ASSOCIATION OF MIDWEST MUSEUMS

INTRO SESSION:

GET INSPIRED

July 6, 2021

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>>ZINNIA WILLITS: Good morning. Or good afternoon. A warm welcome to all. You've joined the introduction session for module 4 managing website projects -- what you will hear from Museum professionals who have managed website projects through times of great changes in teams of volunteers come in house staff and community partners.

Our truly amazing speakers will share information about projects that up and agile, effective, budget friendly and forward thinking. It's time to get inspired. This is the first session in module 4 of the digital empowerment project. A nationwide initiative organized by the six US regional Museum associations that is dedicated to providing free, self-paced training resources for small museums. This inaugural series of online trainings and resource toolkits focused on digital media and technology topics is made possible by funding from the institute of Museum and Library services.

My name is Zinnia Willits and I'm the Executive Director of the Southeastern Museum Conference. My pronouns are she/her. I'm a light-skinned white female with shoulder length reddish-brown hair and I'm wearing black rimmed glasses that are often referred to as cat eye style and today I'm wearing a solid black sleeveless top and am sitting in front of a backdrop of a home office with a window and a set of white closet doors behind me. As the host for today's session I would like to convey a few things to our attendees before we begin the program.

First, in this era of virtual meetings when digital spaces may substitute our physical sense of place it's important to reflect on the land we each occupy in honor of the Indigenous people who have called it home. Today I'm speaking to you from Ocala, Florida, at the historical homelands of the Timucua and Seminole peoples. Wherever we are let us acknowledge all Indigenous nations as living communities. Our elders both past and present as well as future generations. We the digital empowerment project team recognize that our organizations and those of our members were founded within a colonizing society that perpetuated the exclusions and erasures of many native peoples throughout the United States and beyond. We ask you to reflect on the place where you reside and work and to respect the diversity of culture and experiences that form the richness of our world and our profession.

Thank you. And now for just a few housekeeping notes before I introduce today's presenters and get started.

First, the best place to view this session in real time is on the Museum learning hub website under the watch live tab at Museum – hub.org. Here you will be able to see all the captioning, chat and others questions.

I want also to acknowledge today's American sign language interpreter will be on the left side of your screen. And let you know that captioning for today's program is embedded in a box just below the YouTube player on a website with controls to adjust your experience.

The best way to continuously refine our program at the Museum learning hub is to listen to our attendees. We ask for your candid feedback with us.

Following today's program you will be sent a link to a satisfaction survey. Sharing your experience through this survey will only take a few minutes and will greatly improve our work.

We encourage you to post questions to general presenters which will be addressed at the end of the program after the presentations. Please type your questions into the chat. A digital empowerment team member will be gathering them and we will get to as many questions as time allows. However, we may not be able to address all the questions during the live session. Other questions may arise after reflecting on a program. For this reason, we have a set have set up an online community forum for raising questions, posting answers and connecting with your fellow museum practitioners on Museum learning hub website which you can find also at Museum – hub.org

If you are looking for help between programs please visit this forum, create a log in and pose questions. A member of the community one of our technology fellows will get back to you.

Finally to stay connected with us and be aware of future programs, please follow us on social media. Links will be posted in the chat.

And now, it is my pleasure to introduce today's presenters. First we will hear from Cathy Saunders. Cathy is the Lighting The Way coordinator at the New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts. She has three decades of experience developing innovative programs with the science Museum of Minnesota, Providence children's Museum, house Museum and the New Bedford Whaling Museum. At the Whaling Museum she coordinates Lighting The Way historic women of the South Coast which offers historic profiles housed on the project website which are the inspiration for programming that explores and amplifies the impact of women from the region.

Cathy earned her Masters degree in Museum education leadership from -- college and currently serves on the New England Museum association board.

Cathy will be followed by Dr. Fran Kaplan consultant for America's Black Holocaust Virtual Museum and cofounder of Nurturing Diversity Partners in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Dr. Fran Kaplan's 55 year career has been spent working for social justice and peace locally, nationally and internationally. She holds a doctorate in educational leadership and a Master of social work degree. Her work as an adult educator, social worker and community organizer has taken her into various arenas including farm workers’ rights, women's healthcare, child abuse prevention, parenting education and public history.

