Between the productive conversations we had during the ARR Meeting and [Session 309 "DWG, RVT, BIM: A New Kind of Alphabet Soup, with a Lot More Heartburn"](https://archives2016.sched.org/event/6mYV/309-dwg-rvt-bim-a-new-kind-of-alphabet-soup-with-a-lot-more-heartburn) , I think it's fair to say SAA 2016 was a success for the architectural records archival community.

Apologies in advance, this is going to be a bit of a lengthy email as it covers the breadth of topics discussed in the ARR meeting as well as some takeaways from the Session. I've organized the information so you can skip to the parts you're most interested in. To see the flow of the meeting, you can view the slides from the meeting [here](https://docs.google.com/a/berkeley.edu/presentation/d/1Iu2Dg1zM3H2VRNNBAcUVbrBJEm7wMqk830_cV-lR07I/edit?usp=sharing).

1. New Leadership
2. Website update
3. Software Preservation Network
4. CAD/BIM Taskforce survey update
5. Tour by the Portman Archives
6. Next Steps Discussion during the ARR meeting
7. [Get involved!](https://goo.gl/forms/ncczT9TTvFwKdfo23)

In more depth:

1. **New Leadership**
   * Sam Winn, incoming co-chair 2016-2018
   * (Emily Vigor, outgoing co-chair)
   * Tricia Gilson Incoming steering committee member 2016-2019
   * (Wendy Hagenmaier, outgoing steering committee member)
   * Courtney Chartier, Incoming council liaison
   * (Lisa C. Mangiafico, outgoing council liaison)
   * **Continuing leadership:**
   * Aliza Leventhal (co-chair, 2015-2017)
   * Suzi Noruschat (steering committee member 2014-2017)
   * Joanna Groberg (steering committee member 2015­-2018)
   * Tim Walsh (web liaison)
2. **Website Update:** 
   * Google Site (<https://sites.google.com/architecturalrecordsroundtable.com>)
     + Tim is working to set up forwarding from Google Sites discussion forum and formal listserv. This will allow the website to provide easier access to the discussions on our listserv. Previously these were separate discussions. Tim is also resolving the ownership issues, as our site was originally set up by a student worker under a previous co-chair.
3. **Software Preservation Network Forum Recap**
   * (For those who missed it: [see Session 309's slides](https://docs.google.com/a/sasaki.com/presentation/d/1aEPPHzaTWEieZcCS94Hixf2Rv0YdJ8Rht6CWVrD3gHg/edit?usp=drive_web), the audio recording of this session should be available to all SAA members in the next month or so through SAA)
   * The SPN began in October 2015 as an IMLS grant funded project with the goal of building a community around the issue of preserving software, and doing research to evaluate needs for future tools, platforms, guidelines, etc. They hosted their forum on Monday, August 1, 2016, where a variety of topics were covered ranging from legal issues, to defining the word software, to developing case studies and an actionable roadmap for the group to move forward.
   * To learn more about SPN, you can visit their website: <http://www.softwarepreservationnetwork.org/>
4. **CAD/BIM Taskforce Survey Update**
   * ([see meeting's slides](https://docs.google.com/a/berkeley.edu/presentation/d/1Iu2Dg1zM3H2VRNNBAcUVbrBJEm7wMqk830_cV-lR07I/edit?usp=sharing), as well as [slides from Session 309](https://docs.google.com/a/sasaki.com/presentation/d/1aEPPHzaTWEieZcCS94Hixf2Rv0YdJ8Rht6CWVrD3gHg/edit?usp=drive_web))
5. **Major themes and takeaways:** 
   * Education: 50% of respondents had attended some kind of training, but majority were unhappy with or unconfident when it came to digital design records. This looks like an opportunity for ARR to engage with SAA's education programs.
   * Preservation practices: most are haphazard and bit-level focused. This is an area to provide some scalable solutions for the files and the related software.
   * Access/Use: Archivists need training and basic level understanding of the various software in our collections. There was discussion at the SPN Forum about bringing software into the reading rooms, and not offering it to a larger public over the internet, may cover some of the licensing and copyright issues for in-house viewing.
   * Copyright - This has been a significant concern for the CAD/BIM Taskforce, but the majority of respondents noted that they had not experienced copyright issues yet, and their donor agreement clauses do not include copyright stipulations for their donated materials. We are left with the question why/how are people not concerned about copyright stipulations?
   * Partnerships - This is an area we want to be focusing on, and is an area everyone can be engaging. Think about how can we leverage our existing expertise and connections, especially in design world and international community. It's time to reach out and start gathering perspectives, and start gauging the interest or willingness to form relationships with vendors.
6. **Tour by the Portman Archives**:
   * Thank you to Andy Richardson from the Portman Archives for giving the ARR a private tour of several of the hotels and connected spaces designed by Mr. Portman. For those who missed it please check out [the handout](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BypzNEbRI1uPNEFzUWlyeVVFdTQ/view?usp=sharing)Andy's office provided, you can use this for a self-guided tour of the buildings the next time you are in Atlanta.
7. **Next Steps Discussion** (during ARR Meeting)
   * After the CAD/BIM Survey update, we broke into discussion groups focusing on the below four questions. The summaries of each group's show some common themes around training, outreach to records and software creators, as well as the plethora of questions we need answers to to help us become more strategic in our approach to preserving and providing access to digital design files.

