

**Society of American Archivists**  
**DACS Working Group: Interim Report**  
**12 August 2007**  
**(Prepared by: Bill Landis)**

This report is being submitted to update the Standards Committee, the organizational home of the DACS Working Group (DACS WG) within SAA, and other interested SAA units and members about the activities of the DACS WG.

Following a recommendation from the Standards Committee, the SAA Council approved and formally charged a DACS Working Group in January 2007. Initial efforts were focused on identifying and appointing working group members with experience either in the creation or local implementation of DACS, and who broadly represents various institutional and format specializations within the SAA membership and among the broader community of DACS users.

The DACS Working Group (DACS WG) has been officially constituted with the following membership:

- Prudence Backman, New York State Archives
- Kate Bowers, Harvard University
- Teresa Brinati, SAA (staff representative)
- Chatham Ewing, University of Mississippi
- Marcy Flynn, Silver Image Management
- Lynn Holdzkom, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Mary Lacy, Library of Congress
- Bill Landis, Yale University (chair)
- Andrea Leigh, UCLA Film & Television Archive
- Kathy Steiner, The Henry Ford

The DACS WG met via conference call for the first time on 3 May 2007. Teresa Brinati created an SAA-hosted listserv for working group communication ([DACS\\_WG@lists.archivists.org](mailto:DACS_WG@lists.archivists.org)). The working group is pursuing several activities outlined in its charge, about which additional information is provided in this report. The first in-person meeting at the Chicago annual meeting will be important for the DACS WG in launching a period of concentrated work on several of these activities. Progress will be reported to Council, along with any recommended actions requiring Council's attention, in an annual report in November 2007.

The DACS WG will meet on Tuesday, 28 August 2007, 2-5 PM, in Chicago as part of the meeting of the Standards Committee at the 71<sup>st</sup> SAA Annual Meeting. Members of the DACS WG will be available for drop-in consultation and discussion during office hours from 10:30-11:30 AM on Friday, 31 August 2007 in the Exhibit Hall during the Chicago Blues Brunch event.

### Ongoing Working Group Activities

1. Establish an official DACS information and communication web presence at <http://www.archivists.org/dacs/> (working with Brian Doyle).

A temporary site for a "DACS Commons" will be in place by the annual meeting at the above URL. As part of its discussions in Chicago, the working group will develop a plan for populating the web site with content and communications. Some specific categories of

content that have been previously suggested or requested by participants in SAA's introductory DACS workshop are:

- A web-based input form for sending e-mail communication to members of the DACS WG.
  - Additional examples of fully encoded descriptive outputs (print finding aids and files encoded in EAD and MARC) that utilize DACS in exemplary ways.
  - A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page that captures reoccurring issues and offers suggested solutions.
  - Information about and minutes of the DACS WG.
  - An outline of the standards review process for DACS, and a timeline for the most current upcoming review.
  - A DACS bibliography.
2. Develop a plan and timeline for carrying out a formal review of DACS on a five-year cycle, beginning in 2009.

This will evolve from discussions at the working group's meeting in Chicago. Since the members of the Standards Committee will participate in that meeting, it is anticipated that having that committee sign-off on the plan and timeline prior to its submission to Council as part of the DACS WG's annual report in November can easily be accomplished via e-mail.

3. Follow up with modern manuscript cataloging community on their expressed desire to have some unique title transcription rules that were contained in *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts* (APPM) carried forward as an addendum to DACS.

With assistance from Mary Lacy, DACS WG member and newly elected Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) of ACRL/ALA, Bill Landis was invited to attend the meeting of the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee (BSC) in June 2007 to discuss a collaborative strategy for addressing the lack of guidance in DACS for a bibliographic approach to describing modern manuscript materials, primarily at the item level. APPM was predicated on describing archival materials in a bibliographic framework and met the needs of this community. However, with the conscious orientation of DACS toward the *General International Standard Archival Description* (ISAD(G)), which was developed and published after the last revision of APPM, the needs of the bibliographic cataloging community for ISBD (*International Standard Bibliographic Description*)-sensitive rules for description of these materials are no longer addressed in an actively supported standard. Their desire is to develop a set of guidelines, using APPM as a basis, that they could maintain as part of their Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (DCRM) umbrella of standards, which includes separate cataloging guidelines for books, serials, maps, and medieval manuscripts, some of which are completed and some in stages of their development and approval process.

Towards that end, Randal Brandt, chair of the BSC, has appointed a Manuscripts Working Group to undertake the drafting of guidelines. The membership of this group includes Margaret Nichols (Cornell, chair), Diane Ducharme (Yale), Maria Oldal (Morgan Library), Kate Moriarty (St. Louis University), Heather Wolfe (Folger Shakespeare Library), and

Jennifer Nelson (UC Berkeley). The DACS WG needs two members to serve as official liaisons to this BSC working group as they undertake their activities. These liaisons will contribute an archival perspective to this work, and keep the DACS WG informed about relevant issues as they arise and progress towards the completed guidelines. We will discuss appointment of liaisons at our Chicago meeting.

Landis also conveyed to Peter Wosh, Editor of Print and Electronic Publications for SAA, a request from the BSC for copyright permission to reuse parts of APPM as the basis for the work of the Manuscript Working Group. This request was formally granted by SAA's Director of Publications, Teresa Brinati, on 1 August 2007.

This new set of guidelines promises to be a major companion standard for use by archivists within the basic DACS framework. Rules provided therein will, at minimum, address needs by archivists for formal title transcription when that is appropriate in materials they are describing.

4. Develop a general communication plan, and an active outreach plan for various format- and repository-based sections and roundtables within SAA to ensure ongoing communication with the WG about needs they might have relating to DACS implementation, interpretation, and education.

Members of the DACS WG will be available during SAA office hours in the Exhibit Hall. Landis is also on the agenda to provide an update on the DACS WG at the meeting of the Description Section, one of the key constituencies for DACS within SAA. We will discuss as part of our Chicago meeting actively and more formally contacting other sections and roundtables about issues their members may have relating to DACS. We may also solicit information on a desire to establish relationships with those that would like more formal contact with the DACS WG as part of their meetings at future annual meetings (e.g., reporting to the membership of the Description Section at this year's annual meeting). Because of general annual meeting time constraints, though, it seems more promising for the working group to leverage communication through the web-based input form on the "DACS Commons" page as our principle means of soliciting issues and comments from the SAA membership.

Another issue still up for discussion by the DACS WG is having official representation from NARA on the working group. It is unclear to what extent NARA is implementing DACS in any of its descriptive systems, so we are uncertain about whether or not there is institutional interest within NARA in having some kind of liaison to the working group. We will use the opportunity of the annual meeting to determine who within NARA would be the appropriate person to whom we should address this query.