

Society of American Archivists
The Next Archival Fundamentals Series
February 2012

OVERVIEW

With assistance from the SAA Foundation, the Fundamental Change Working Group held its first meeting in Chicago on November 4–6, 2011, to begin research and development on the next iteration of the best-selling Archival Fundamentals Series.

The 11-member Working Group is comprised of a mix of members from the Publications Board and *American Archivist* Editorial Board: Peter Wosh (New York University), Tom Frusciano (Rutgers University), Nicole Milano (AFS Intercultural Programs, Inc.), Michael Shallcross (Bentley Historical Library), Gregory Hunter (Long Island University), Paul Conway (University of Michigan), Donna McCrea (University of Montana), Christopher Prom (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Nancy Beaumont (Executive Director), and Teresa Brinati (Director of Publishing). It is chaired by SAA's immediate past president Helen Tibbo (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).

The Working Group focused on short- and long-term product development, a modular approach to content, and the possibility of implementing distribution options that would include eBooks. The proposed approach to delivering information involves discrete modules, like chapters in a book, which will communicate foundational archival knowledge. But unlike chapters, they will be conceived and written as stand-alone pieces. So, for example, instead of a single book addressing arrangement and description, there will be a number of stand-alone modules on different aspects of this topic, which in turn will be part of a larger, evolving series. We would anticipate that users would combine these modules in various configurations in order to produce their own products.

The modular approach is a work-in-progress and there are many details to work out regarding editorial oversight, content, and production. Even so, the Working Group's goal is to debut a few modules in time for SAA's 2012 Annual Meeting in August.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Goals

The *next* Archival Fundamentals Series has two goals:

- 1) to produce and publish discrete modules that communicate foundational archival knowledge; and
- 2) to pilot a new approach to editing and distributing content from SAA—one that would provide the association with a sustainable publishing model in a rapidly changing market.

The Modular Structure

Each module in the series will provide a general introduction to a specific field of practice based on the following guiding principles:

- The target audience is individuals with limited or no practical experience in the area treated in the module, and limited or some familiarity with general archival literature.
- A module will be 10,000 to 20,000 words long (to be determined in consultation with an SAA editor).
- The module will represent the best of current practice, and will make only limited reference to debates about the more theoretical aspects of archival work.
- The advice provided will be appropriate for implementation in a wide range of repositories (in terms of size, repository focus, and available resources).
- The work will point to other resources of value, both within the new series and in the broader literature.
- The module content that you author should be able to stand on its own. For marketing purposes, SAA may choose to bundle modules into a digital packet or a print volume with other modules touching on related areas.

To provide some consistency, SAA suggests that each module follow this structure:

1. Introduction;
2. Issues/literature review;
3. Discussion of relevant standards, technologies, policies, practices, procedures, tools, and services, as applicable;
4. Description of current activities in the area, including one or more brief case studies;
5. Recommendations; and
6. Further readings.

Phase 1 (December 2011–August 2012)

Topics. SAA will begin by focusing on topics that complement or fill gaps in the seven-volume Archival Fundamentals Series II that was published between 2004 and 2010. Initial modules in the *next* series will be commissioned and will address topics related to digital preservation, curation, and the digital environment.

Specifically, SAA proposes that three modules be developed and published by August 1, 2012. The following modules are in production:

- “Standards for Arrangement and Description”
by Sybil Schaefer, Rockefeller Archive Center
- “Implementing Descriptive and Access Systems”
by Daniel Santamaria, Princeton University
- “Processing Digital Records and Manuscripts”
by J. Gordon Daines III, Brigham Young University

These modules will be developed as supplements to the following existing volumes in the Archival Fundamentals Series II: *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* by Kathleen Roe (SAA, 2005) and *Preserving Archives and Manuscripts* by Mary Lynn Ritzenhaler (SAA, 2010). Chris Prom (University of Illinois at Urbana-Campaign) and Tom Frusciano (Rutgers University) will serve as coordinator/editors for the first three modules; Paul Conway (University of Michigan) will serve as coordinator/editor for the last volume. Each work will be approximately 10,000 to 20,000 words in length.

Distribution. The finished modules will be available for purchase and distributed in several forms:

- As discrete downloads.
- Bundled and downloaded with other modules relating to a particular topical area (such as arrangement and description, etc.).
- As a book on digital curation techniques for archivists.
- As readings for SAA’s continuing education offerings.

We would anticipate that users would combine these modules in various configurations in order to produce their own products.

Process. The flexible format that envisioned will be facilitated by the use of a collaborative editorial process prior to submission, a single-blind peer review process, and quick turn-around. As appropriate, SAA will pilot the use of a Web-based review, submission, and publication management system.

These elements will allow SAA to experiment with a new editorial process, resulting in attractive and discrete products that are of use to a broad audience, while supporting the Society’s need for continued publications income. The pilot project is intended to result in the development of a nimble, sustainable, and innovative publishing model. Our ultimate hope is that the models, approaches and tools developed as part of this process will be applicable to professional societies or organizations that are under pressure to develop sustainable business models for publication in the digital age.

Timetable. SAA is looking at a timetable that will require submission of a manuscript suitable for peer review no later than May 15, 2012.

January 30, 2012	Letter of Intent signed by author (honorarium installment)
February 15, 2012	Author’s outline due to editors
May 15, 2012	Author’s first draft due to editors for peer review
June 1, 2012	Peer review comments returned by editors to author
July 1, 2012	Author’s final revisions due editors (honorarium installment)
August 1, 2012	Publication (honorarium installment)

Phase 2 will include modules focused on digital preservation, curation, and the digital environment to be developed by January 1, 2013.