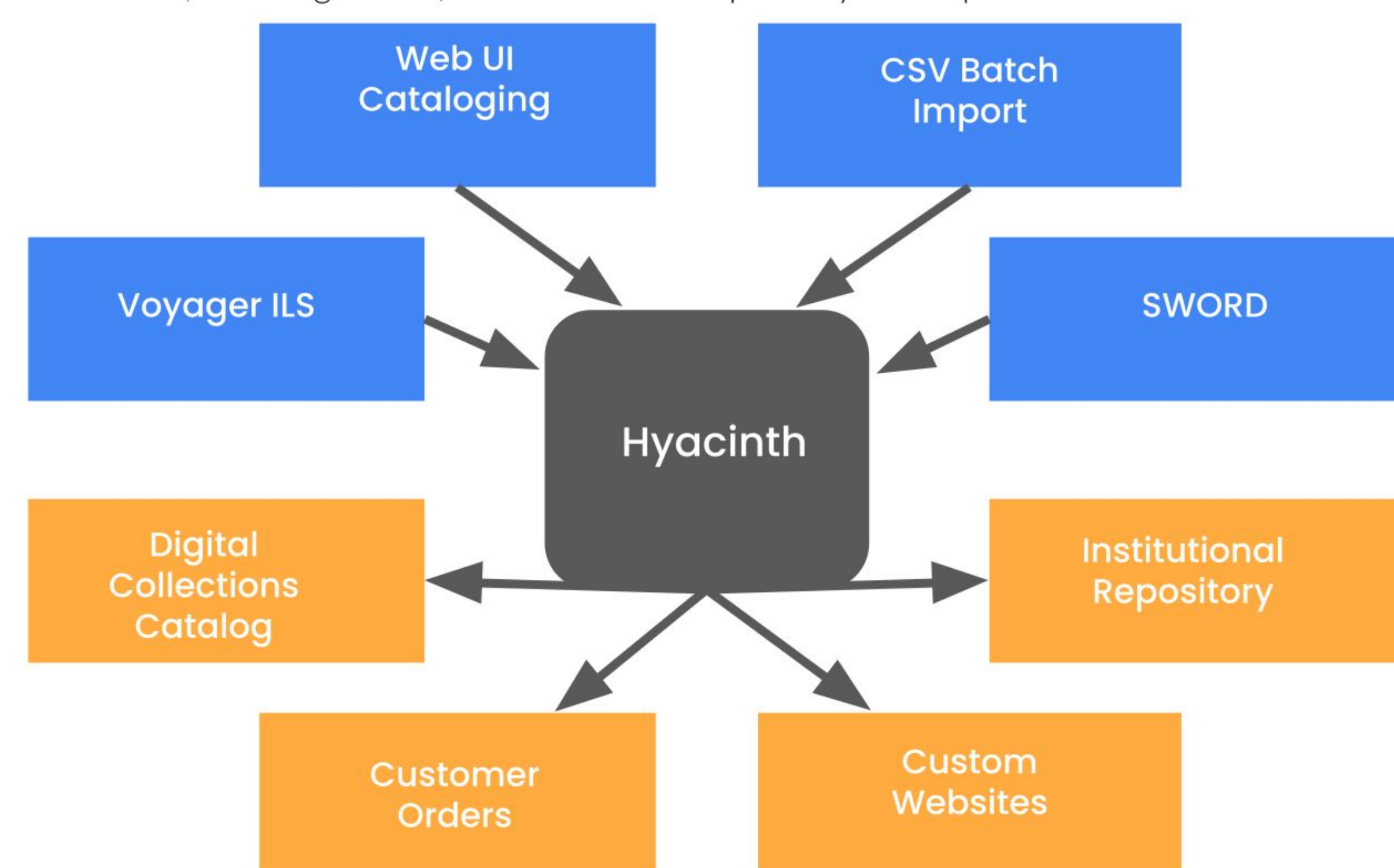


Everyone makes mistakes: Building trust and psychological safety in a shared digital object management system

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What is Hyacinth?

