

**Society of American Archivists  
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**Communications Task Force:**

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**Executive Summary**

The Communications Task Force was charged in August 2012 for a one-year term to advise the SAA Council on “practical ways to enhance SAA's communications, with a focus on three areas: intended audiences, content/messages, and tools/channels.” This is the Task Force’s final report.

- Of most immediate significance for the Council are **eleven practical recommendations** for specific adjustments to SAA’s current array of communications tools and their use. The recommendations have been ranked by the Task Force into priority groupings of high, medium, and low. Relevant supporting language from the new Strategic Plan is provided for each recommendation. A fiscal impact statement is also provided.
- Council members may also be interested in the section titled “**Analysis of SAA Research Sources on Communications,**” which compares the CTF’s survey data with those of the 2012 Member Needs and Satisfaction Survey and recent research conducted by the Publications Board.
- The “**Communications Matrix,**” which details all of SAA’s current communications channels, may provide a useful reference

Other sections of the report provide extensive detail of the Task Force’s process and its methods of analysis of a variety of information sources. **Finally, the Task Force recommends that its work conclude as planned in August 2013.**

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## **BACKGROUND**

The Communications Task Force was established in August 2012 with a mandate to advise the SAA Council “on practical ways to enhance SAA's communications with a focus on three areas: intended audiences, content/messages, and tools/channels.” To address this charge, the CTF conducted a survey of SAA’s communication channels, held a discussion with staff, reviewed Google Analytics provided by staff on SAA communications, and completed a detailed review and analysis of the 2012 member survey, in addition to research and review of literature on effective organizational communication. A mini-environmental scan of four organizations was done for the January Council Report and the results of those scans, in conjunction with the other research done by the Communications Task Force, were used as the basis for preliminary recommendations to SAA.

An update was presented to the Council at the January 2013 Council meeting. The CTF focused energy on developing and presenting preliminary recommendations to SAA membership for feedback. Nine preliminary recommendations and a survey were posted on the CTF microsite in April of 2013 and open to comment through May 2013. A call for comments from SAA’s membership was distributed across multiple SAA listservs and platforms. A guest post to Off the Record provided additional space for comments. The CTF received detailed feedback from the Council at the May 2013 meeting relating to the nine preliminary recommendations put forth for member comments and eleven additional areas of research. The CTF used Council suggestions, member feedback, previous work of the Communication Technology Working Group, and extensive research to produce eleven final recommendations for the SAA Council on communication tool/channel use, message content, and general communications strategies.

The CTF thanks the SAA Council and the SAA staff for their support and feedback, thanks the membership for their participation, and presents the following report as the conclusion of our one-year charge and mandate.

## **DISCUSSION/ORIGINAL RESEARCH AND RESOURCES**

The CTF consulted primary and secondary sources wherever possible and created a number of original research documents that formed the basis of the task force's efforts and final recommendations. Four of these documents (one bibliography and three pieces of original research) have been appended to the Report as Appendices A-C. Additional original research, Appendices D and E, will be discussed later in the Report. The CTF also relied upon the work of the Communications Technology Working Group and the SAA's Uniform Guidelines for SAA Websites and Online Communications. The documents show the breadth, depth, and scope of SAA's communications. In some cases, the research illustrates communication channels that are spread too thin or have duplicative purposes; in other cases, the surveys show a real expansion of channels in the lead up to the 2013 Annual Conference.

### **Communication Channel Use across Sections and Roundtables**

One of the first actions taken by the CTF was to do a review, as comprehensive as possible, of all the ways that SAA communicates with members. The CTF determined what channels were in use and investigated four major areas for each communication channel: audience, message, access and distribution, and frequency of distribution. This Communications Channel Survey became the working document that formed the core of the CTF's additional research. For Sections and Roundtables, the CTF focused on what was made available to Section and Roundtable members with an emphasis on group page highlights, newsletters, and social media. The CTF created a formal document, Communication Use across Sections and Roundtables, (Appendix A), utilizing this research. The CTF conducted the research from August to September 2012, Appendix A was updated in June and July 2013.

See APPENDIX A: COMMUNICATION CHANNEL USE ACROSS SECTIONS AND  
ROUNDTABLES (attachment)

### **Communication Effectiveness: Communications Matrix and Bibliography**

After conducting the initial survey and creating the working document, the CTF considered how to assess the effectiveness of SAA's communications channel use and strategy. The first step was to track down and review literature on communications effectiveness (Appendix C). There was remarkably little literature available that the CTF found to be of use. The literature that the CTF located provided some insights into effectiveness but provided little guidance to the CTF on how to measure effectiveness. The following concepts were considered as possible ways to measure effectiveness: reach of communication channel, ease of use, understandability, appeal across multiple audiences, ability to broadcast a clear message, and ability to speak to a specific segment of an audience when desired.

The Communications Matrix provides a tentative first step to gauging whether a communication channel is effective at conveying its message to its intended audience. Information about intended audience, distribution, and frequency were drawn from the CTF's working document. The Matrix uses SAA member comments from the CTF's preliminary recommendations to make the case for the clarity and reach of each communication channel's message. The last column presents the CTF's exceptionally preliminary assessment of each communications channel's effectiveness. The information in the Matrix is completely anecdotal and derives from a very limited sample set. The time frame and complexity of the CTF's charge did not allow for further attempts to quantify the information. Nevertheless, the CTF strongly believes that assessing effectiveness and especially determining some type of measurable standard for the effectiveness of communication channels is an essential part of SAA's future communications strategy. The CTF believes that SAA should consider directly addressing the issue of effectiveness and finding a quantitative measurement as part of SAA's communication strategy.

See APPENDIX B: COMMUNICATIONS MATRIX (attachment)

See APPENDIX C: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF COMMUNICATIONS EFFECTIVENESS LITERATURE

### **Environmental Scans conducted by SAA CTF**

In November of 2012, the members of the CTF conducted mini-environmental scans of four associations. Three of the associations had similar purposes to SAA and can be considered to be primarily or closely involved with the library and/or archives profession (ARMA International (formerly Association of Records Managers and Administrators), ACA (Association of Canadian Archivists), and AHA (American Historical Association)). One association, AARP (American Association of Retired Persons), was chosen particularly because it had a different size and scope, though it faces many of the same issues of reaching a diverse audience and a focus on advocacy and outreach.

The environmental scans were done with a focus on how each association presented, organized, and advertised information to members and non-members. The CTF paid special attention to each association's organizational structure, the availability of Annual Reports and other core documents, and how the association was similar to, or different from, SAA. Information about the size, scope, budget, status of staffers (volunteer and paid, if identifiable), and other details of the organization were researched using each association's publicly available materials. The following communications related questions were researched: goals of the association's communication strategy, identify communication channels used by the association and determine if the same channels were used for all audiences, what is their social media presence and what is the level of participation.