From spring 2010 through summer 2017, Dr. Kaplan worked as a full-time volunteer with the community group working to reestablish America's Black Holocaust Museum.

I've truly enjoyed getting to know both of these wonderful women and I'm thankful for the time each has devoted to this session. Now I'm pleased to turn the floor over to Cathy Saunders to begin our session.

>>CATHY SAUNDERS: Thank you Zinnia. I'm so glad to be here. My name is Cathy Saunders, I am a coordinator for the Lighting The Way project and New Bedford Whaling Museum. Lighting The Way historic women of the South Coast.

So just a bit about New Bedford Whaling Museum to begin, we are located in southeastern Massachusetts on the traditional homelands of the Wampanoag people. The Whaling Museum is so much more than just the history of whaling it is a comprehensive Museum of history, culture, science and art and it is a midsized Museum rather than a small museum. It's budget is about $4 million per year and its annual visitation is a little over 100,000 visitors per year.

However, this particular project started out as an independent project but then was brought in under the wing of the New Bedford Whaling Museum and I will be talking about that.

So the original idea for Lighting The Way came from a local woman leader who said we need a coffee table book to tell people about women's history and other women's stories for untold. And asked she started talking to other community leaders quickly became clear that a coffee table was really static and that it would soon be out of date and did not meet the needs so from there it came up with the idea we need to create a website that will have longevity. And so we started pulling together leaders from arts and culture, leader from history, organizations. The original steering committee had I think over 40 organizations involved and the Whaling Museum is one of those partners involve stepped forward and offered to be the fiscal agent and then as the program became more established really took on the project and then decided to hire a part-time staff person who is myself to work with it.

So I’m going to give you a little bit of background of the project before my time and then dive into what the website looks like and how we use it.

So that initial collaboration, they launched the program fully in 2018 the summer of 2018. They had a huge event with 600 people attended there were costumed interpreters. There were guided walking tours throughout downtown New Bedford showing locations that women's stories were connected to. There was a printed trail map passed out and put out throughout the downtown and this was all to draw attention to the website which had these profiles of women that they started collecting stories of.

So the website itself is on a WordPress platform and if you go back of house in the WordPress platform you will see these profiles are technically blog posts. Doesn't like that to the user but that is how the operational side of it works. This website was developed, one of the community partners had a relationship with this husband and wife design team. They were really supportive of the project.

They designed the initial website and really that core was that it was going to be these profiles and that that was the core of the programming was how do we get the stories of these women that so many people have not heard of?

Because not only did we want to put women who may have been more well-known like Rosetta Douglas who is the daughter of Frederick Douglass. But we wanted to put people like the goat lady of Dartmouth who had recently passed away. These stories of community members that people knew or had relatives over connected to.

So then as the website transferred into the Whaling Museum immensity webmaster was another part-time person at the Museum was handling any of the updates that came along with it.

So when I started the Museum, the website looked like this. It was the home for these profiles, the one programmatic activity was happening with this idea of a walking trail. And they had that trail in the form of a paper map that was printed or downloaded into a PDF. They also have put those many of those profiles up on a mobile app and and then they also occasionally offered live guided tours. When I was brought in 2019 there was a great look ahead to 2020 and the Centennial of women's suffrage and wouldn't this be a great time to add on more substantial programming that highlighted the importance of women's history and women's right to vote and the election year.

And I, the way I walked into it was I said we really need to do some strategic visioning. If I'm going to know how to develop this program I need to know but our vision is and what our values are and how I can connect all the programming that is been tossed out into that to help guide us.

And that in turn guided one of the first things I did switch was went back to that original web designer and said we need our website homepage to reflect our strategic vision so you will see a couple of things that changed here. One is that the core of the problem is those profiles. Who wanted the profiles more prominent and people understand that this was live. Profiles were being added. This is not a static project and certainly was a question I often got asked, which are the newest profiles? Who are the newest additions - of this top bar here scrolls through the 10 most recent added profiles.