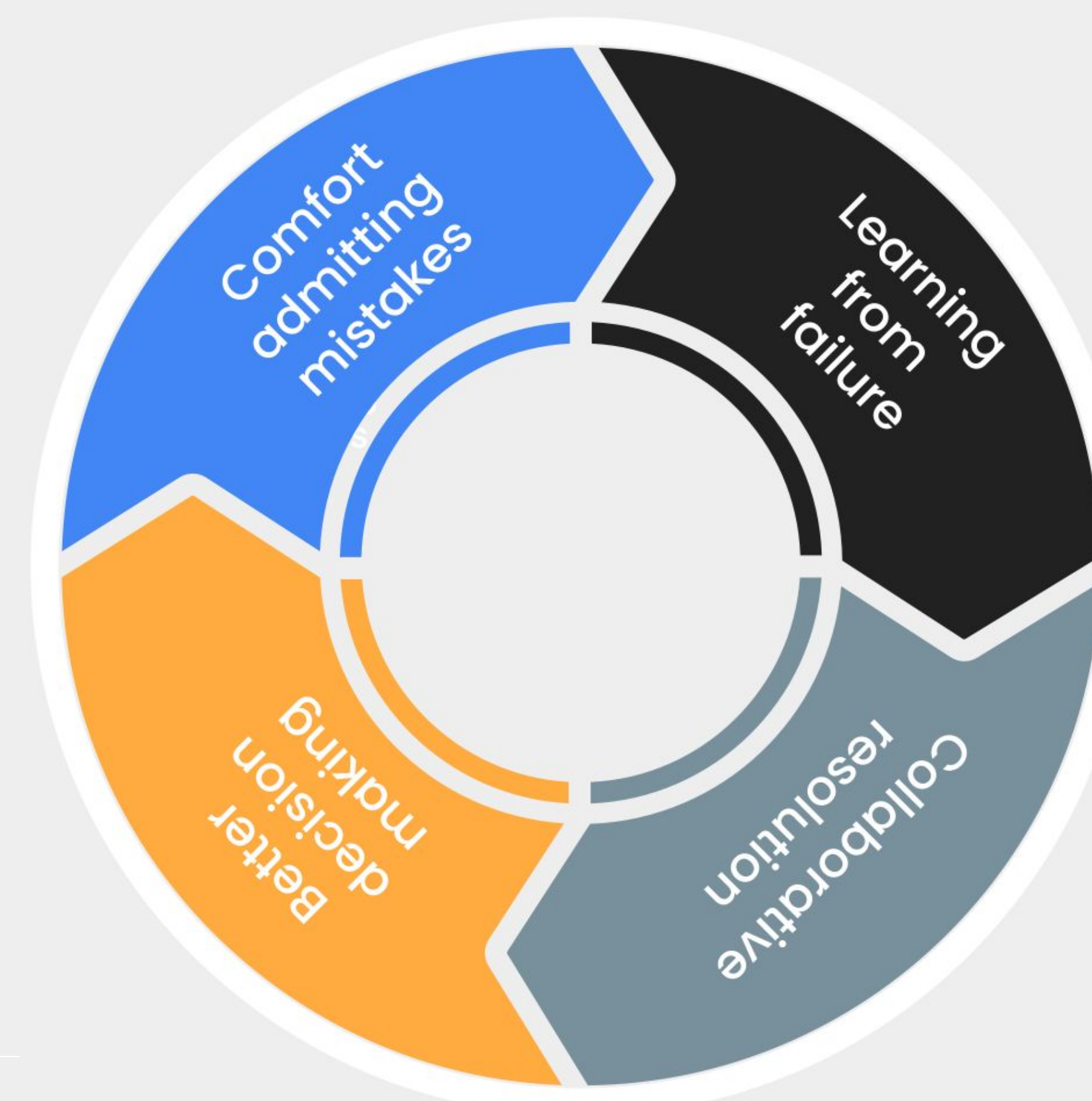
Columbia University Libraries uses one software application to manage digital objects and metadata for digital collections, scanning orders, the institutional repository and to publish that data to various websites.



The Hyacinth User Group has flourished since its inception in 2018 due in large part to the trust shared amongst members. This trust has grown because the members of the group are practitioners with hands-on experience in the application. One of the hallmarks of the trust is psychological safety, a concept from the world of business and administration. People who feel psychological safety in their workplace are able to express themselves without fear of negative consequences. This is concretely observable in our regular practice of mistake and recovery sharing.