The environmental scans proved useful to the CTF as we refined our recommendations to the Council on SAA's communication channels and future communications strategy. The scans provided no dramatic results but did highlight a number of areas where CTF members felt that the reviewed associations had better communication strategies or technology compared to SAA.

In particular, ARMA's website is much easier to browse than SAA's; many SAA users indicated in the member survey and CTF survey that they default to the "search box" to locate information. In addition, the visible presence of social media icons (Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube) on AARP compared favorably to SAA's main website. The main websites for the small associations were easier to navigate, in comparison to SAA, though that may be related to SAA's reliance on two platforms and the double-login required to access certain materials. Overall, the environmental scans confirmed the CTF's findings related to improving SAA's communication strategy and showing alternatives for streamlining content and highlighting social media presence on the SAA website.

### **CTF Preliminary Recommendations and Questionnaire for Member Feedback**

In April 2013, the CTF proposed nine preliminary recommendations and created a questionnaire designed to elicit SAA member feedback on SAA's communications channels. The recommendations were posted on the CTF's microsite with links from the SAA main website, Off the Record, Twitter, and Facebook. Those who answered the questionnaire were given the opportunity to comment at the end of the questionnaire providing narrative responses. Members could also send comments to the CTF directly via a specially set up email address, [ctf@archivists.org](mailto:ctf@archivists.org). The CTF has reviewed the quantitative and qualitative results and drawn a number of conclusions regarding the current use of communication channels as well as suggestions for future communication strategies.

#### Analysis of Qualitative Member Comments on Preliminary Recommendations and Questionnaire

There were a total of seventy (70) narrative responses to the call for feedback from the CTF received with the majority received by the deadline of May 4, 2013. All narrative responses, which took the form of long-form written comments to the blog posts, microsite, open field of the questionnaire, or to the email address, are included in the assessment. The CTF received comments from members in the following distribution: three via Twitter, 25 posted to the microsite, three posted to Off the Record, seven emailed to [ctf@archivists.org](mailto:ctf@archivists.org) and 32 included as part of the questionnaire.

See APPENDIX D: NARRATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

As expected, the recommendations for enhancing Archival Outlook via online publication and for redesign of the SAA website were by far the two most mentioned recommendations in the narrative comments, a trend which is echoed in the quantitative questionnaire results. The emphasis in most of the comments about the website was the difficulty of finding key documents on the site and/or the difficulty engendered by the dual sign in, suggesting that our thoughts on these areas are on target. In The Loop, Official SAA Blog, and content aggregation all received a moderate number of mentions, suggesting that attention could be profitably focused on these areas as well. Surprisingly, only two mentions, supportive or otherwise, were made regarding our Twitter recommendation, which may suggest SAA's Twitter community is either happy with

or neutral about the recommendation. This result may also, however, be a result of selection bias by those archivists who chose to answer the survey or comment on the microsite.

What is also striking in the review of the narrative responses is the number of responses suggesting *less* action on SAA's communication tools. At least three comments suggested that SAA should pick one platform and become extremely adept in using it, rather than attempting to become fluent in a number of platforms. Of these comments, one suggested that a main account could link to other accounts via a content aggregator such as the service IFTTT<sup>1</sup>, which would allow content dissemination to focus on that one account; however, this type of communication was specifically complained about in a number of other comments (and at the CTWG open forum in 2011). Several comments reminded the task force that not all archivists are on social media and that SAA should not lose sight of the traditional communications channels, such as listservs. One comment was even blunter, directly instructing: "Do not use social media". Again, these comments do not necessarily tell us anything about the feelings of the membership at large due to selection bias. On the other hand, the "plugged in" nature of the members of this Task Force may be giving us confirmation bias in the other direction. This issue deserves more consideration.

#### Analysis of Questionnaire Results (Quantitative But Not Scientific)

The questionnaire consisted of nine multiple-choice questions and one free response question. This was an online questionnaire created through SurveyMonkey.<sup>2</sup> The questionnaire was posted on April 7, 2013 and closed to responses on May 4. Announcement of the questionnaire appeared on Off the Record, SAA's Twitter feed, SAA's Facebook page, In the Loop, and on the SAA Website as well as the SAA CTF microsite.

The questionnaire was answered by 151 SAA members. For the purposes of analysis, all questionnaires are being counted though only 128 are considered "complete" with answers to all nine multiple-choice questions. Failure to answer question 10, the free response question, is not required for a questionnaire to be considered "complete." Four questionnaire responses came in after the close date; they are being counted as part of the questionnaire response pool.

As of June 30, 2013 SAA had 6,189 members. The response rate to this questionnaire was 2.5% of SAA members (membership numbers for April-May 2013 are assumed to be close to those of June 30, 2013).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> About IFTTT, <https://ifttt.com>.

<sup>2</sup> The Survey and full results are available at SAA's SurveyMonkey account: [http://www.surveymonkey.com/MySurvey\\_EditorFull.aspx?sm=8YIOI9dHpBQuvFpoabHTRM7PUYrhgVcU7KZaB6S0xXU\\_3D](http://www.surveymonkey.com/MySurvey_EditorFull.aspx?sm=8YIOI9dHpBQuvFpoabHTRM7PUYrhgVcU7KZaB6S0xXU_3D)

<sup>3</sup> 151 respondents, total, 128 complete responses

Question 1: answered by 150 of 151

Question 2: answered by 151

Question 3: answered by 128 of 151

Question 4: answered by 151

Question 5: answered by 145 of 151

The questionnaire questions were designed to assess SAA members' use of available communication channels including print, social media, and other digital resources in their daily lives as well as in relation to SAA. Questions were intended to determine how SAA member respondents felt about SAA's use of various communication channels particularly social media and to determine whether the Communication Task Force's initial research and recommendations were in line with membership expectations and usage.

The response rate to this questionnaire was low, as was expected by the Task Force. The questionnaire was presented to SAA members as one of many ways to provide feedback on the CTF's preliminary recommendations. There was no minimum target set for participation; all responses were valid additions to the Communication Task Force's research. It should be noted that the questionnaire was posted at nearly the same time that SAA sought comments on the Draft Goals and Strategies document, which may have affected participation. The CTF recognizes that this questionnaire has a self-selecting bias: the small sample size likely drew those who either already use and approve of a high number of SAA's communications channels or those who have experienced a high degree of frustration with the same channels. Given the expectations of this questionnaire, the CTF believes that the questionnaire sample size is large enough for the purpose intended to draw important conclusions for SAA's communication policies and future directions.