And then there was a lot of programming that we wanted to do and so we added this spotlights these three spotlights of basically buttons icons and buttons to link to the pages with more descriptions of those. And that allowed us to be current, dynamic but also show the information in a visual way and in fact I took a screenshot last week and if you go to our webpage today you will see that this first button for ignite has now been swapped out with our guided walking tour for the summer. That allows us to keep, an easy way to keep our homepage fresh and really reflect those programmatic goals. And that strategic vision helps me prioritize what we want to be highlighting at any given time.

What I'm going to do is just share a couple of examples how we have used the website to further our programmatic vision beyond just promotion of programs that we are doing which we obviously do. If you go to the website you can see that part of it but here are places where we have used our website and some interesting and creative ways to help achieve our programmatic goals.

The first that I want to talk to you about, well I will very briefly we use it to promote the walking trail but I'm going to focus on the more interesting project so we have got the ignite youth artist showcase and that was, this we have done this three years in a row now we invite young artists ages 12-22 to look at our profiles and to pick a woman they are interested in and then develop an art piece that is inspired by one of them. Where engaging young people well website and then we have this terrific website to showcase the work they have done and we do this through, we have static images of the winners. We have a slideshow of all the presentations. Of all the art submissions and then we also have some videos of the showcase events where we get to hear from the artist as well as see their artwork. Is a way to really have it live beyond that one time event that is held and to highlight these magnificent young artists. And to make the profiles have a new life.

Also during the pandemic, we were able to connect the youth artist showcase from our website with the Whaling receive educational site encouraging entries during the off-season of the contest.

Another interesting project that we did was a public art selection that also tied in a piece of online voting. We knew that in this centennial year that we wanted something big and visual and we were not in a position to have a bronze statue built. But winded be great if we hung a banner on the side of the Whaling Museum building that feature one of our terrific historic women? And, but we did not, we wanted to engage the community in this so we decided to invite 10 young women and we gave them 10 of the historic women who were all so fickle he engaged so again connecting on the suffrage theme. And each of these women each of the young women chose one of the historic women and then did a short, two minutes video profile on it so again how do you take what was a 300-500 word essay about this woman, put it into a new format that other people will engage with in a different away, tie-in young people so that you are drawing young people to the website.

Then we did this videos, uploaded them in YouTube which then put them into a WordPress voting contest plug-in and put them on our website and then we did press releases, social media blasts and invited the community to vote and to go in and you could like three of the videos at a time and come back the next day and like three more of the videos.

We got a bunch of names I historic women in front of people that they may not have ever known about. Engaged because the students were involved that meant their families were getting connected so it really a great way for that kind of engagement.

So if you're interested in knowing what the plug-in was that we used to put the link went on the slide here so you can see that. It was overall successful. I will say over the last weekend of voting when we were all off, something went glitchy and people could start voting multiple times in a day and two of the women had over 1000 votes each and so we put two women on our banner. It all worked out.

You have to monitor these things we learned.

Another interesting thing we did was we, going into the fall election without wanted to do an election form and then thought everyone is too zoomed out they will not show up for it. But how can we meet that mission that we have of making women feel they are seen and have contributions to this community. We thought let's do a get out the vote campaign that features local women why they encourage others to vote. So we had women do these self these like you see here. We also had 14 short videos like 32nd long encouraging people to vote. All of these, every one of these drove people back to our website where we put a comprehensive voter information page which included not only how to register to vote, how to find your polling place, but also how to sign up to be a poll worker.

Those were put out on all of our social media platforms and was a great way again to you so website as a platform to help engage the community at this level.

The last project that I want to talk about in terms of what we had done expanding the programmatic depth of our website is a digital exhibit we developed. So I will profiles as they existed now are as I said 300-500 word essays and they are great they don't have a lot of context.

