICE WORK

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Secret Title!

Growing with Care Towards Principled Metadata Justice Work

I wanted something that was more alive, less solid and unchanging - both "growing" and "towards" imply perpetual movement and openness - but I still felt that the original title would probably read better at first glance, when it comes to understanding what we're aiming for today.

So, secret title. I love a good metaphor, and this allows us to have an extended metaphor of the forest and trees as we talk today.

# AGENDA (WITH TIMELINE)

- INTRODUCTION AND RESOURCES - 5 MIN
- COLLABORATIVE ACTIONS TOWARDS CREATING A DOCUMENT TO SUPPORT PRINCIPLED METADATA JUSTICE WORK - 10 MIN
- GROUP ACTIVITY - 25 MIN
- FINAL THOUGHTS - 5 MIN

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## Agenda

You won't walk away with a document, but hopefully with the motivation, inspiration, and movement to get you there.

# RESOURCES



[THESE SLIDES](#)



[EXAMPLE DOCUMENT](#)



[ETHERPAD EXAMPLE](#)

[HTTPS://SHAREOK.ORG/HANDLE/11244/337931](https://shareok.org/handle/11244/337931)

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Resources for today's activity:

Most of these are available in ShareOK  
<https://shareok.org/handle/11244/337931>

These slides have all of the links you'll need. If any of the discussion leaders already have it open and could drop the link to shareok and the etherpad example into chat, that would be excellent.

The example doc is from the previously mentioned Learning and Working Group on Metadata Justice at OU, and is more for reference and use after today, though certainly feel free to poke at it, especially if you're stuck. I just don't want it to limit the kind of thinking and ideas you'll all have and share during the activity.

We will be using etherpads as collaborative spaces to work today in our groups - feel free to test out, but we will look at it together before the activity.



# IT IS NATURAL TO FEEL A SENSE OF URGENCY

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- THE PROBLEMS ARE MASSIVE, SYSTEMATIC, AND EVER-GROWING
- OUR WORK (OR DENIAL) AFFECTS REAL PEOPLE
- DECADES OF BACKBURNERED WORK

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The most natural feeling to have related to metadata justice work is a sense of urgency, and likely anxiety.

There is so much important work to be done, so many impacts on real people, and figuring out where to start can feel daunting.

I'd like to suggest a few actions today for getting started - these should hopefully be useful whether you're truly just getting started, or are hoping to revisit/revitalize your approach to this work, whether as an individual or within a group.

Which brings us to the first, and most important, action:



We will slow down.

Carrying ourselves through the metaphor of a forest, what if we try to slow to down to tree time?

What can we learn from trees?

Peter Wohlleben

The Hidden Life of Trees

"If you are a tree slow growth is the key to growing old. Growth fueled by hefty additions of excess nitrogen from agricultural operations is unhealthy."

He also talks about how young saplings, growing under natural conditions under mother trees can expect to experience light deprivation for up to (and even over) 300 years, strengthening them, unlike our quick, less healthy, and very human approach to forest regrowth.

(pause)



WE WILL  
SLOW DOWN  
MORE

"It's supremely unhealthy, for both individuals and organizations, to try to be in bloom all the time. Perhaps, if we reject the capitalist drive to constantly churn out new products and instead take a stand to support more reflective and responsive practices, we can offer our patrons services that are deeper, more lasting, and more human."

- Julia Glassman, "The Innovation Fetish and Slow Librarianship: What Librarians Can Learn from the Juicero"

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We will slow down more.

There is also a growing movement of librarians, pushing back on expectations of perpetual production and innovation.

Julia Glassman

"The Innovation Fetish and Slow Librarianship: What Librarians Can Learn From the Juicero"

"It's supremely unhealthy, for both individuals and organizations, to try to be in bloom all the time. Perhaps, if we reject the capitalist drive to constantly churn out new products and instead take a stand to support more reflective and responsive practices, we can offer our patrons services that are deeper, more lasting, and more human."

(pause)





WE WILL  
SLOW DOWN  
EVEN MORE

"Our collective resting coordinated with deep traveling within our hearts begins the process of dismantling capitalism, white supremacy, racism, homophobia, ableism, and patriarchy."

"There is no rush. There is no urgency. Unravel from the lies of white supremacy culture. Rest is a meticulous love practice."

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- Tricia Hersey, Founder of the Nap Ministry, *Rest is Resistance*

We will slow down even more.

If we want to truly approach this work with care, we have to commit to learning about WHY slowing down is so essential from a Black liberation (which is to say, all liberation) lens.

Tricia Hersey - Nap Ministry  
Rest is Resistance

"Our collective resting coordinated with deep traveling within our hearts begins the process of dismantling capitalism, white supremacy, racism, homophobia, ableism, and patriarchy."