In everyday life, only four communication channels (the Internet, Internet news, Facebook, and blogs) are used by over 50% of respondents. Exactly half of respondents, 50%, read print newspapers. In fact, nearly 1 out of 10 respondents is not a regular user of the Internet. While 65% (98) of respondents indicate that they use Facebook in their everyday life, only 25% (39) of respondents use SAA's Facebook page. Of SAA's communication channels, four have the greatest participation: SAA Website (74%), In the Loop (72%), Section/Roundtable listservs (67%) and Archival Outlook (66%). Fifty-eight percent (58%) of respondents use or access American Archivist on a regular basis; the numbers show a statistically significant difference between AO and AA access. SAA Microsites for Roundtable and Sections (31%), Twitter (22%), Facebook (26%), and Off the Record (25%) fell in the middle range of participation. The communication channels provided by SAA with the least use are blogs (11%), LinkedIn (12%), RSS Feeds (7%), and Flickr and other photo sites (1%).

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Question 6: answered by 141 of 151

Question 7: answered by 142 of 151

Question 8: answered by 143 of 151

Question 9: answered by 151

Question 10: answered by 39 of 151

Question 1 had a response rate of 99.3%.

Question 2, 4, and 9 has response rates of 100%.

Question 3 had a response rate of 84.7%, the lowest of the multiple choice questions.

Questions 5 through 8 had a response rate between 93.3-96%.

25.8% of respondents answered question 10, which was a free response question.

Compared to the usage for everyday life there are some important differences. Among respondents, 12% use Flickr or a photo-sharing site in everyday life compared to 1% who use an SAA provided one. This suggests that there are SAA members who might welcome a more visible photo-sharing or similar site as an avenue for communication but further research would be needed before making such a change. Similarly, 33% of respondents use LinkedIn on a regular basis but only 12% use SAA's LinkedIn site. Facebook use is even more startling: 65% of respondents use Facebook but only 26% use or access SAA's Facebook page. This suggests that SAA has communication channels that could be deployed, advertised, maintained, or updated more efficiently and effectively.

The communication channel questionnaire results indicate that most SAA members utilize the core publications/communication channels provided by SAA (website, In the Loop, AO, and AA) that are sent to or pushed to them rather than seeking out ways to communicate on their own. In fact, over 65% of respondents identified email blasts like In the Loop as the social media channel or tool that has the most potential for SAA. Channels that require greater participation from the user, such as Twitter and Facebook, were chosen by approximately 1/3 of respondents. The reason why this is the case is not fully apparent based on the questionnaire's questions and should be followed up in the future.

Respondents chose the SAA website as both the communication channel that is "of the greatest use [to the respondent]" (33%) and the communication channel that is "of the highest priority for SAA" (58%). At the same time, when asked on a scale of 1-10 to identify how well the channel is used, forty-seven percent (37 of 82) of those who stated that the website was "of the greatest use" to him/her rated the website five or under. The distribution of answers for questions 5 and 7 showed a dipped bell with the most respondents choosing either "5" or "7" on the scale of 1-10. The mean for question 5 ranking on "greatest use" to the respondent was 5.9. The mean for how well the channel of highest priority for SAA was used was even lower, 5.7. No respondents chose the highest (10) while one chose the lowest (1). It is interesting to note that the same percentage of respondents, 24%, answered "7" when asked to rate how well the website was used by SAA. Interestingly, 30% chose "5" as the answer when asked to rate how well SAA used the website when it was the most important channel to them while only 22% rated it a "5" when designating the website as the most important communication channel to SAA. While the numbers show many respondents who seem pleased with how well SAA uses the website (14% rated it an 8 or 9 in answer to Question 7), the high percentage of answers in the 4 to 7 range indicate that there is a great deal of improvement that can be made. Further research into the results would be needed to see what relationship, if any, exists between those who made critical narrative comments of the website and their responses to the questionnaire. While there is no scientific basis for this, the SAA members who responded to the questionnaire seemed less willing to give harsh ratings (1, 2, or 3) and compared to those who provided highly rated answers (8, 9, or 10). A larger sample and statistical analysis would be needed to determine if this has any impact on the questionnaire's validity or if it is just further evidence of selection bias.



No respondents chose Flickr or the Host Committee blog as the channels of the highest priority to SAA (Question 6) and LinkedIn, Off the Record, and RSS Feeds were selected by two respondents each. Five response options—Flickr or other photo sharing sites, LinkedIn, Off the Record, Host Committee Blog, and RSS Feeds were chosen by less than 3% of respondents total (LinkedIn, Host Committee Blog and Off the Record were selected by 0) as the SAA communication channel of the greatest use to the respondent (Question 4).

Nearly all of the choices presented for Questions 8 and 9 on why members use SAA communication channels and what members would like to see more of from SAA received support of at least 1/4 of respondents.<sup>4</sup> Members most wanted to see more information on Education (59%), Around the Profession (56%), and Advocacy (53%). The Communications Task Force expected to see stronger numbers for jobs but that may relate to the sample that chose to answer the questionnaire. Questionnaire respondents were not asked about their employment status. In fact, only 4% of respondents indicated that they used SAA resources for school, which suggests that in this small sample, an even smaller number were student members of SAA or those working on continuing education.

For most SAA members, at least according to the sample respondents to this questionnaire, SAA serves as a major part of their professional awareness and development. Members look to SAA to provide publications about what is happening within SAA and across the profession, to provide advice and information about advocacy issues, and to enable them to remain current with profession. SAA members are most often passive recipients of SAA communication products (AO, AA, In the Loop) and less inclined to participate in social media networks (Twitter, Facebook, Flickr) associated with the larger association. Many members are still determining the importance and status of blogs.

In conclusion, while SAA members have a broad participation across social media platforms in their everyday lives they are less likely to engage with these platforms within the settings provided by SAA, the exception being Section and Roundtable listservs. The communication channel questionnaire has highlighted a number of aspects that were less specifically covered in the broader January 2012 SAA membership questionnaire and has provided the Communications Task Force with unparalleled information about the membership's use and attitudes toward SAA's communication style and choice of communication channels.