And in the year of the pandemic or the height of the pandemic when we doing so little in person activities at the Museum we were trying to think of ways to engage with our audiences in different ways and we were also aware that we were going into a school year where Massachusetts teachers were not going to be required to add in a new civic engagement standard particularly for the eighth grade.

So we thought is there an online could we do a digital exhibit which connects with this idea of civic education could help meet these standards and that supports but then also engages, is an interesting engaging platform and another dynamic way to engage with our content.

I connected with Road Tour for which is a project of the Rhode Island Council for the humanities, Brown University public humanities program, the Rhode Island historical Society. They already had a program called Road tour which is on website and a mobile app it's on the curate scape platform and they have these tours, or digital exhibits on five different topics without what do you have about having us do one for lighting the way? They love the idea they expand outside of Rhode Island to southeastern Massachusetts. So we did this.

As you can see on the left-hand side there is a map of where they all play spaced so you can see the places we chose connecting the seven women's stories and on the right I just took a screenshot show an example of what we were able to do once platform that is different from our website. We were able to add videos and images that provide context to the story.

Every one of these stories that we put on Road tour on this organizing the New Bedford digital exhibit, every one of the story pages has a link back to our website to the woman's profile but also back to these educator resources which support those civic education standards. And I will just say that we launched that in February and the duration of visits in both their site and our site had been very positive. And they reported to us that of their 35 towards this spring hours was ranked number four on there so we been really pleased with the outcome of this.

What is next for the Lighting The Way website? We want to augment the profiles to be more engaging. We love how Road tour allowed more images more context we want more of that. Let us know that a lot of people don't realize that Lighting The Way is a project of New Bedford Whaling Museum and -- such amazing content in the archives. Currently digitized and stuff that is also not digitized in our collections of the summer I have an intern going through an inventory, possible pieces of the Museum connection collection that would connect to the stories that we would then add links and images that enrich those stories.

We also want to continue adding more profiles. When I came there were 60 profiles on the website. It was 111 profiles right now. We have a list of another 30 names. People keep adding lists and we are also reaching out to other communities where we have less representation asking then to come forward with new names of women that we don't know about. And that is also has let us to be partnering in the fall with the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth class which is going to be doing research. I'm really excited about that is that most of our researchers and writers who have been contributing are an older demographic and this will be a younger demographic. They may find stories and new perspectives that we had not considered before and haven't then represented on our website so we're very excited about that.

I just want to talk to you about a couple -- that was supposed to be a beautiful image of my logo on the left-hand side so sorry about that. Just use your imagination there.

But so the challenges that I found is there's lots of hands in the pot. Their times we have to go back to that original designer when nobody else at the museum can figure out how to make a change. We also had some transition in the museum staff so a lot of times I'm spending project management trying to figure out who knows how to do this that needs to be done on the website and when can it be done and how can I get on your schedule because this is not your priority. I learned how to do some things but there are other things I'm not going to mess with that. I think that has been a real, just a reality that I've had to face.

The other thing is that when they started this they generally know where they were going and they were just super excited and started throwing stuff up on the website and as I've learned where we were going and more about WordPress I really had to do some restructuring. We had an intern work with me to completely redo the tagging and the categorization and we have changed the structure of the pulldown menus anticipating things that will come down the road again kind of the New England house analogy starts building and when you realize really we should have put the front door here instead.

And finally I mentioned at the beginning we had a mobile app that they launched at the same time as the website and it, nobody used it so we discontinued it at the time that we launched Road toward because there we were riding on this bigger platform where we were getting seen rather than just out solo on our own.

And that is what I have to share with you today I will be happy to answer questions at the end. And feel free to email me and please do check out our website and I'm very excited for what my colleague, Fran comes going to be sharing with you in a few moments.

>>DR. FRAN KAPLAN: I'm really surprised at how many things our two museums have in common in listening to you. I found a lot of connections and anyway I'm very glad to be here. Honored to be asked to do this.