1. What is the general sentiment and vibe of our respondents? What are their major concerns

2. What are trends in the data? Are these things we need to share with the larger community?

3. Where do we need to be focused? Which software are most prevalent in our holdings? From what years?

4. What are some areas we can provide quick support? Preservation practices that are consistent? What kind of checklists or protocols we can share to help facilitate better donor agreements and context collection?

* + Each group provided summaries of their discussions, here are the highlights:
  + **Group 1:**
  + This group wanted to get a handle on the complexity of software that everyone grapples with. Training was discussed, as many folks have taken courses on born-digital preservation, but there is little for CAD/BIM specific (or design files generally). It appears that there is an opportunity for targeted training on that realm. And getting buy-in from records creators to implement useful elements such as file-naming conventions.
  + Desired resources:
    - Idea of glossary for software
    - Spreadsheet of basic information pointing people towards the dominant softwares, file types, etc.
    - Basic basic information for folks grappling with design records.
    - Clarification about the specific complexities and compositions of CAD/BIM files,
    - Donor agreement language clarifying what collecting repositories are able to take and share.
    - Clarification of the differences between analog and digital design records, ability to more clearly view and document the phases of design that is problematized in the digital realm. Additionally, clarifying what this means in terms of archivist intervention and identification of phases captured in the records.
  + **Group 2:**
  + Concerned about viewing the files, and who will be the users of the files/software we preserve from the 1980s (or earlier) moving forward. A lot of great questions were asked including:
    - What will those users be able to do with these files and software?
    - How much Can they open, view, manipulate files from this time?
    - Who is the user, how will their needs determine the essential elements we preserve?
    - What competencies are we expecting archivists to take on to be able to guide patrons through the files?
    - What are we documenting -built work and the design process, or just original materials?
    - Are we limiting our users to people who are comfortable navigating software?
    - What do we do with document management systems and versions?
    - Do we archive the entire document management system or just extract specific information from it? (E.g. E-Builder).
    - What is the goal of that specific institution developing and capturing the records?
    - How do you navigate the huge file sizes, all the formats?
    - How do we address the records retention discrepancies between donating firms?
  + **Group 3:**
  + This group focused on training and actionable items. For training, they recognized that there is a gap to be filled between intro and expert level digital preservationists. For actionable items they talked about what can be immediately addressed, asking if we should be looking for stop gap measure or getting beyond the status quo. These actionable items are to hopefully stifle if not start fighting back against the anxiety and overwhelming feelings archivists are presently having about the impending (or already coming) "Giant pile of scary files!" We need a better understanding of file types and how different design professionals use everything (looking to interdisciplinary practices that firms are already using to mesh GIS, revit, legal documentation, etc). Looking to identify what already exists that we can build upon?
  + **Group 4:**
  + Areas where we can provide quick support:
    - Donor agreements: The CCA has a questionnaire they give their donor to understand the workflows that the records are created in. They also have a skype call with the donor to walk them through screen grabs. So, improving our working agreements.
    - Planning education for our internal group to learn how to better work with design records and born-digital more broadly. Building upon Visual Materials workshop, it might be neat for us to do something similar to learn about electronic records.
      * Develop case studies of contemporary uses.
      * Can we plan training with architects, both for us and for our training?
      * What types of software do we need training for? So many versions, so many applications.
      * Building a glossary of new terms and core competencies for architectural records in the born-digital era.
      * Start talking with records creators from the 1980s forward to better understand how these records are created and used

1. **Get involved!**
   * Attendees were able to sign up if they were interested in being involved during the year to work on issues of shared concern. If you're interested in being actively involved in developing training, reference resources, outreach plans (with vendors and records creators), or other topics not mentioned, [please sign up here.](https://goo.gl/forms/ncczT9TTvFwKdfo23)