

BCC DPC Python Study Groups

Terms of Reference

Version History

Version	Date	Name	Change Details
0.1	27/03/2023	PSG Admin Team	Initial draft for March 2023 meeting
0.2	25/04/2023	PSG Transition Teams	Revision
0.3	15/09/2023	PSG Transition Teams	Revision

Purpose

Effective digital preservation needs ongoing, continuous development of various skills. In particular, scripting and coding skills are necessary to effectively support and develop digital preservation tasks and workflows. Despite this recognized need, digital preservation practitioners often describe this as a gap in their skillset and point to difficulties to identify relevant training opportunities for developing these skills to the extent that they can be practically and meaningfully used.

The main purpose of the BitCurator Consortium (BCC) and Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) Python Study Group (PSG) program is to provide a regular and effective training program and community of learning focused on the development of scripting and coding skills, which can be practically and meaningfully applied to digital preservation activities and workflows.

The main aims of the program are:

- Supporting community
- Skills development
- Building capacity
- Collaboration

Scope

This section sets out the high-level activities of the Python Study Group program. Further details are provided in the relevant sections below.

Management activities:

- Oversight of the program will sit with a governance group formed of key stakeholders
- Administrative support for the program will be provided by the DPC. This will include, but is not limited to:
 - Coordination of the governance group
 - Managing sign-ups and related admin
 - Arranging study group sessions and related admin, including Zoom hosting
 - Hosting study materials on the DPC website
 - Facilitating program evaluation

Study Group activities:

- Study groups will meet on a monthly basis to provide peer-to-peer support for learning to use python for digital preservation
- Each study group will be provided with an initial focus area relating to the use of python within digital preservation activities, but thereafter the groups should be largely self-driven
- General supporting resources will be provided for the groups, and will also be made available to the broader digital preservation community
- The following are explicitly out of scope for the study groups:
 - Provision of a detailed curriculum for learning python within digital preservation activities
 - Provision of practitioner certification on the use python for digital preservation
 - Consultation on how to deploy python for digital preservation

Values

The Python Study Groups are established under the auspices of the DPC Executive Board and BCC Executive Council.

They will adopt the constitution, norms and values of the DPC, including:

- Care for our members, resources, people and environment
- Maintain neutrality in respect to solutions, approaches, sectors, suppliers and vendors
- Be open, transparent and accountable to members
- Amplify the needs and successes of our members
- Be open to all stakeholders with a presumption of positive intent
- Respond to the needs of members in the delivery of services
- Be authoritative, current and concise in all our publications and communications
- Be respectful, welcoming, inclusive and transparent in all our dealings
- Be evidence-led, making effective use of data in decision making

The study groups support the BCC's [inclusivity commitment](#) to prioritizing BCC initiatives related to introductory digital preservation education. The groups shall adopt the values of the BCC, including the following examples of positive behavior from the [BCC Code of Conduct](#):

- Using welcoming and inclusive language

- Being respectful of differing viewpoints and experiences
- Gracefully accepting constructive criticism
- Respecting and valuing the contributions of all members of the community, regardless of status or role
- Showing empathy towards other community members

The study groups will act on their own values, including:

- Providing a non-judgmental space where anyone and everyone feels welcomed and valued, regardless of their level of expertise
- Allowing for shared learning and collaboration across time zones, geographies, and distinct institutional contexts
- Balancing the curriculum between accessibility / low barrier to entry and usefulness in everyday digital archiving workflows
- Clear external and internal communications and organized resources
- Supporting accountability for practitioners as they learn and implement python together
- Continual attention to program sustainability and momentum

The study groups also meet under the DPC's Inclusion and Diversity policy. DPC is committed to being accessible to everyone who wishes to engage with the topic of digital preservation. Communities that fully embrace these values are shown to be more effective, innovative, and united. Therefore we expect participants to be positive, accepting, and sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. Harassment of any member of the DPC community will not be tolerated and appropriate steps will be taken to deal with any such issues. For more information, see the [DPC Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#).

Sources:

- [PSG Pilot Motivation and Goals](#)
- Example [Working Group ToR](#)
- [BCC Inclusivity Statement](#)
- [PSG Project Kick Off Jamboard Exercise](#)
- [DPC Inclusion and Diversity policy](#)

Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

Any conflicts of interest should be declared at the start of each session. This will be a standing item on the governance group agenda. Participants are encouraged to raise any concerns about conflicts of interest with the leader of the relevant session:

- For governance group meetings this will be the chair of the group
- For study group meetings this will be the DPC staff member acting as host

Discussions relating to particular people, organizations, or products should be treated confidentially.

Management and Administration

A governance group will meet two times a year, with ad hoc meetings as needed, to conduct oversight of the Python Study Groups program.