I'm with America's Black Holocaust Virtual Museum and also with Nurturing Diversity Partners which is my full-time job and the museum has been my full-time volunteer job for over 10 years. So I will tell you more about that but I want to just tell you a couple of things that I hope to cover in this 20 minutes. I want to tell you that the initial inspiration for this virtual museum was and how America's Black Holocaust Museum went through a brick-and-mortar museum which was hedge be closed to a virtual museum only which took its place to a museum beyond walls that developed out of the virtual museum and now back to a brick-and-mortar museum and still maintaining and growing the virtual museum.

I would like to talk you about how the virtual museum structures structure evolved and how we think about curated, managed our virtual content which is about 3300 pages right now and grows all the time.

Talk to you a bit about the staffing and what it costs to do this. How we managed to build this over the last 11 years as a volunteer project and what it has cost.

So probably in a fairly different place in some ways than many of you because this is not my salaried gig and it has not been and virtually completely built on volunteers. So, but you 's leaves a lot of volunteers. I want to talk about that a bit and give you an idea of how we use volunteers in a virtual space.

And I think what one of the things that I'm proudest of is that I kind of anticipated I'm an elder those of you who see me can see my white hair. Probably my wrinkles, too. And if there is something I anticipated over 10 years the shift in organizations have to make in this past year from bricks and mortar to virtual. As I say necessity is the mother of invention. So I hope to share some of the key learning sets that I've had over this time.

Some of them they have to go through the Q&A but some things that we learned about how to set the reading level and how t field-tested that. The importance of visual over time and as the Internet has changed. How to do community engagement and programming at a museum that had no walls or as we step beyond walls.

And the interest internationally in this museum which is which surprised me. I thought that race and racism were an American issue primarily at least in the way that it is structured in the United States. The people all over the world visit this museum in some of our exhibits are published in France and Germany. Inbox because it turns out that people are very interested in this.

I was interested in Cathy's unused mobile app because of course there's been a lot of talk with us about moving to an even more mobile situation with the onset of or the comeback of the fiscal museum and how we integrate these two museums. So let me just give you a tour of the museum.

This is Dr. James Cameron on the left ear the founder of America's black Holocaust Museum. Let me share something but the title a lot of times people just say the American black Holocaust Museum. This was Dr. Cameron's vision to help understand what the Holocaust has been like that Black people have experienced in the United States in particular and his vision was to cover from captivity in Africa to the present day.

And that is a pretty big scope. He founded this museum when he was 74 years old. I'm ashamed to say just got to 74 and I'm tired but he was working in the museum until then. He is the only known survivor of a lynching in the United States of America. And I think his conception for this museum was brilliant as ahistorical as Memorial Museum. You are not familiar with history museums that are also historical museums I invite you to visit here and learn more about Dr. Cameron and what that means for a museum.

On the right-hand side as our welcome video and the new building with Dr. Cameron's surviving son in front of it. These are the main pictures of the museum. These are chronological and I will give you a quick tour of a couple of those. We have a memorial to the lynching this was as far as I know the first Memorial -- do you need me to speak slower? No interpreter? I'm going too fast.

One of the first memorials to victims of lynching in the United States. There is now a wonderful physical memorial in Montgomery, Alabama. We continue this Memorial online. I will show you that. There something you can do is become a freedom lover our rollcall wall to take the pledge. Understand what is meant by a Black Holocaust we encourage you to read about it.

And like Cathy honestly populating news coverage that we have so when we first opened the virtual museum the media called me and said I understand you are -- what is it doing in a history museum? I said its history in the making your breaking news. So this is one of the ways is that volunteers have help at the museum is by posting the breaking news and I can talk you more about that.

And populates the most recent breaking news on our website. We also have some other things that we can change. We are developing a new gallery that is going to be a thematic gallery. If you look at the Black Holocaust through the eyes of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Often considered the most segregated community in the United States, most segregated metropolitan area which is where I live.

So this is the structure of the museum. I want to take you to our mission statement. ABHM this is the mission of both the physical and virtual museum which are obviously connected. It's built a public awareness of the hump the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow in America and provides racial repair reconciliation and healing.

