

## Teleworking Student Assistants-What on Earth Can They Do from Home? – Transcript

Please stand by for realtime captions.

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Hello everyone. Welcome to Teleworking Student Assistants: What On Earth Can They Do From Home? . Before we get started I have a few housekeeping reminders please use the chat box for any questions, comments or technical issues that come up during the presentation. I will keep track of those. We will address them after the presentation. We are recalling -- recording the conference. Everyone will see links to the presentation. Please join me in welcoming our presenters. Elisabeth Garner and Sarah Dutton . I will hand it over to Elisabeth Garner to start the session .

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Hello everyone. I hope you can hear me. Thank you for joining me this afternoon. This is definitely a topic that I had to think about when everything happened back in March of this year. Keeping to work at all possible if I could. I will go through a few slides today and show you some of the things that we were able to do in order to work from home. Near Charlotte, North Carolina.

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This is me on the left. And that is Sarah on the right. A little bit about myself. Right now as the interim government resources coordinator at the UNC Wilmington rental library. Current vice chair of the government resource section for the North Carolina library association. My hobbies include anything to do with the North Carolina mountains, hiking, skiing, etc. I go whenever I can. I am leaving this Sunday morning for a week to go up. I am looking forward to that. I am married to have two cats, Sheldon and Alf, and a sweet nephew named Ethan. And Sarah is a junior at UNC Wilmington majoring in history. She is my current student worker. She is also working in an archival internship at the Gaston County Museum in North Carolina. She is a social media coordinator for SHEA at UNC Wilmington. I will pass the ball over to Sarah.

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I wanted to see if she wants to add anything.

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Hello. I also have two cats. I love libraries and cats. We are the [ Indiscernible ] SHEA. The group. [ Indiscernible ] SAGA .

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I think I have the ball back. Thank you for elaborating on that. I could not remember what SAGA stood for. I could not remember the act rule full spelling. Thank you.

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Free COVID-19 on-site work. Many of you may have government document offices that look similar to what ours looks like. We were in the middle of the selection, the selection, the selection and so forth. Making lists daily of [ Indiscernible ] from the congressional committee hearings in that area. We were turning out some boxes as you can see. And now I should have taken a picture of what this looks like. We have been able to get rid of close to 100 boxes since

they have fallen off the database list. We are clearing out probably anywhere from 15 to 20 boxes maybe every couple of weeks or so as they fall off the list. We are definitely doing the selection before COVID-19.

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March came along. We needed to shift. That made me think about what I needed to get Sarah do from home. We were really fortunate at my library. Our director at the campus as a whole said it would be okay for student workers, at least at our library to telework if they wanted to do so. And Sarah fortunately cannot thank her enough. She still wanted to do it. We still needed the help and she has been instrumental in that help. Let me move forward and talk about how we switch gears with our projects.

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Sir if you like to jump in any point, just feel free to jump in.

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The one thing that she was doing here, along with making lists of printed items she was checking electronic links. We do get the federal online records each month from archives. We get the North Carolina worn digital records from the state library. She was able to at least continue checking those links from home. The difference was she of course did not have our [ Indiscernible ]. She did not have it at home. To tweak that a little bit I would still send her the list, the spreadsheets of the numbers. And she could plug those into her online public catalog and search them that way. She can check links. Our North Carolina born digital state government publications, I am not sure how many of you have access to those types of records in your state. But if you do, essentially they post those each month And I can go on the page and I can click on the month. I can open up the list. They list the title of the document. And then they list a number that corresponds to the title. And then I just make a note pad list of all those numbers. And I bring them into a connection. And then I sent her the list of the numbers to check as well. And she does that from home. So that is a couple of ideas you might be able to tweak for student workers. If they were loose -- used to checking links. They can do it potentially from home using the online catalog.

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I sort of went over this. I wanted to write it out in case anyone wanted to use in the future for student worker. You can see my process. A little bit has changed with this number. We are now receiving quite a few more than 3000 a month. Since GPL has gone through the process of hating the links. We get the overlaid records and the changes. I send her 5000 links. I have another 2500 to send to you. Just bear that in mind. So that is the slide that explains the process.