### **Analysis of SAA Research Sources on Communications**

The CTF's work builds on SAA's efforts to assess membership and communication strategies. The CTF's questionnaire is situated in comparison to three other documents: first, the "raw data" gathered from the 2012 membership survey by Association Metrics (<http://files.archivists.org/membership/surveys/saaSurvey-2012-FreqDistributions.pdf>), second,

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<sup>4</sup> The answers that were selected by less than 25% of respondents were: Question 8 "Which of the following topics would you like to see more information from SAA" were early bird registrations (12%) and Awards (2.1%), and SAA Governance (22.4%). For Question 9 "How do you use the SAA website" were Because of school (4%), For information about International Archives (4%), to study (for professional exam/certification (9.3%), For information about Archives in the US (17.9%), and To find out what SAA Council is doing (21.9%).

the report based on this raw data that was authored by Association Metrics (<http://files.archivists.org/membership/surveys/saaMemberSurvey-2012r2.pdf>, referred to in the subsequent write up as ‘the membership survey report’), and third, a draft summary for discussion looking at the publications that was prepared by Michelle Light and Nicole Milano in October 2012 (referred to as ‘publication summary’). Task Force member and Council liaison Beth Kaplan shared this last document with the CTF.

The 2012 [Member Needs and Satisfaction Survey](#) was conducted to assess “the value proposition undergirding SAA membership.”<sup>5</sup> Association Metrics, a company hired by SAA, conducted the 2012 survey. It should be noted that this survey assessed SAA’s communications as part of a broader survey assessing how individuals valued their membership. According to the membership survey report, Individual members overwhelmingly noted that their primary motivation for SAA membership was to “stay current on information about the profession.”<sup>6</sup> This statement confirms our belief that SAA’s communication strategy should be a high priority, in order to meet this demand.

### Areas of Agreement Across Research Sources

The strongest area of agreement across the questionnaire and survey documents was the need to prioritize the website overhaul. The membership survey report devoted considerable time and coverage to the SAA website.<sup>7</sup> The report indicated that members would like to see improvement in “navigation, relevant information, and finding information.”<sup>8</sup> The raw data from the membership survey shows that 25% of those surveyed give a fair to poor assessment of the website’s ease of navigation and ease of finding information.<sup>9</sup> The publications summary noted that difficulties with the website may affect publications accessibility. Our CTF questionnaire indicated that the website is used most often of all SAA communications channels (74%) and received the overwhelming majority vote as the highest priority for improvement (58%). This supports our Recommendation 3 to prioritize work on the website, particularly the need to eliminate the “two login” system.

The membership survey also consistently shows moderate interest in improving social media channels. The raw data indicates that 52% think SAA should improve its use of Facebook, 41% say Twitter, and 51% say LinkedIn should be improved.<sup>10</sup> The membership survey report and the publication summary present slightly smaller numbers, in part because these documents looked at only “very” and “extremely” answers, not “somewhat.” More than 50% of respondents to the CTF questionnaire question on SAA use of social media said that email blasts and blogs had the most potential for SAA, less than 40% of respondents responded that Twitter or

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<sup>5</sup> [Off the Record](#), August 2, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> [Member Needs and Satisfaction Survey](#), Report, <http://files.archivists.org/membership/surveys/saaMemberSurvey-2012r2.pdf>, January 2012, 31.

<sup>7</sup> Member Needs Survey, Report, 155-164.

<sup>8</sup> Member Needs Survey, Report, 155.

<sup>9</sup> Member Needs Survey, Raw Data, <http://files.archivists.org/membership/surveys/saaSurvey-2012-FreqDistributions.pdf>, 48.

<sup>10</sup> Member Needs Survey, Raw Data, 51-52. These percentages are the combined total for “somewhat important,” “very important,” and “extremely important.”

Facebook held the most potential. Since SAA already uses Facebook and Twitter, the CTF concludes that a minimal investment in responding and interacting with those who leave comments on these sites should have a measurable impact. Recommendations 5, 6, 7, and 8 address the CTF's conclusions relative to social media.

According to the raw data, 10% of the membership knows about In the Loop but doesn't read it, and 8% were not aware at all.<sup>11</sup> This combined percentage (18%) is higher than similar responses for *American Archivist* and *Archival Outlook* (7% and 5.5%, respectively). This finding was similar to our CTF questionnaire, which indicates 71% of respondents regularly read In the Loop. Although this may be a self-selected group, this supports the CTF's Recommendation 2 to overhaul In The Loop for brevity and readability to increase readership satisfaction.

### Areas of Disagreement Across Research Sources

The CTF found some degree of disagreement between the membership survey and CTF questionnaire in terms of *Archival Outlook* and *In the Loop*.

The CTF questionnaire indicates 65% of respondents regularly use AO. According to the raw data gathered for the membership survey, 60% of members are either extremely, very, or somewhat likely to take advantage of an online-only option for *Archival Outlook*.<sup>12</sup> The publication summary, however, claims, "a majority of members do not want to move to exclusive online delivery of [...] *Archival Outlook*."<sup>13</sup> This assertion is based on the 36% of individuals who only rated the option as extremely or very likely. Given the "optional" nature of delivery, the Task Force believes that the "somewhat likely" number should not be discounted. Recommendation 1 builds on the awareness of AO's potential as a digital resource. In addition, The CTF urges SAA to develop and promote an "opt in" option to receive a print copy (i.e. the default access option would be online subscriptions) once SAA has experience with the new opt-out option that is currently being developed.

### Areas Where the CTF Provided Primary Research

While the resources discussed provide data in many areas comparable to the work of the CTF, the fact that they served different purposes from the CTF and sought different information, means that corroborating research does not exist for all of the CTF's recommendations including Recommendations 4, 5, 6 and 7. These areas primarily concern the use of blogs and aggregation tools.

The CTF questionnaire asked several questions about blogs, including *Off the Record*. The raw data, membership survey report, or publications summary did not consider any questions related to a blog. Over 53% of respondents to the questionnaire indicated that blogs have significant potential as a communication channel for SAA. The place of blogs was second only to email blasts.

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<sup>11</sup> Member Needs Survey, Raw Data, 21.

<sup>12</sup> Member Needs Survey, Raw Data, 32.

<sup>13</sup> Publication Summary.

While none of the previous surveys or reports explicitly asked about aggregation, it is clear from the CTF questionnaire and responses to the preliminary recommendations that SAA members use a variety of different communications tools. As one respondent to the CTF questionnaire stated, "I think the SAA website is the primary communication platform and social media should be integrated into the website, for example, incorporating aggregators to display Twitter conversations." The CTF's further research into other associations and a review of SAA's communication channels only made the need for aggregation, in some format, more apparent.

## **CTF'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON COMMUNICATIONS**

The CTF presents eleven recommendations on communications to the SAA Council as the culmination of the Task Force's charge. These recommendations touch on a broad array of topics from technological infrastructure to social media interaction with SAA members. The CTF is presenting recommendations that have the backing of the full task force; all CTF members have agreed to the language and content of each of the eleven recommendations.