Our vision, a society that remembers its past order to shape a better future. A nation undivided by race where every person matters equally. I want to shape up his history you can read about and it's bringing your attention to these navigational aids at the top. And also down the side.

Where in will be call a gallery called about ABHM and these are all the things you can find. We also have another way all of our pages to get from one gallery to another and to our special gallery so you can get to the chronological galleries and our special exhibits through this.

Sorry my fingers are on this here.

Dr. Cameron was inspired by another museum that has now a lot of exhibit online did not at the time because it was before the Internet. He was in Israel in 1979 on a church trip and went to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and was inspired to make this museum in his basement study until his wife got tired of everybody traipsing through her living room in order to see the museum so 1988 he opened a physical museum separate from his home which was unfortunately closed by the Great Depression in 2008 and by his passing in 2006 because he had been one of the principles exhibits of the museum he would talk to visitors and tell them the story of his lynching and how he managed to stay alive and what happened after that pycnotic can read about that and see a video about that on our website.

These are some iterations of the museum. He started in small storefronts and then he got a whole building that the city gave him for one dollar and after he passed away and we had the inspiration to do a virtual museum which happened in 2010 at the end of 2010. We were sitting around chatting and say how could we revive this museum without any money? And I have a sister and brother-in-law that were very involved in web design. So I said what about doing a website? I didn't know anything about doing a website I had no idea what I was volunteering myself for at that time.

I also was unable to work because I'd gotten older and ageism had come into play and with my disability I was unable to work so I just made this my job and worked on this as I said from the end of 2010 until today and I'm still working with it.

Some of the things that we did that were beyond the walls, we also issued, reissued Dr. Cameron's memoir with some additions that he gave me they had not been in previous versions of the book. We also had every year on his birthday a huge celebration of some kind and this particular one we revived some lynching place from the early late 1800s and early 1900s that brought out anti- lynching activists at the time.

We held in other people's brick and mortar spaces like churches and libraries, we held interracial dialogues and so forth so there's almost never a time when America's Black Holocaust was not active even though the physical space was closed.

I want to show you briefly this is an exhibit in our reconstruction gallery, a gallery which is fairly small still. But as I said this museum continues to grow.

This gallery of this exhibit founding the new free Black community as part of our telling of stories about get tools often and part of our theme which are which includes resilience. So we like to have exhibits that show the resilience of the Black community even during the Black Holocaust. So this one was created by a scholar who is a graduate student. We have both graduate students and experienced scholars alike contributing as volunteers. In their field.

An exhibit is about 900 and 1200 words and we try to get at the reading level of 8th-10th grade which is very very hard if you asked scholars to write so it requires some editing help. Because middle school students use our website. High school students. Americans whose first language is not English. People around the world. So that is the reading level we try for.

And this is one of the few digitized documents, historic documents that ABHM bone spur we do not have extensive physical collections and the ones that we do have are still locked in storage there is no place to put them. But this one did get digitized and it is a marriage certificate because enslaved people could not marry, you can only imagine once freedom came how excited people were to actually get formally married.

So we use digitized information from elsewhere obviously. We don't have all that ourselves. We use it under the public domain. Most of our stuff that's historical is under public domain. And some things that are licensed as well.

As I say we like to tell stories that are not the ones that we all get taught while I didn't get taught any of this in school but most people around get taught something about Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks and all of that. So in this area we talk about the architecturally of the civil rights movement who was not known because he was gay.

And even though he was the principal mover and shaker behind a great deal of the organized civil rights movement he did make it into this picture of the 1963 March on Washington. These are the leadership. Ruston was not in this picture because at that time the thought that this would be would reflect badly on the civil rights movement.

We also try to tell stories that are what we call intersectional.

I just want to give you a sense of what the memorial is of the victims of lynching. We are trying to collect stories of lynching victims about their lives, not their deaths. Will know about their deaths coming oh, lynching was an abomination, an atrocity. And we do tell stories of lynchings here including the one that Dr. Cameron escaped. And but we also like to tell stories of who and why they were lynched.