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During this it has brought a couple of different issues to light. And another one came up since I made the slide. Basically we did have the PURLS issue . And so we are sort of addressing all that. But Sarah also noticed that while she was checking the electronic records from home, they were showing incorrect summaries. In the catalog you have a summary explaining the book or the item and what it is about. But the summaries were completely incorrect. Many of them were pretty comical as I recall.

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We had some in German. We had mother day gifts. There was one with the metaphysical powers of the mind under a military document or something about minerals. Very interesting combination of things that I was not acting to find at this job.

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You have to admit it makes a tedious task a little bit funny to find things like that for sure. But because she found these issues and there were so many of them, I had to get in touch with the catalog department because I did not know why this was happening. And so I thought of collaborating with them and for whatever reason, when I would plug them in to our server, they would not show up. And so I could get really granular and get into a. Suffice to say the coordinator of our cataloging department did some work with our assistance department and they figured out a way to go into the system. They have corrected it. At least we think we have I do not think there is an incorrect summaries showing up. If they show up they are matching the title of the item. So far, so good. In a weird way her working remotely brought to light some issues that were not so great. So that was very helpful.

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In other more tedious project, this is a picture of one of the roads of our correction. -- Collection. We made a D selection last. In order to speed up the process we basically were using a template to see if the template -- to see the temple task of the title and the date it was published. At some point in time we are asleep are going to need to have the OCLC number attached to the particular item. We would need to get rid of our holdings and connections. And then do a math D selection of those actual items in our catalog. So to speed up the process we left will OCLC number spreadsheet. Which again is a tedious project. But it did come in handy. Now Sarah has been able to go back through all spreadsheets, or she is still working on it this is not quite close to being finished. But she can go through the online public catalog, typing and pull the print item associated. And then she can jot down the OCLC number associated with the title. In the same spreadsheet. And then she can send it back to me. And I can do one mass deletion of our holdings, which cannot be -- it takes so much work off of my shoulders. It is something that she is able to do remotely. It really has been a super helpful. Is there anything you would like to add Sarah?

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I have now worked on this particular one. Others have come up that were more time pressing. It is different than how we were doing it in person. But I am glad I am able to work on this project, even though I cannot physically pull items or shells. -- Shelves.

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She's selling herself a little bit short. It truly has been helpful. When I realized as fast as I turn out these list it on campus, she can turn around and take one and spend a few hours a day and get that OCLC number for each of those items. It has been super helpful. Again this is a slide where I wanted to write out the process of how she would do it. Doing it at home. This is more for you to look at. You can look at it at your leisure.

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And then we have some microfiche. Earlier in the year or late last year, I cannot remember. It was brought to light that there was the overall list of the numbers. We have cleared out a great deal of our federal microfiche and is a project we want to continue to deselect the microfiche. Many libraries I'm sure doing it. And in that spirit, I have sent chunks of the active notepad list

to Sarah. She types in the number. She puts it into the online catalog from home. And I trained her. She's such a quick learner. She identified and pulled up multiple records for that. She's able to open the record and she can look at the different fields to determine which one is the microfiche. Sorry I got a little bit distracted by the chat. So basically I trained her enough to identify which one would be the microfiche record. And then she writes down the OCLC number for me. I will going to make sure it has been deleted from the catalog that the holdings have been removed. That is the process. That is one I do not think you have been doing recently. Because other projects have come up. It is wonderful.

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I will definitely get to some of these chat questions. Do not worry.

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I am keeping track for you. I will give them to you at the end.

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That is fine, thank you. The other thing that I thought would be helpful for Sarah is -- the FDLP webinars. I told Sarah she's welcome to view any webinars that are in that series. Sarah has already expressed interest to going to the library science school and finish with undergraduate school. She's already doing her internship in an archival setting. I figured this would be helpful for her anyway to learn more about what we do, and how FDLP libraries work. In our state or in North Carolina we have another webinar series called [ Indiscernible ] I put the YouTube channel. It is another series of webinars. They can view this from home. I count that as work. That is there for you to view later.

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That is it. I tried to go through for five projects. I have several working on them from home. Sarah if you have anything else.

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I would like to have at the webinar is a brief part while waiting for some projects. They help me understand about the system. [ Indiscernible ] the general history of records. It was a good background. I recommended. Is a fun little break.