The basis for the final recommendations includes the nine preliminary recommendations presented to members in April 2013 and the Council in May 2013, feedback on those recommendations from members and Council, as well as suggested further work and refinement by our Council Liaison and Task Force member, Elisabeth Kaplan. The fourteen additional "recommendations in progress" from the May 2013 Report to Council were either included in existing recommendations or considered important enough to become their own recommendations (Recommendations 10 and 11).

At the request of the SAA Council, the CTF provides rankings based on priority for each of the 11 recommendations. These rankings do not take budgetary or manpower concerns into consideration as major factors. They are based on the task force members' understanding of the tasks facing SAA and the ultimate goal of improving SAA's communication with membership.

Each recommendation was given a priority ranking of "high," "medium," or "low." The priority ranking was determined using the following (unscientific) method: each task force member ranked the recommendations from 1 to 11 or on a scale of high/medium/low priority. Recommendations ranked 1-4 or "high" were given a score of 30. Recommendations with ranking of 5-8 or "medium" were given a score of 20, recommendations with a ranking of 9-11 or "low" were given a score of ten. Scores were added and divided by 4 representing the number of task force members who provided their rankings. Recommendations with an average of 27.5-30 are considered "high" priority. Recommendations with an average of 17.5-20 are of "medium" priority, and recommendations with an average of 10-15 are of "low" priority.

It is understood that the Council will take many elements into account when making determinations about which of the CTF's recommendations to pursue first including, but not

limited to, cost, manpower, and existing usage. The CTF believes that these recommendations will provide a strong framework from which SAA can develop a comprehensive, effective, and flexible communication strategy for the future of the association.

## **Recommendation 1: Archival Outlook**

### **Recommendation 1A: Enhance AO**

Archival Outlook provides an opportunity for members to participate in the organization through brief, commissioned articles and profiles. As the Council has already embraced the idea of an opt-in for electronic only distribution of AO, the Task Force only wishes to reinforce this decision. To enhance the ability of members to find, cite, and share individual articles, the Task Force recommends that the electronic version of Archival Outlook be designed so that each article and section is individually accessible and/or downloadable.

Support statement: Supports Goal 3, Advancing the Field, particularly 3.1, Foster and disseminate research in and about the field; Goal 2, Enhancing Professional Growth, particularly 2.3, Support the career development of members.

Fiscal impact: budget planning for new publication platform is already underway.

### **Recommendation 1B: End Embargo on AO**

Although the Communications Task Force is not charged to delve into policy matters, we feel strongly enough about the current practice of restricting access to Archival Outlook to offer our recommendation—particularly as this issue is firmly situated within the realm of SAA communications channels, and their audiences, delivery, and effectiveness.

Currently the three most recent issues of AO (covering the most recent six months) are restricted to members only. Print copies are sent to members, but the online version requires member log in. The CTF understands that this access restriction was instituted as part of the package of member benefits, but we suspect that this practice has outlived its usefulness, while other member benefits, like discounted rates for registration at the annual meeting and workshops, discounts on publications, and the ability to join SAA component groups and serve in leadership positions, are more deeply valued rewards of membership.

At the same time, the CTF sees lost opportunities in the embargo of six months of content in what is, after all, a newsletter, exactly the place where people would expect to find content that is substantive but also current. The timeliness factor will be increasingly important since the newly re-platformed AO will have the capacity to facilitate interaction with content through social media. As such, it could serve as recruitment tool for non-members. In addition, it could engage non-archivists, including those in related professions and the general public, in conversations about substantive, timely content.

While we look forward to the “new,” re-platformed AO, the CTF sees no reason not to lift this restriction immediately.

PRIORITY for 1A and 1B: HIGH

Support statement: supports Goal 2, Enhancing Professional Growth, particularly 2.1, Identify the need for new standards, guidelines, and best practices and lead or participate in their development; Goal 3, Advancing the Field; Goal 4, Meeting Members’ Needs.

Fiscal impact: None anticipated.

### **Recommendation 2: Sharpen “In the Loop”**

In The Loop (ITL) is intended to provide timely information to members about developments around the profession and related fields. However, the current format does not allow the strengths to come through—the often excessive length and too-broad scope of included items makes it more difficult to identify those of highest priority. The Task Force recommends that SAA re-evaluate the style and content of In The Loop to focus on brevity and clarity. The CTF recommends the following specific items to assist with this process:

- Employ “view more” and “view less” to ensure a concise visual flow.
- Consider a less “conversational” writing style, in favor of a more “journalistic” style.
- Dispense with the “Miscellaneous” section. If an item does not clearly fit in a pre-defined category, either create broader or newer categories or re-evaluate whether that item is of sufficient importance to include.
- Rotate the order of sections, so as to more evenly distribute the amount of attention each receives. It may be useful to separate out one or two of the most important items in a “top story” section above the rotation.
- Move content from ITL to the SAA website or an official blog and use ITL to provide links to the fuller content/story.

Making ITL items shorter will allow for better and quicker visual scanning; increasing the ability of SAA members to quickly determine the relevance of items to their personal or professional interests; and decreasing the feel of an overwhelming “wall-of-text” of the bi-weekly email.

PRIORITY: HIGH

Support statement: supports Goal 4, Meeting Members’ Needs.

Fiscal impact: short term investment of staff time upfront.

### **Recommendation 3: The SAA Website - Tweak Now, Overhaul Soon**

The SAA website is due for a major overhaul. The Task Force sees this task as high priority, supported by data from the Member Survey, our own communications channels survey, and ample anecdotal information from social media and personal contacts. We strongly advise that the Council allocate the resources necessary to undertake this thorough revision. Just as importantly, the Council needs to identify and allocate ongoing resources (not onetime funds) to expand SAA’s technological capacity over time.

In the short term, the Task Force recommends that SAA put web development resources into solving the dual login problem on the website, as well as reorganizing content for basic usability.

Examples of this latter priority may include increasing visibility of the Search box and links to social media, and moving most frequently used content toward the top of the homepage.

As a longer-term priority, the Task Force recommends that SAA re-evaluate its dissemination of website content via the Global Newsfeed and other RSS channels. To encourage full use of the Global Newsfeed, SAA should work to increase awareness of its existence, whether on the website itself or through mention in various events or publications. The CTF recommends that SAA direct this content to a blog featuring news content. This blog would corral the content currently on the homepage, freeing up space to showcase important information about the organization and resources for members and potential members. An SAA blog would provide more functionality and timeliness than the current homepage, affording members the ability to customize the ways in which they receive information from SAA. Automatic updating of the Newsfeed should also be more judicious, to avoid, for example, updating the feed when a section or roundtable performs an administrative update. To maintain maximum relevance, the Newsfeed should only update for the release of major documents from the SAA office (News Items, Press Releases, Position Statements, and Resolutions), each of which should in turn include descriptive title metadata.

