Postdoctoral Associate - Advancing Equity and Accessibility in Archives and Special Collections

Postdoctoral Research Program - Center for Research on Equitable and Open Scholarship (CREOS)
Two-Year Term - Visa Sponsorship Available

The MIT Libraries' Center for Research on Equitable and Open Scholarship (CREOS) seeks an exceptional, collaborative, and community-driven researcher for a two-year postdoctoral associate role, to conduct original research on scholarly communications and the scholarly ecosystem. In partnership with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, CREOS plans to hire three highly motivated scholars with a strong desire to conduct research that will advance knowledge in the service of equitable and open scholarship. We are especially interested in applicants who wish to pursue research that will further our understanding of incentives and barriers to equitable and open scholarship, impacts of equitable and open scholarship, and/or economic models for equitable and open scholarship.

Responsibilities:

Conduct original research in the areas of open and equitable scholarship under the guidance of the Principal Investigator Stephanie Frampton (Associate Professor of Literature and Director of the MIT Programs in Digital Humanities) and in close collaboration with library and faculty mentors, research scientists, and fellow postdoctoral associates. The outcomes from this research will be used to inform future research, implementations, or adoptable resources for MIT Libraries and the broader library community.

This position will focus on research related to identifying, assessing, developing, and promulgating best practices for advancing equity and accessibility in archives and special collections, with a particular focus on accessibility of digital collections for persons with disabilities. The postdoctoral associate’s research will focus on identifying and analyzing current barriers to accessing digital collections within archives and special collections. The associate will also be expected to critically assess existing and potential technology solutions for closing the accessibility divide. We are particularly interested in exploring how remote access to digital archives and special collections might redress and/or exacerbate challenges of disability and equity.

The first year of the associateship will focus on identifying, describing, and analyzing existing accessibility practices and interventions to digital archives and special collections access, while the second year will focus on designing prototypes and evaluating interventions within MIT Libraries’ own Distinctive Collections.

The participant selected for this position will join the vibrant community of researchers in the humanities, arts, and social sciences who are part of MIT Programs in Digital Humanities. They will have the opportunity to contribute to established research questions in CREOS as well as to develop their own ideas for research in the areas of open and equitable research: specifically, the barriers, impacts, and/or economic models therein.
MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum/Basic Qualifications:
  - PhD or equivalent terminal degree in Information Sciences, Library Studies, Sociology, Science and Technology Studies, Disability Studies, Human-Computer Interaction, Education, Cultural Studies, or a related field required, with a background in research on scholarly communications, the science of science, studies of knowledge and knowledge production, and/or information sciences preferred.
  - Experience with and an understanding of archives, archival practices, and special collections.
  - Experience conducting and disseminating basic research in an academic environment.
  - Understanding of the complex and changing landscape of scholarship and scholarly communications; and ability to identify significant and relevant research questions.
  - Familiarity with multiple methodologies (e.g. experimental design, survey methods, interviews, etc.); experience in using both qualitative and quantitative data to test hypotheses preferred.
  - Ability to work on interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research projects.
  - Proven success in working in a dynamic and team environment.
  - Clear and effective written and verbal communication, including presentation skills; preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work.
  - Demonstrated commitment to promoting the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all work activities and in interpersonal interactions.

We expect the candidate to be stronger in some qualifications listed above than others; we are committed to helping our future colleague expand their skills, as well as learning from their areas of strength.

SALARY AND BENEFITS: $65,000 USD/year. MIT offers excellent benefits including a choice of health and retirement plans, a dental plan, tuition assistance, and fully subsidized MBTA passes for local bus and subway service. Flexible work arrangements, including flex-time and telecommuting, are considered for positions that meet established criteria. The MIT Libraries is a collegial and supportive working environment and fosters professional growth of staff with management training and travel funding for professional meetings.

APPLICATION PROCESS: Apply online at: https://hr.mit.edu/careers. Priority will be given to applications received March 19th, 2021; position open until filled. Applications must include the following:

- Cover letter addressing qualifications for undertaking the research project including your interest and background in some subset of topics listed under Responsibilities and any additional topics that may fit into the research scope.
- CV.
- *Writing sample, such as an excerpt from the dissertation or other relevant publication, of no more than 5,000 words.
- *Two letters of recommendation.

*Please send the writing sample and letters of recommendation to creos@mit.edu

The Environment:

The MIT Libraries are an engine for creating, sharing, and safeguarding knowledge at the Institute and beyond. The Libraries work to improve the world’s collective knowledge by equipping current and future scholars with the best content and the skills to use it, whether examining medieval manuscripts or flying drones to collect data. We make MIT research — from the LIGO detection of gravitational waves, to the design of humanoid robots, to advances in drug delivery — openly accessible to the world. Our
new research initiative CREOS tackles the big challenges in scholarly communication, ranging from accessibility and inclusion in library systems to economic models for equitable and open scholarship.

Through this work, we are building a library of the future, reimagining and reinvigorating the use of libraries from simply quiet places to study into a global network of partnerships that can build “a more inclusive, equitable, trustworthy, and sustainable scholarly knowledge ecosystem.”

MIT is strongly and actively committed to diversity within its community and particularly welcomes applications from qualified women and minority candidates. The Libraries seek professionals who enthusiastically embrace the empathy, courage, self-reflection and respect of a multi-cultural, diverse, and inclusive workplace, and who strive to incorporate those values in their work and interactions.

MIT Programs in Digital Humanities:

Founded in 2018 with a $1.3 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the MIT Programs in Digital Humanities aim to advance computational methods and digital approaches to humanistic inquiry through code, communication, and community.

Taking advantage of MIT’s rich STEM expertise and seeking to enhance humanities education among engineering and computer science students, the lab is centered on a diverse group of undergraduate research associates (over 70% female and 35% underrepresented minorities) who work closely with pre- and postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, staff, and SHASS faculty on groundbreaking research and teaching projects in the humanities and humanistic social sciences.

Equal Employment Opportunity:

MIT has a publicly posted Nondiscrimination Policy with a commitment to equal opportunity. The Institute prohibits discrimination against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other Institute administered programs and activities.