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Yeah, definitely.

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Okay. We have about 25 minutes for questions. If you have anything please type it into the chat box. I will relay them for a. We have a couple that came in while presenting. Do you have Sarah just working at home or do you manage more at homes Teutons?

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I only have Sarah. I had a federal work-study student. I had her earlier in the year. I believe January and February. But we had an issue, a campus issue with the federal work-study program. She ended up having to leave. So I used to have more than one. But I just have Sarah for now. And honestly, she has been a workhorse. I was telling my supervisor the other day, I feel like if I could just have Sarah for a student worker, I would be fine. Even with all the projects we have going on. She's just able to do a really good job. And it is hard to train. I am going on a tangent. But if I were to hire a new student worker in the spring, I am not sure if we will be doing that at this point. It would be difficult to train that student off-campus. I think it is

much easier to have the student here. And I can walk them through what we do. I probably will have Sarah through the spring. And then we will reassess for the fall of 2021.

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It would be difficult without having the prior on campus experience. I was there for a semester and a half. Before I had to go home and I'll come back on campus. It was easy for me to transfer the information. But I cannot imagine how it would be to just train remotely.

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I think if you start throwing out terms like OCLC . A student has no concept of the program and it would be very difficult.

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Thank you. We have another question. Are you recycling the microfiche ?

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That is a great question. We have facilities on campus. We have to mark boxes special destroy because everything that has happened this year, the last time we were sending out microfiche probably was two or 3 years ago at this point. Maybe even longer. I think at one point they were trying to recycle it in a sustainable manner. But now I am actually not sure if that is the case. I wish I had a better answer for you. I will probably start looking. We still have maybe 20 draws of microfiche that we still need to deselect so they are not in boxes yet. But when we get rid of those microfiche, I will definitely call the facilities again to see if there was a way they can do that. If you burn microfiche it sets off about chemical. I will definitely check into it again. That is a great question.

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We have a question. Do you think that your institution will move toward doing more remote base student work regularly moving forward, or only while COVID-19 restrictions are in place ?

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That is a great question. Again I do not know the answer. That has not been brought up in any staff meetings. Personally speaking I feel like that would be a department by department case. And I say that because the library student workers at any given time we have 50 or 60 student workers. We have so many different departments within the library. We have student workers who work for the facilities person. Those student workers are in the building moving furniture. And those types of things. You clearly cannot do that remotely. Sarah I would much prefer to have you back on campus if it were up to me. But again that is up to Sarah. A lot of it depends on if the University continues to offer classes mostly online, and all of her classes are online, I will not necessarily make sense for her to return to campus.

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In my program and my classes do not require in person. -- [ Indiscernible ] everything is still up in the air with this pandemic. I am not really sure I do not know what it will entail in the future.

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My gut feeling, with student workers probably prefer to be on campus working. It is a social thing in some ways. But they also learn from each other while they are actually on the job site. But again that is just an observation. It does not necessarily mean it is true.

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I prefer to be in person. I do not have that while I am in my house.

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I love to have the worklife and the work home differentiation. That is a great question. I may talk with my supervisor and ask if he has heard anything about it. Thank you for asking. Smith we have a couple of comments. Tabitha says she has done training with students on new platforms using Zoom share screen and it was a real blessing. It worked really well for her.

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I think now that you bring that up there may have been one time early on. I think I may have called you. Or we did a Zoom show you how to do something on the online catalog.

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I recall I have done some work with others. I have been using both Zoom and other platforms for classes. Zoom is good for this type of work.

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Debbie wants to point out that according to their presentation earlier in the Internet archive is accepting fiche and found that libraries are getting rid of.

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I would write that down right now.

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We have some questions for Sarah. Karina and Laura both would like to know about what academic programs you think might have students that are interested? How can we make the work more attractive to prospective student workers? Any tips for hiring students that can handle detail and repetitive tasks? And/or even like it. Smack the repetitive task is up to the student. I just enjoy doing something that I can focus on. That is why I like the work. The history department is a good place for [ Indiscernible ] the English department. [ Indiscernible ] those are the top three that I can think of. That would be primarily interested in this type of work. Also [ Indiscernible ] would be a good place. [ Indiscernible ] a lot of my friends on the honors college. And they have shared the mindset similarly. [ Indiscernible ]

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I will add one little thing. I think a lot of colleges and universities use handshake platforms to hire students. With that we can sort of tweak the job description. I think we did a good enough job with that. Sarah can say yes or no. And trying to describe what the work would be like. Hopefully if a student was not as that type of work they might not necessarily have applied.