Finally, the Task Force recommends improving the user experience for Section/Roundtables listservs and microsites. Both areas of component group content should be significantly easier to find and access, perhaps by putting direct links to landing pages in a top-level site menu. (Solving the two-login problem will, to a certain extent, deal with this problem for the microsites). The Task Force also recommends increasing the usability of content creation modules for component leaders, as well as encouraging appropriate use of microsites. (See Appendix E: Communication Strategy Recommendations for SAA Sections and Roundtables).

PRIORITY: HIGH

Support statement: Supports Goals 1 - 4, as the public face of the profession and the go-to place for member needs.

Fiscal impact: significant staff time.

#### **Recommendation 4: Emphasize Aggregation of Relevant Content**

The Task Force recommends creation of a content aggregator built into the SAA homepage. Such a tool, which would make it easier for members to quickly locate and use all of the rich content produced by SAA and its component groups, was requested frequently in the comments received on our Communication Channels questionnaire and in the comments to our preliminary recommendations. The tool could be as simple as a list, or something more sophisticated (see, for example, the *New York Times*' Twitter feed and blog aggregators). Other aggregators could be used for Twitter, RSS feeds, and for new and/or less widespread communication channels.

As an additional benefit, routing of content through such an aggregator would decrease the need to repeat information across multiple communications channels. By linking all content through an aggregator, SAA staff could focus their efforts on one or two communication channels, rather than attempting to juggle 5 or 6 at once. This would address other negative

comments from the questionnaire that addressed the repetitive nature of SAA postings and the superficial nature of SAA's use of many communication channels including Facebook and LinkedIn that rely on pushed information.

PRIORITY: HIGH

Support statement: supports especially Goal 4, Meeting Members' Needs.

Fiscal impact: Staff time.

### **Recommendation 5: Increase Elected Leadership Social Web Presence**

The Task Force encourages elected leaders to develop their presence on various social media platforms. The Task Force recognizes that all elected leaders may not be equally comfortable with, or interested in, all social media platforms and does not suggest that they be required to participate. There are numerous platforms for leadership to choose from. Two existing platforms serve as positive examples of engagement:

- At less than a year old, the unofficial leadership blog "Off the Record" has provided a much-needed space for conversation with members and solicitation of feedback on important SAA issues. The Task Force urges the president of SAA to continue the leadership blog and encourages the Vice President/President-Elect to also engage in similar activities to ensure continuity.
- Twitter provides another effective means for elected leaders to listen to and participate in timely discussion of SAA issues, as exemplified by Jackie Dooley's and other elected leaders' active presence on Twitter. The Task Force strongly encourages future leaders to consider creating and maintaining Twitter accounts to better interact with members and respond to their concerns.

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

Support statement: supports especially SAA's Core Organizational Values of creativity and experimentation, transparency and collaboration.

Fiscal impact: none.

### **Recommendation 6: Make More Extensive Use of Social Media for the SAA Annual Meeting**

The Task Force recommends extending use of blogs and other social media pertaining to Annual Meeting content, to correspond with new requirements for a host committee blog. This could take whatever form the program committee feels is most appropriate, but we recommend two specific options for consideration:

- A Program Committee blog populated by attendees' session reviews and comments. The Midwest Archives Conference provides a very well received model that SAA could adopt.<sup>14</sup>
- A "Designated Tweeter" program, in which a volunteer would provide an "official" live-tweet of all sessions. This would complement existing back-channel discussion of sessions on Twitter, providing at least some discussion on sessions that are not well

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<sup>14</sup> Midwest Archives Conference Program Committee, "In the Driver's Seat: MAC at INDY 2013," <http://2013mac.wordpress.com/category/program-committee/>



attended by existing Twitter users, and could serve as an supplemental record of session proceedings.

PRIORITY: LOW

Support statement: Supports Goal 4, Meeting Members' Needs, especially 4.1, Facilitate effective communication with and among members, and 4.2, Create opportunities for members to participate fully in the association.

Fiscal impact: none, though will require some time from volunteers to organize and carry out these activities.

#### **Recommendation 7: SAA's Twitter Use - More than a Broadcast Channel**

The Task Force recommends that SAA continue to expand its Twitter use to respond to SAA's growing Twitter community. The CTF suggests a more interactive model: in addition to using Twitter as one of many channels for SAA's promotion and to broadcast announcements. In particular, we encourage continuation of the practice of "signing" tweets from the official SAA account in response to follower inquiries, (following the model of Executive Director Nancy Beaumont). Establishing individual signatures serves as an effective and minimally labor-intensive way to expand SAA's presence on a social media channel. It should lead to increased personal engagement between the SAA office and SAA members. The goal is to make SAA's Twitter feed more of a two-way communication channel while preserving its current functionality.

PRIORITY: LOW

Support statement: supports strategic Goal 4, Meeting Members' Needs, especially 4.1, Facilitate effective communication among members.

Fiscal impact: none

#### **Recommendation 8: Linked In, Flickr, and Facebook - Monitor and Carry On**

The Task Force recommends that SAA develop a timetable to revisit the functionality of LinkedIn, Flickr, and Facebook to re-evaluate usefulness, as needed. This re-evaluation will be especially necessary in case of changes to the platforms' interface or structure. The Task Force recommends that SAA evaluate whether these communication channels are an asset to SAA, and if so, how best to maximize their use. This is especially important if Recommendation 5 (Content Aggregator) is implemented.

PRIORITY: LOW

Support statement: supports strategic Goal 4, Meeting Members' Needs, especially 4.1, Facilitate effective communication among members.

Fiscal impact : none

#### **Recommendation 9: The *American Archivist* - Building on Strength through Outreach and Social Media**

The American Archivist is one of SAA's strongest assets. New technologies provide SAA with ample opportunity to combine the established nature of AA with ever-increasing interest in social media among new archivists. Increasingly, AA is accessed exclusively online. The CTF applauds changes described by Greg Hunter in AA 76(1) Spring/Summer 2013, and looks

forward to seeing the journal continue to incorporate new technologies to expand the reach of, and potentially readership for, our flagship publication.