"There is no rush. There is no urgency. Unravel from the lies of white supremacy culture. Rest is a meticulous love practice." -81

rest is a meticulous love practice.

a moment to just sit with that idea , with our discomfort with rest and silence, with the realization that even within a jam-packed collaborative session at a professional symposium, there is time for rest.

(pause)



We will root ourselves in humanity. x2

# WHO ARE WE GROWING THIS FOREST FOR AND WHY?

- COMMUNITIES
  - SELF
  - FAMILY
  - WORK GROUP
  - OTHER COMMUNITIES
    - INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL COMMUNITIES
  
- CENTRALITY OF TRUST

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We're going to ask ourselves:  
Who and what is motivating us?  
Why are we doing this work?

So much of this work is about community and trust.

So we want to think both about who will be engaging in this work and who will be potentially affected by it?

So, starting from a community of one, we can ask:

is guilt or shame motivating us?  
if so, why, and to what end?  
and how can we instead move to a place of trusting ourselves and our hearts?

From there, we can branch out further, stepping carefully from community to community, asking, is this a community I am already a part of? is there an existing relationship of trust?

This work becomes even more critical when we start to talk about work in collaboration with external communities, but I believe it's essential we build out from that community of one before even attempting to reach our branches into broader communities.

Trust, from the roots on up, is central to this work.





We will grow with care. x2



# TAKE TIME BUILDING OUT GROWTH RINGS

- SCOPE

- WHAT KIND OF WORK WILL YOU START WITH?
- HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE INVOLVED AND WHAT DOES ADMIN SUPPORT LOOK LIKE?
- WHAT IS OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF WORK?

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# TEND SHOOTS, BRANCHES, SEEDLINGS WITH CARE

- COMMUNITY REST AND RECOVERY

- HOW DO WE CARE FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS DOING THIS WORK?
- HOW CAN WE VALUE NON-PRODUCTIVE TIME AND SPACE IN THIS WORK?

Growing with care can mean spending time and energy on refining the scope of our work.

Where will we start?

What do we have the resources for?

What is outside of our scope?

Growing with care can also mean embedding community care into our practices and documentation.

How to care for ourselves and others while engaging in this work?

How to value rest and non-productive time, as highly as - in fact, more highly than - time spent at our desks working?



We will build sustainable eco-systems. x2

# HOW CAN WE MAKE THIS WORK SUSTAINABLE INTO THE FUTURE?

- **COLLABORATING ON PLANS AND DOCUMENTATION FOR**
  - OUTLINING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
  - COMMUNICATION THAT IS CLEAR, DIRECT, AND CONSISTENT
  - DISCORD AND GRIEVANCES
  - ORGANIZED DOCUMENTATION
- **PLAN FOR HOW TO INSTITUTE CHANGE WHEN/AS NEEDED**
  - EXPANDING GROWTH
  - CONTROLLED BURNS

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Our initial excitement can only carry us so far, especially when we understand the kind of energy needed for this work.

So how can we build sustainability into our practices and documentation?

Collaboration is key

Even if you are engaging in this work as a solitary library worker, your work will impact others and their communities and the work is never truly done alone.

For example, if you're working to update a subject heading, the success of your work is often entirely dependent on decades (if not more) of social justice work to change language usage.

So thinking through roles and responsibilities, documenting our communication pathways, and thinking through how to resolve grievances in a way that aligns with our broader personal and/or institutional values.

Sustainability also means being willing to regularly reassess the bounds of our work, expanding and burning back as needed to ensure the future viability of the work.

Burnout doesn't have to be an inevitability.

I'm gonna say that again:

burnout doesn't have to be an inevitability.



We will create our own compasses.

# WE'RE HUMANS, NOT TREES!

- HOW TO CONTINUALLY FIND OUR WAY BACK
  - TO OURSELVES
  - TO OUR ROOTS
  - TO THE GROWTH WE HAVE TENDED WITH CARE
  - TO OUR SUSTAINABLE ECO-SYSTEMS
- ACTIONABLE PRINCIPLES

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Cause we're humans, not trees!

So we need a way to guide ourselves back, to all of the good, slow, and restful work we've done.

to ourselves

to our roots

to the shoots we have tended with care

to our practices of sustainability

which leads us to our actionable principles.

I refuse to impose any rules about exactly what these should look like, except that principles - as opposed to values - are actionable.

They can be single words or they can be phrases, framed much like the actions I've just outlined, "we will . . . "



# GROUP ACTIVITY

- BREAKOUT ROOMS

- BRAINSTORMING BASED ON THE 5 ACTIONS

- 25 MIN TOTAL
- 5 MIN FOR EACH SECTION

- ETHERPADS

- EXAMPLE

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- SLOW DOWN

- FAVORITE WAYS TO SLOW DOWN
- INSPIRATION FOR SLOWING DOWN

- ROOT YOURSELF IN HUMANITY

- WHO ARE WE DOING THIS WORK FOR AND WHY?
- IS THERE TRUST-BUILDING WORK TO DO, AND WITH WHOM?