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I will say that I did another government department existed until I was looking for a job on campus. Government offices are usually tucked away. Maybe putting it out there and the type of work you do will make it easy for students to find you. I had no idea until I looked at the handshake applications.

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Something like that might be helpful.

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Thank you. Carolyn has another question for Sarah. How many hours do you work a week? What is the workload expectation? You me online? How do you communicate if you have questions?

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We communicate exclusively through email. We talk a lot the beginning with kinks working out. But I have been doing this since March. And I walked through the summer. We have a pretty

steady routine and workflow set up. I work 12 hours per week sometimes it drops down to 10 depending on my class workload for the week or if I have midterms or finals. Usually I work about four hours [ Indiscernible ] every day. Usually a lot of work on spreadsheets and then the catalog.

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Thank you. Whitney says she is a student at library school. She was an art history major during undergrad. And and and tology students might be a good choice as well.

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I am not as familiar with the work that they do.

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I was going to say that is a good point with art history and anthropology. Typically I think when you say government documents to the average college student they get the deer in the headlights look. We do have federal department agencies like the Smithsonian Institute. Just a host of different types of arts. It is such a huge department. There is definitely a good plan. There may be something for almost every student. I had a communications sports enthusiast major. Working for me for 3 years. If I was able to keep him, definitely something for anybody.

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Have you done any projects with web tech notes? That is a great question. I had my weekly meeting with my supervisor at 3:00 today. We were talking about web tech notes. About 6 years ago when I started in this position, it was under a different leadership at that time. I had talked about whether I needed to be doing web tech notes. Basically daily looking for updates and changes to records and to items and things like that. At that time we had decided we might not focus on as much because we were ill -- we were going to be deselected. We do not want to spend too much time looking for items and changing numbers. If we knew we were going to be getting rid of a lot of the collection. And I still think that is our focus today. So I have not introduced Sarah to web tech notes. Unless she found it on her own. It is something I probably could show her what it is so she would have the knowledge.

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If you are doing any projects with web tech notes feel free to email me because I would be interested. I have been fascinated by them but I have not dealt with it all that much.

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Thank you. We have another question for Sarah. Have you found a favorite government document? If so what is it?

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Actually I have two I was checking a while back. I was on location. I found the official announcement from the military about the space force. That was a fun read. Also within our collection I was putting up a preacher. We have this [ Indiscernible ] we got it back in 1971. [ Indiscernible ] communism part one. A collection of all of the paperwork and statements released and congressional hearings. About communism. Oh cool, old looking record. That one is a first favor. And I found that when I was shelving stuff.

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More about web tech notes. They have been doing work on web tech notes. There is someone you can contact if interested. And Laura points out Elizabeth, you have found your people if you have been always fascinated with web tech notes.

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Definitely. My email address is on the screen. If you want to email me I am interested in learning about what you guys are doing with web tech notes for sure.

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We have another 10 minutes. If anyone has any final questions. You can type them into the chat. I was reading the chat comment. That is a good plan. We are almost a little library within a big library in a way. And I was a history major too. My favorite part of the collection is the Department of Defense. There World War I and the World War II documents. I feel like I am definitely using my history degree in the current job that I have heard I hope Sarah has that same feeling.

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I have emailed myself so many different documents and taken pictures of things. Using as references my own personal interest. It is definitely a good resource and I am glad that I have it.

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Okay. If there are no other questions, I am going to give you a couple of minutes to type anything last-minute. Suzanne says it would be great if there is a place we can share projects students are working on. Who knows how long this pandemic will last. That is a very good point.

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I think there is a project tab on the FDLP site .

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If there are no more questions, I want to give a big thank you to Elizabeth and Sarah for an excellent program. Thank you to the audience for joining today. With that we conclude today's event. We look forward to seeing you tomorrow. Have a great evening.

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Thanks. Smack

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[ Event Concluded ]