The CTF recommends four avenues for enhancing AA. First, the landing page should include links to HathiTrust and JSTOR as well as MetaPress to provide information on all access options available to members. Second, two existing features, Reviews Portal and Briefly Noted, should be reevaluated: we believe the Reviews Portal would be well suited to a blog format and should be promoted more broadly if it is active; “Briefly Noted” is not linked from any page and so is invisible without the URL. Third, the online “Supplement” needs more promotion and, potentially an expansion, if it is to be continued. It would also benefit from a different platform. Fourth, the CTF would like to see SAA build on the success of the special discussion session at SAA 2012 that was arranged for Scott Clyne’s 2012 AA article by promoting other modes of interactivity with AA authors. This could take the shape of an AA article “book club” on an SAA blog (frequency to be determined) or author talks and conversations on Reddit, Twitter, or via live web chats.

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

Support statement: Supports Goal 2, Enhancing Professional Growth and Goal 3, Advancing the Field

Fiscal impact: none; staff and volunteer time required.

#### **Recommendation 10: SAA Listservs**

The CTF review of listservs (not including A&A) revealed a broad range of levels of activity across the various component groups - from active, frequent engagement to near silence except for the occasional forward from the SAA office. While it is not within the scope of the CTF’s mandate to determine how component groups utilize their listservs, we would like to propose one change to ensure the future efficacy of listservs, since they do serve critical communications roles for component group members. The CTF recommends finding a solution for the “Out of Office” replies that are generated when one posts to a listserv. SAA should determine whether the fix requires back end changes or can be adjusted by providing user-end reminders. Ending the “Out of Office” email problem will address a common complaint put forth by listserv users.

PRIORITY: MEDIUM

Support statement: supports Goal 4, Meeting Members’ Needs

Fiscal impact: Not known at this time

#### **Recommendation 11: Steps toward Section and Roundtable Communications Best Practices**

Sections and Roundtables are increasingly adopting social media for communications either in addition to or outside the framework of the SAA-supplied tools (microsites and listserv). These include Twitter, blogs, and Facebook. Some component groups seem to be moving in that direction but are having difficulty getting started. To that end the CTF has created “Communication Strategy Recommendations for Sections and Roundtables” that we believe

should be circulated and considered a place to start for creating Communications Best Practices. The CTF believes that this document should be presented to the newly created Affinity Group Task Force with the suggestion that they consider the importance of affinity group communications. Given the CTF's yearlong investigation of SAA communication strategies and noting the strengths and weaknesses of the use of various communications channels, the CTF believes that moving toward "best practices" is an important step in SAA's comprehensive communication and social media strategy over the next 3 to 5 years. Many of these recommendations can be adapted to SAA's office and centralized communication channels.

Support statement: Supports Goal 4, Meeting Members' Needs, particularly 4.1 Facilitate effective communication with and among members and 4.2, Create opportunities for members to participate fully in the association.

Fiscal impact: none.

SEE APPENDIX E: COMMUNICATION STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SECTIONS AND ROUNDTABLES.

PRIORITY: LOW

## **CONCLUSIONS**

### **General**

The CTF's work has discovered a wide-range of communication uses and communication needs among SAA's myriad groups. We have spent the last year in a search for common themes that SAA can apply to improve communication channel use and to clarify SAA's intended messages to target audiences. There are a few key ideas that should be considered as the takeaways from the CTF report: improving existing communication channels is the most straightforward way to improve the SAA member user experience. Social media is a growing and ever-evolving platform for interaction among SAA staff, elected leaders, and members. Therefore, the CTF encourages SAA staff and leadership to be more visible on social media. A large majority of SAA members do not seek out contact with SAA, they wait for SAA to contact them via RSS feeds, email blasts, or regular updates to the website. While SAA should certainly embrace more interaction with SAA members, the older, more established channels must be maintained and updated as well.

There is no single answer to SAA's communications needs—the variety of information provided, the multiplicity of purposes, and the complex nature of SAA's membership mean that SAA will always be faced with decisions about the best way to reach most of the membership. We

believe that the CTF's recommendations will materially assist SAA with their efforts to establish a beneficial and adaptable communications strategy for SAA's future.

### **Future of CTF and Ongoing Advisory Needs**

The SAA Council charged the CTF to make a final recommendation as to whether the task force should continue in an ongoing advisory role by transitioning to a communications working group.

After due consideration, the Task Force recommends that its term ends as originally designated on August 16, 2013. Task Force members believe that we have fulfilled the existing charge and that the final report provides enough data, from a wide range of sources, and recommendations for the Council and SAA directors to consider and, we hope, implement.

Although we do not recommend that the Task Force transition into a working group, we do recommend that the Council establish some means of ongoing and regular evaluation as CTF recommendations are adopted in part or in full. Communication and evaluation is critical given that many of the CTF's recommendations are long-term in nature. Given that, the CTF suggests that regular consultation and communication between the Council and SAA Office be established to address and keep track of work on SAA's communication strategy for long-term projects. In addition, a plan for regular communication with SAA membership on actions taken by SAA Council and the SAA Office in response to the CTF's recommendations should be established. The CTF believes that SAA or the Council should provide a public response to these recommendations acknowledging contributions from those who took the time to provide feedback and share their concerns. It is the CTF's hope that information about changes to communication strategy and implementation of new ideas is shared with members directly.

The CTF strongly suggests that the Council revisit the CTF's recommendations and reexamine SAA's use of communication channels in 2015 to assess what changes have been made, successful implementations, areas in need of continued improvement, and recommendations still to be implemented. In addition, in 2015, the Council should consider whether any un-adopted recommendations are currently obsolete due to advances in social media or other communications technology.

## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A: See attached spreadsheet**

**APPENDIX B: See attached spreadsheet**

## **APPENDIX C: COMMUNICATIONS EFFECTIVENESS LITERATURE**

These sources were consulted as part of the CTF effort to determine a reasonable way to calculate, measure, and/or assess communication effectiveness. The sources were reviewed and while many had good insights, most only reinforced what the CTF already knew. No source indicated how to create a useful “effectiveness measurement tool” that could be adapted and applied by the CTF within the scope and timeframe of our charge. Executive Director Nancy Beaumont provided a number of the sources listed below.