Scope of work for the governance group includes:

- Addressing any Code of Conduct violations or other violations of the Terms of Reference
- Administering annual evaluations of the Python Study Group program
- Making recommendations on programmatic changes
- Launching subcommittees as needed, particularly an every-other-year curriculum review committee
- Conducting strategic planning for the Python Study Groups program

The governance group's six (6) total members will comprise five (5) voting representatives and one non-voting DPC staff member for support. Of the voting members, at least one will be a constituent of DPC and another one a constituent of BCC. The remaining three voting members are open to participants in the Python Study Group program community who are members of DPC or BCC.

Administrative support of the Python Study Groups will be conducted by the DPC. This will include, but is not limited to

- Managing the allocation of resources, such as virtual meeting spaces, programmatic communications, and study group materials
- Coordination of the governance group
- Managing sign-ups and related admin
- Arranging study group sessions and related admin, including Zoom hosting
- Hosting study materials on the DPC web estate
- Facilitating program evaluation

Membership

Participation in the Python Study Groups is open to BCC and DPC members, and the broader digital preservation community.

However, to keep numbers manageable, there will be a finite number of places. The Python Study Groups will comprise a maximum of twenty (20) study groups divided into two time zones. There will be 10 study groups per time zone; each group will have no more than 8 participants, allowing for up to 80 participants per time zone and 160 participants in total.

The two time zone groups will be targeted as follows:

- Time Zone 1: Africa, Europe, Eastern Regions of the Americas
- Time Zone 2: Asia, Australasia and Pacific, Western Regions of the Americas

Membership will be for 6 months in the first instance, with an option for study groups to renew for an additional 6 months if agreed collectively.

For the study groups themselves, there will be priority places set aside for DPC and BCC members as well as a limited number of places for those who are not currently members of these organizations.

- BCC members will have priority access to 25 seats in each time zone (50 total)
- DPC members will have priority access to 25 seats in each time zone (50 total)
- Those who are not BCC and DPC members will be able to access the remaining 30 seats in each time zone (60 total)

Additionally, a waitlist will be available for any remaining places.

Sign-ups for the study groups will be facilitated using Google Form sign-in sheets, where individuals will provide their name, organization, and contact email under the group they wish to join.

- There will be no more than ten groups per time zone, and no more than 80 participants per time zone (no group will have more than eight members).
- Each group will have a corresponding number
 - Groups 1-10 correspond to Time Zone 1
 - Groups 11-21 correspond to Time Zone 2

Participation entitles members of the study groups participation in this program only. Those who join the study groups will be added to a Slack workspace and given access to a shared Google Drive folder where all resources linked to this program will be available to participants.

Meetings - Format and Timings

Python Study Group program coordinators will arrange study group meetings in the two different time zones. Groups will be split into one of the two meeting times. Each meeting will take place once a month for 2 hours in the relevant time zone, on the Zoom platform.

The typical structure for the meetings will start with a plenary session with all of the groups in and then break-out rooms for each individual group for the rest of the session.

Participants in the study groups meetings are expected to adhere to the values and code of conduct as outlined in the [Values](#) section of this document.

Outputs

The primary output of the Python Study Group program is a global digital preservation workforce that is better equipped to employ python in their digital preservation workflows. Initial outputs to support the administration and facilitation of the groups will be created by the transition team. The transition team will dissolve by the end of 2023, at which point the governance group will steward these materials into the future.

Initial outputs include:

- Content to support learning, including a “Getting Started with Python” guide, suggestions of how Python can be used for digital preservation, and a list of additional recommended resources
- An onboarding process for participants, including all implementation mechanisms (sign-up sheet, orientation, etc.)
- A web page and hub for PSG information and documentation (including on how to join, how to contribute to the curriculum) on the DPC website

The governance group will steward the iterative Python Study Groups learning content developed by the pilot organizers and transition team in 2021-2023. The governance group will solicit and implement contributions every two years with the aim of developing a curriculum. Ongoing contributions from DPC and BCC members will also be accepted. All documentary output that can be shared with the public will be via the DPC website under a [Creative Commons CC BY/SA/NC license](#).

The study groups will have access to a Google Drive space to collaborate and work on their own projects. While they are encouraged to proactively communicate about their progress in the form of a blog post, presentation, or other activity, and they have access to DPC and BCC communication outlets to do so, it is not a requirement of participation or committed output.

Outputs may grow if volunteer support is strong. The governance group and staff are encouraged to focus additional capacity towards activities that support the professional development of participants, such as an annual showcase of participants’ projects or project spotlight social media campaigns that promote both the program and its participants.

Evaluation

Formal evaluation of the program will be carried out using a feedback survey at the end of each study group cycle. Survey questions will be agreed by the governance group. Simple and straightforward issues identified will be triaged immediately as part of the DPC’s administrative support offer, and more complicated issues will be referred to the governance group for consideration and action.

Participants will also be encouraged to provide informal feedback to relevant DPC support staff as needed during each active cycle of the Python Study Group program.