RBMS/SAA Joint Task Force (Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures)

Minutes from meeting held 8 September 2016, 1:00-2:30 pm EDT (via phone)

In Attendance: Martha O'Hara Conway, Rachel D'Agostino, Lara Friedman-Shedlov, Angela Fritz, Emily Novak Gustainis, Haven Hawley, Lisa Miller, Katy Rawdon, Cyndi Shein
Absent: Adriana Cuervo

Notetaker: Lara Friedman-Shedlov

Emily confirmed that the Task Force's annual report to Council was submitted to SAA, the final version of which was circulated via the listserv last week. Although the deadline for the report is in November, we wanted to get this in at the same time as other section reports because we did not submit a report to Standards in August. No one had any follow-up questions or comments.

The Sunday afternoon time slot for for our regular meeting at ALA Midwinter is confirmed. Martha and Haven plan to attend. Angela, Lara, Emily, are probable attendees but not yet definite. Rachel is uncertain. Katy, Lisa, and Cyndi will not be attending this year. Martha will check and see if a space would be available at a local repository, such as Emory University, for a working meeting on the Friday or Monday of the conference, in case we do have a critical mass. She will confirm availability on or about November 1st.

The main focus of the meeting was discussion of what what we will be releasing publicly for comment.

Discussion was held about whether it is helpful or necessary to include examples in the Category Definitions document, and whether they should also include extent statements.   The question was raised as to whether the examples are intended to help readers understand what formats fall into which categories or to understand what counts as one intellectual unit.   We know that different repositories will make different and equally legitimate decisions about format categorization -- they just need to be consistent about how they apply the definitions and not count the same things in more than one category. Several people felt strongly that we are focusing too much on the category definitions and not enough on *how* to count. The suggestion was made that the examples might be more useful in the context of a case study-like explanation, with a demonstration of how to convert existing extent statements into the reporting format. However that would take longer to complete. Haven suggested a "reading comprehension"-style example, where a descriptive record would be presented with notations indicating which information was considered relevant and which wasn't, for the purpose of a level one count. These should be presented separately from the category definitions.

There was also some discussion about the use of links to online catalog records or other descriptions in the examples. Links could be included if they are persistent, but Lara is concerned that the document needs to stand on its own.

We also revisited the discussion about whether examples come from a diverse-enough set of repositories. Examples might be small repositories that don't use a formal catalog of any kind but describe via a blog.

Martha agreed to create an example or two examples as models and share with the rest of the task force. Examples will be in the form of screenshots of source records (e.g. catalog records, finding aids, or other online description) that is annotated with circles, arrows, strikethroughs, etc. that illustrate what information was considered relevant for a level one count. We will need a list of other types of examples that are needed. We will want one or two basic examples and several that illustrate less straightforward situations where different decisions could potentially be made. We also want to include examples from a variety of repositories, and we need to be sure to include at least one example of a description that isn't a catalog record or a finding aid.

Rachel, Lisa, and Emily volunteered to work on additional examples once Martha has provided a model.

Emily is continuing to write up the list of potential sources of data. Martha is working on the beefed up introduction.

The documents will be uploaded to our SAA website and will set up a gmail account for comments.