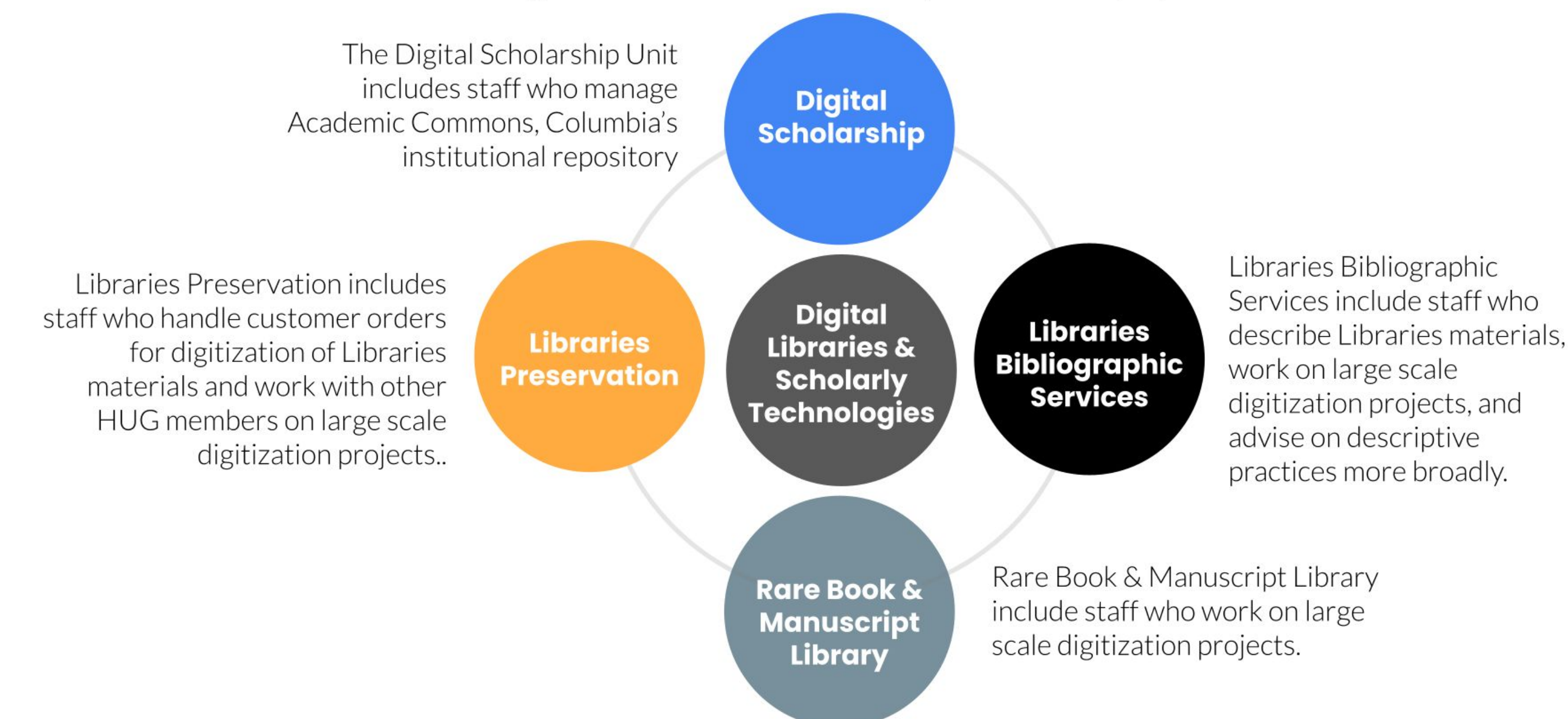
This communication around error recovery in the HUG has created a healthy culture of owning one's mistakes and calling upon collective wisdom to fix them quickly, efficiently, and without too many tears. Forgetting a semicolon doesn't mean that someone doesn't know how to do their job, a fact we all recognize as metadata practitioners.

While institutional and departmental culture and leadership set the strongest tone when it comes to error reporting and recovering quickly, the HUG can serve as an example for other metadata practitioners on how to fail with grace and provide guidance without assigning blame. And, perhaps equally importantly, how to document things and report them back to the group so that we all benefit from the mistakes that everyone makes.



The Hyacinth User Group

The Hyacinth application is developed and technically maintained by Digital Libraries & Scholarly Technologies. The Hyacinth User Group (HUG) includes stakeholders from units throughout the Libraries who utilize Hyacinth for their projects.



Mistakes & Fixes

Mistakes can be made because of miscommunication, inscrutable, outdated or missing documentation, carelessness, oversight, and more! Each problem below was discussed by a subset of the HUG team, without placing blame, and a solution was decided.

Spreadsheet disaster!

Auto-filling functions iterate over URIs and create new duplicate controlled vocabulary terms with incorrect URIs.



This problem had to be solved manually. First, the affected records using duplicate terms were updated with the correct URI. Then, the duplicate terms with incorrect URIs were deleted one at a time.

Who deleted my columns?

The Hyacinth database is constructed so that if columns in a delimited group are edited, all columns in that group must be included in a batch update



This problem could be solved programmatically. We were able to join previous database exports with our revised data to recover the lost data.

Who's in control?