And in this case we do have a pretty extensive story about Anthony Crawford because his granddaughter became a public historian, was able to face the story in her family. Many people are people who have trauma everywhere don't want to talk about it and so it is hard to collect the stories. A lot people don't even know the stories exist and their families but we are starting to get more and more of that as people become aware.

I thought I would share with you the exhibit that has gone the most comments. We do allow comments and this one has 50 a great deal more than most do. This is a breaking news story actually something new that came up with Henry Louis Gates the famous historian or current contemporary historian back in January 1914 people were still arguing about it. And some of the arguments unfortunately get into uncivil discourse which is beyond our comments policy. We don't want to censor anything. We put in an exhibit called hateful speech.

So these are the vulgar and profane and whatever comments that we did not put in the other exhibit because they comprise what we call hateful speech to. I just want to take you briefly to breaking news to know we are running out of time here. And as I said this is what we call history in the making. The most volunteers we've had, I've lost count of the number of volunteers. It's probably well over 200 in the 11 years that we been going. A lot of them are undergraduates, at universities around here and we call this hour educational program. People who do this hosting for us, Black media and Black journalists every week and they put up with a select and of course we give them some guidance of what they select and put up breaking news for us and the really good students learn to connect this breaking news with exhibits that are already in the museum.

So we try to connect the past and present we use video. We use as can see still pictures and things that are digitized. Here's an example about how you can learn more about the background of the subject. In other places in the virtual museum and also outside.

We've learned to aggregate fees, excerpt them and post them and that is a lot about you so volunteers. In addition to our scholar reels.

If you have questions after this this is where you can find me. And I've given also I think some links that you can follow that may be in the chat later. I would be very happy to answer your questions.

>>ZINNIA WILLITS: All right. We are all back and I would just like to thank you both for those wonderful presentations. I will just tell everybody attending today that in preparation for this webinar and just getting to know Cathy and Dr. Kaplan I spent a lot of time on these websites and their dynamic and deep and rich with such wonderful history so thank you both really for sharing this story with us.

We do have a bunch of questions and probably about five minutes somebody try to get to about two or three don't worry everybody listening we can follow this up in the forum that we have because obviously there's a lot of interest for both of you and what you are doing pretty. Up this one was particularly interesting to me estimate comes from a collections background. You are both capturing stories of multiple, Fran, 3000 pages of content on your website so someone wanted to know you have a database behind the scenes managing the profiles, or, are they captured posterior single pages on your site?

>>CATHY SAUNDERS: As I said technically the profiles are blog posts. Cycle back of house, I can search it by what date they were put up, what, what sort of their tags or keywords so that allows me to manage those. But then for the user we have created some, we created a tag cloud we created a pulldown menu of hereby century. By what town they are connected with and what key topic. Like whaling or labor history. Output answers the question for our site.

>>DR. FRAN KAPLAN: The breaking news essentially everything comes into that post people don't really operate much on a day-to-day except for the lynching Memorial. So because we wanted this to be something that could easily be changed. Not static. Let me tell you one of the challenges of finding someone to do your website we have found is trying to get web designers to understand how not static museums are cut they really need to be very flexible and adaptable to changes as well discovered even more so in this last year.

>>CATHY SAUNDERS: Also in the back of house management we keep a Google spreadsheet that when someone writes a profile they intranet into the Google spreadsheet and it's the task of the next person to review and creepy tax and upload it so that's how we keep track behind the scenes of what is in queue and was moving.

>>DR. FRAN KAPLAN: Like Cathy we are in WordPress which when we started was one of the first platforms and it was easy to train other people on we knew a lot of different people looking who came and went that's how we wanted to be on it as we wanted it to be very simple to use and something people might be familiar with.

>>ZINNIA WILLITS: Absolutely. Okay here's another one that I'm sure lots of people out there will be interested in what avenues have you explored for funding your website, upgrades, or features? Who once jumping on that want?

>>CATHY SAUNDERS: I'm going to defer to you, Fran, first.

>>DR. FRAN KAPLAN: We haven't had funding. This has been a volunteer effort. When we started it for the first 10 years all the funding came out of my pocket so things like web hosting. Designer were mostly volunteer but we need to pay for some of their work. This been a few things.