- The Good Kind of Audit,  
<http://associationmediaandpublishing.org/finalproofarchives/The-Good-Kind-of-Audit?&Sort>
- Determining the Right Distribution Channels for Your Content  
<http://associationmediaandpublishing.org/featuredwebarticles/Determining-the-Right-Distribution-Channels-for-Your-Content?Sort>
- “Ten Steps for Conducting a Communications Audit”  
<http://www.urbanwordsgroup.com/tensteps.pdf>
- “Communications Audit Outline and Overview,” American Chamber of Commerce Executives (provided by N. Beaumont)
- “Use of Social Media in Associations,” Best Practices, Association Forum of Chicagoland (provided by N. Beaumont)
- Virginia Society of CPAs Communications Survey (provided by N. Beaumont)
- Bakke, Emile. “A Model and Measure of Mobile Communication Competence.” *Human Communication Research* vol. 36 (2010), 348-371.
- Godfrey, Andrea, Kathleen Seiders, and Glenn B. Voss. “Enough is Enough! The Fine Line in Executing Multichannel Relational Communication.” *Journal of Marketing* vol. 75 (July 2011), 94-109.
- Hartman, Jackie L. and Jim McCambridge. “Optimizing Millennials’ Communication Styles.” *Business Communication Quarterly* vol. 74:1 (March 2011), 22-44.
- Neufeld, Derrick J., Zeying Wan, and Yulin Fang. “Remote Leadership, Communication Effectiveness and Leader Performance. *Group Decision Negotiation* (2010), 227-246. Originally published online in 2008.
- Petrovcic, Andraz. “[Posting, quoting, and replying: a comparison of methodological approaches to measure communication ties in web forums.](#) *Quality and Quantity* vol. 46, no. 3 (Apr 2012), p. 829-854.

- Reinold, T. [Integrated marketing communications: How can we measure its effectiveness?](#) *Journal of Marketing Communications*. April 2012.

## **APPENDIX E: COMMUNICATION STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SECTIONS AND ROUNDTABLES**

### **General Communication Strategy Recommendation for Sections and Roundtables**

The SAA Communications Task Force suggests that SAA work toward establishing a set of “best practices” for all SAA Sections and Roundtables. This document is the CTF’s contribution to that process. Now that all Sections and Roundtables are required to have (and will, at the time of the August 2013 Council meeting, have voted on) by-laws, the CTF would like to present these communication strategy recommendations for the Sections and Roundtables. It is the CTF’s hope that these recommendations will serve as the first step toward the creation of Communications Best Practices for Sections and Roundtables.

There are four main areas where Section and Roundtable communications fall within the scope of the CTF’s mandate: Section and Roundtable website on SAA, listserv use, newsletters, and social media presence.

Best practices for Section and Roundtable use of the SAA-based website should include providing updated documents such as the by-laws, lists of members, Annual Reports (if they are produced), newsletters (if produced), and minutes from meetings. No SAA-based website should be more than one year behind schedule for updating these core documents on the SAA site. Maintenance of the SAA-based website for the Section or Roundtable is a key responsibility of the Section/Roundtable leadership.

The CTF’s yearlong review of SAA’s communication channels has shown that listserv use varies widely among the component groups. Some Roundtables and Sections have very active listserv communities, while others rarely use their listservs. The CTF recommends that each Section and Roundtable assess their listserv usage to determine ways to improve participation, if increased participation is desired. In the case of some Sections and Roundtables, it is understood that listserv participation is not a marker of the Section or Roundtable’s activity and active membership. For those Sections and Roundtables where listserv participation is active, it would be recommended to spend some time and energy to find ways, including FAQ postings or “top questions” to ensure that the same conversation is not repeated within a six month window. While the pace of technological change means that some discussions will happen over and over, the Section or Roundtable leadership should pay attention to how the listserv is being used efficiently as well as effectively.

More and more Roundtables and Sections are publishing newsletters, and are increasingly choosing to publish in an online-only format. In addition, Section and Roundtables are adding

blogs as a way to communicate and interact with their members. The CTF applauds this step toward greater communication by Sections and Roundtables with their membership. For Sections and Roundtable that no longer, or choose not to, produce newsletters, the CTF recommends moving old newsletters to an “archived” page within the microsite rather than keeping them on the main microsite page. The CTF also applauds the use of electronic-only newsletters as a cost-effective tool.

### **Recommendations for use of Social Media by Sections and Roundtables**

Considering the vast array of social media tools and platforms available, each Section and Roundtable (leadership and membership) should consider tool selection, resource allocation, and time management. Different social media tools require different time investments along the spectrum of participation. If your Roundtable or Section has less direct interaction, a social media option like a blog post or RSS feed that requires little interaction from your membership may be the best choice. If you have a very active membership that is less tech savvy, participating in some well-established social media forums such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter along with a blog might be the best choice. If your membership is very active and/or very tech savvy, experimenting with newer social media platforms such as Tumblr, Branch or Thumb may hold great appeal. Once a social media channel is selected, remember that it must be maintained. Most social media, with some exceptions, has a life cycle of 1-3 years. Social media channels, once chosen, should be reviewed and audited for use every 3 years, at minimum. Worse than having no social media is having a long string of inactive or rarely used social media accounts. Best practice should be to focus on one, or possibly two, social media tools that can be easily maintained, updated, audited, and reviewed by Section/Roundtable leadership at regular intervals.

This document should be considered in conjunction with the [Uniform Guidelines for SAA Websites and Online Communications](#).

### **Resources for Social Media Use in Associations:**

- Social Media for Associations—Status Report 2013 by Kellen Company  
May 6, 2013  
<http://www.kellencompany.com/blog/2013/05/06/social-media-associations-status-report-2013>
- Nah, Seungahn, and Gregory D. Saxon. “Modeling the adoption and use of social media by nonprofit organizations.” *New Media & Society*. March 2013 vol. 15 no. 2 294-313  
<http://nms.sagepub.com/content/15/2/294.short>
- Treem, Jeffrey W. and Leonardi, Paul M., *Social Media Use in Organizations: Exploring the Affordances of Visibility, Editability, Persistence, and Association* (2012).



Communication Yearbook, Vol. 36, pp. 143-189, 2012.

<http://ssrn.com/abstract=2129853> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2129853>

- Roscoe, Andrew and Andrea Knotts Bona. Social Media Use by US Associations: Benchmarks and Practices by One Orange Feather, Inc. 2011  
<http://www.oneorangefeather.com/documents/Social%20Media%20Use%20by%20Associations%20Final.pdf>
- American Bar Association (ABA), website, "Social Media Resources for Bar Associations,"  
[http://www.americanbar.org/groups/bar\\_services/resources/socialmedia.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/bar_services/resources/socialmedia.html)

### **Resources for Social Media Use Best Practices**

- Brunetto, Steve. "Social Media Best Practices for Organizations." *Marketing Daily*. Commentary, June 7, 2013.  
<http://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/200911/social-media-best-practices-for-organizations.html#axzz2YSxctxPR>
- "Social Media Best Practices," Social Media at Colorado State University. No date for when last updated. <http://socialmedia.colostate.edu/page/General-Best-Practices-in-Social-Media.aspx>
- CDC Best practices for Facebook:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/pdf/facebookguidelines.pdf>  
(substitute "SAA" or "Roundtable/Section name" wherever you see CDC)