- GROW WITH CARE

- WHAT MIGHT BE IN/OUT OF SCOPE FOR YOU?
- HOW CAN WE CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER/VALUE NON-PRODUCTIVE TIME?

- SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEM

- WHAT ARE SOME KEY PIECES YOU'LL WANT IN YOUR DOCUMENT?

- CREATE YOUR COMPASS

- WHAT ACTIONABLE PRINCIPLES MIGHT GUIDE OUR WORK WITH METADATA JUSTICE?

In a few moments we'll start our group activity in breakout rooms. In the rooms we'll be brainstorming based on the 5 actions (there's a cheatsheet on this page of the slides)

Before we jump in, I'm just going to hop over to the etherpad example. I'll share the link in the chat.

So it's essentially a collaborative platform that will allow us all to share and gather lots of thoughts around these 5 actions. Please go ahead and type in the example etherpad - each group will have it's own etherpad, separate from this example one, and they're all linked on the next page of the slides. But if you haven't used etherpad and just want to try it out, that's what this example etherpad is for.

After the symposium, the etherpads will be shared out by email as txt. files.

Group leaders will be there to guide everyone through and keep time. So we'll take about 5 min for each action, each split up into an initial 3 min of silent brainstorming in your group etherpad, followed by about 2 min of sharing out.

Silence – auditory rest – has a way of helping us to see how “we can bend time when we rest” - Tricia Hersey

(back to sharing slides)

# GROUP ETHERPAD LINKS

- ETHERPADS

- Group 01 - [https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ\\_Foundations\\_Group\\_01](https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ_Foundations_Group_01)
- Group 02 - [https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ\\_Foundations\\_Group\\_02](https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ_Foundations_Group_02)
- Group 03 - [https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ\\_Foundations\\_Group\\_03](https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ_Foundations_Group_03)
- Group 04 - [https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ\\_Foundations\\_Group\\_04](https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ_Foundations_Group_04)
- Group 05 - [https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ\\_Foundations\\_Group\\_05](https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ_Foundations_Group_05)
- Group 06 - [https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ\\_Foundations\\_Group\\_06](https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ_Foundations_Group_06)
- Group 07 - [https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ\\_Foundations\\_Group\\_07](https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ_Foundations_Group_07)
- Group 08 - [https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ\\_Foundations\\_Group\\_08](https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ_Foundations_Group_08)
- Group 09 - [https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ\\_Foundations\\_Group\\_09](https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ_Foundations_Group_09)
- Group 10 - [https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ\\_Foundations\\_Group\\_10](https://pad.riseup.net/p/MJ_Foundations_Group_10)

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Any questions before we breakout?

So let's go ahead and hop into our breakout rooms.

I'll be available if any group has a question, they can click on breakout room button in zoom and then choose to contact me so I can hop in and help out.

Shae and I will also be popping into rooms silently to check and be sure tech and everything else is working out well.

So I'll see all of you back here in about 25 min if not before then.



# FINAL THOUGHTS

- ETHERPADS
  - AVAILABLE FOR OVER A MONTH
  - .TXT FILES WILL BE EXPORTED AND SHARED OUT POST-SYMPOSIUM
  - TIME TO ADD MORE BEFORE NEXT WEEK
- PLEASE SHARE ANY COMMENTS AND/OR CONSTRUCTIVE CRITIQUES IN THE SURVEY SHARED OUT BY THE SYMPOSIUM ORGANIZERS

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After the symposium, the etherpads will be shared out by email as txt. files, but won't be exported until next week - so feel free to add more until then, if an idea strikes you before next week.

I'll look forward to hearing your thoughts about today in the final survey from the symposium organizers.

And I'm also just very excited to read through all of the etherpads.

# SUGGESTED READINGS



ANY AND ALL OF AUDRE LORDE'S WRITINGS



REST IS RESISTANCE  
TRICIA HERSEY



THE HIDDEN LIFE OF TREES  
PETER WOHLLEBEN



"THE INNOVATION FETISH AND SLOW  
LIBRARIANSHIP: WHAT LIBRARIANS CAN  
LEARN FROM THE JUICERO"  
JULIA GLASSMAN



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Finally I have here a few suggested readings - there are so many out there, but to quote Tricia Hersey just one more time:

"Audre Lorde is the inspiration for our dreams and our dreaming." - Tricia Hersey

So any of Audre Lorde's works, plus links to the works referenced earlier in the slides.



THANK YOU!

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Thank you to our discussion leaders for volunteering for this activity - it couldn't have happened without you.

And thank you to everyone participating.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to the abolitionist movement and disability culture for guiding me towards my own most central values of trust and personal autonomy, both of which inform my approach to this work.

Thank you.