Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
Date
Chicago, Illinois

Establish Committee on AI (COAI)
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BACKGROUND

AI ("artificial intelligence") technologies have serious implications on archival records and collections, professional practice, and SAA as an organization. Data, records, and digitized collections in archives often serve as training sets for AI development and evaluation. Some archival institutions have adopted AI tools into their work. Archival scholars have called attention to how archives are implicated in AI. As the leading professional organization for archivists, SAA must establish guidelines that reflect our collective values on the use of AI into archival labor and professional responsibilities, and repository functions, from selection and acquisition, to processing and description, to access, accessibility, use, public programming, advocacy, and preservation. As an organization, SAA must also establish guidance and policies in place around the use of AI technologies in its own work of organizing, communicating, advocating, and providing membership services.

DISCUSSION

Providing expert advice on AI and archives requires convening a diverse group of experts who can bring informed perspectives to bear regarding the various ethical, accessibility, technical, organizational, and social dimensions of AI technologies. The creation of this Committee would bring deep knowledge and expertise that SAA Council members do not collectively have. SAA's approach to AI requires active and sustained planning and demands ethical response that a committee will be situated to provide.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT a Committee on AI be created and charged per the following description:

Committee on AI (COAI)

I. Purpose

The Committee on AI (COAI) works to ensure that the Society can support archives and archivists who must make a determination on how to adopt and implement AI technologies. The Committee reports to Council and is expected to coordinate with various SAA component groups, external organizations, and communities represented in archival collections. In addition,

the Committee will keep pace with relevant scholarship, technical development, ethical perspectives, and accessibility concerns and benefits, so they can advise on issues and advocate for the intersection between records, archives, and archivists and AI, and will report on matters relating to AI.

II. Committee Selection, Size, and Length of Termshttps://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ai

The Committee on AI (COAI) composition shall be as follows:

- Co-Chairs (2)
- Members (11)
- Council Liaison (1)
- SAA Staff (1)

The committee consists of fifteen members, who are appointed by the SAA vice president/president-elect, in consultation with the committee co-chairs. The co-chairs shall serve staggered two-year terms. Other committee members serve staggered three-year terms. One member shall serve as liaison to the Intellectual Property Working Group; another will serve as liaison to the Trust in Archives initiative, and another will serve as the liaison to AI4LAM. Members of the Committee may be re-appointed as necessary.

III. Duties and Responsibilities

- Serves as as Council's point of contact for questions about AI
- Develops and disseminates guidance, including potential training recommendations for archivists, about AI for the profession (such as developing a resource page, issuing a statement of values, or recommending AI competencies for the profession)
- Collaborates with organizations with similar expertise and interests, as needed
- Engages with diverse communities, not just institutional partners
- Closely considers accessibility benefits of relevant AI-generated or -assisted technologies
- Makes recommendations to SAA Council for necessary actions to meet these duties and responsibilities, and to meet SAA's mission, Core Values, and Code of Ethics

IV. Reporting Procedures

The Committee on AI (COAI, herein "Committee") reports to the Council and works closely with its Council liaison, the President, and the CEO to ensure that it is responsive to the Council's needs. The co-chairs, or their designee, are responsible for submitting an annual report, recommending items for action, discussion, feedback at Council's quarterly meetings, and engaging in educational programming with related stakeholders. The co-chairs are also responsible for ensuring that minutes of Committee meetings are prepared and posted on the Committee's SAA-hosted website to inform SAA members of its activities and comply with SAA's record-keeping requirements.

V. Meetings

The Committee is expected to meet once per year at the Annual Meeting and may also meet mid-year when appropriate. In addition, the committee may conduct its business by e-mail, telephone, or virtual meeting during the course of the year. The members of the Committee may agree on the frequency it deems appropriate to conduct its business meetings.

Support Statement: The creation of this committee allows SAA to provide guidance and support to archivists and archival institutions and SAA staff on ethical approaches to AI technologies.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: The creation of this committee responds to Goals 3.1. (Identify the need for new standards, guidelines, and best practices and lead or participate in their development) and 2.2 (Provide content, via education and publications, that reflects the latest thinking and best practices in the field.) of the Strategic Plan.

Fiscal Impact: The estimated staff time associated with this activity is 1 staff member @ 20 hours per year.