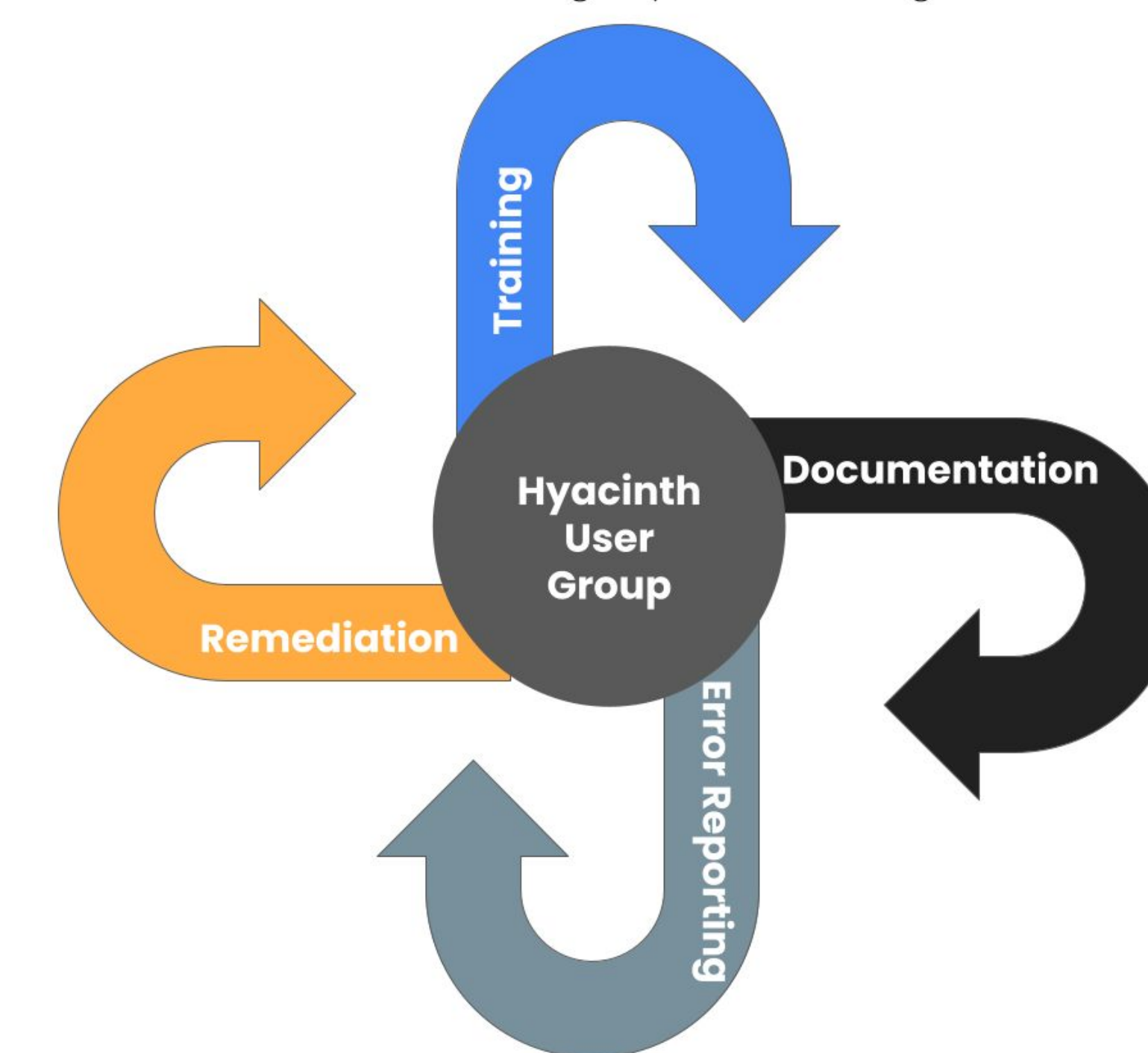
Hyacinth uses multiple subject-based controlled vocabularies with FAST and LCSH terms, but they do not exactly map to the FAST subject types.



Sometimes FAST terms that are similar are put in different Hyacinth controlled vocabularies. To fix this, we have to delete misplaced terms, create new ones, and update records.

Principles of Communication

The HUG has cultivated a culture of asking for help before making assumptions, which builds strong communication between members. Training is heavily informed by constantly-updated documentation and advice from the group about working with numerous records and shared vocabularies.



The Hyacinth User Group meets monthly to address specific issues, answer questions from members and prioritize remediation and development projects.

There is also an email alias that redirects to all active members and another for support requests that redirects to Hyacinth administrators and developers. These are used by members of the group as well as other staff to communicate with the group.

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