Now there is some funding because of, we the establishment of a physical museum so this year the physical museum gave me a small budget to work with. But I would say that one of the places to go for us for this kind of funding in the future will be the humanities funding, digital humanities funding. That every state and think has humanities Council and then of course the national endowment for the humanities. So that's where we will be going. IMLS until one year ago is not defined museum as being digital and now there is room for digital projects. But we couldn't find a place to get funded as a grassroots organization for this initially.

>>ZINNIA WILLITS: Cathy?

>>CATHY SAUNDERS: I will just add that any general funding request that we have put in whether appropriation or small foundation has incorporates the prominence of the website and the costs so in a way we say this is part of the overhead of the project. But I can't think of funding that we could not get a digital humanities grant but that's action because we are probably too large a museum.

>>ZINNIA WILLITS: I think that definitely gives a lot of people some thought about where to go. We are running low on time but I have one final question that I will be interested to hear how you both answer it. But then just everybody who is listening some of these questions to my Fran there was even one about what makes a museum and museum if it's all on the website? So I think definitely there is room for conversation here to continue on our forum.

The final question that I'm going to post to both of you but you could start your website project over, what would you would you do differently? Just the one or two. Anyone first?

>>CATHY SAUNDERS: I think one of the things for me content wise is with such it was such a labor of enthusiasm putting it together but I think we are recognize that we want to create some more standards around the profiles. And so we are building those out now as we go forward. I think that is again, what is your structure? What is your consistency across what you are doing.

>>DR. FRAN KAPLAN: I don't know given when we started and how we had to start what I would do differently. What I would do differently now? Now there seems to be a real opening for digital humanities projects and if I could wave my magic wand I would get somebody who really knows how to access that because that is not really in my ballpark so much.

Because I do think there is a lot of opportunity out here now that there has not been, thanks to the coronavirus. It's one of the silver linings in the cloud is we all are zoomed out at least we know how to use zoom and we know how to engage the community in this way so I think there is a lot more understanding of things that we could do. If I had funding right now I would do some GIS projects. Some other kinds of interactive stuff. One of the things we've all wanted to do is to gamify some of our history so people could interact with it as a game.

>>CATHY SAUNDERS: I think personally when I started there was some assumption other people will handle behind the scenes tech and some ways I could go back and say I would do an intensive learning of WordPress and what can and cannot do, that might have changed how I approach some things. So take the time to learn. That before you delve too deep. That can sometimes help.

>>ZINNIA WILLITS: I will add as someone who was thrown into managing a website with no experience of doing so, I completely understand and appreciate the reality that you are both putting to these projects and the passion behind it. That is what is fueling it and one of my favorite aspects of this whole project is being able to give attention to these amazing sites and museums out there and putting real people to the websites and real experiences so I really want to thank you both for your time today. With that apply to go ahead and do my host Judy and go ahead and wrap us up so thank you.

First everybody listening thank you all for attending today's inspiring session on managing website projects. A huge thank again to Cathy and Fran for sharing their journeys with website development, management and collaboration. A few super quick reminders and knuckle we are at time. After each module or the full module each month all four video so be available on our website as well as a complete toolkit of resources provided by our presenters so there's more to come. Also please remember if you missed any of this session or just want to watch it again you can access the recording on the Museum learning hub website, Museum – hub.org. Under the recent webinars tab. Please complete the postevent survey and feedback form and then don't forget to visit that forum in our website to ask questions related to this presentation or additional tech questions.

Finally please join us next Tuesday, July 13, for the first technical training workshop for module four which will focus -- on what you need to get started with the website project including easy to follow step-by-step processes and helpful guides and checklists for goal setting pick a good one. Project phases and teambuilding at this session will be taught by the founder and lead strategist of Bluebird in Indianapolis, Indiana.

I’ve truly enjoyed being back as host for module four I look forward to seeing you again next week. Thank you all for attending today's session and have a fabulous day.

[End of webinar]