

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 22 – 24, 2014
Chicago, Illinois**

**Staff Report: Technology
(Prepared by Matt Black)**

Annual Meeting

Two technology initiatives begun in 2013 have been implemented again this year with improvements. Both were launched much earlier in 2014 to coincide with the launch/publicity schedule for the Annual Meeting.

1. Dedicated Annual Meeting Website

A dedicated website for the 2014 Annual Meeting again takes its design from the meeting, rather than SAA's website. The design is again mobile-friendly and well integrated with social media.

2. Online Schedule and Mobile App

The online schedule is again hosted by Sched.org this year and was launched on April 15 along with the opening of registration. Implementation was very efficient due to using the same platform. We are already seeing excellent participation—more than 100 users have already created a personal schedule via Sched.org.

One of the top suggestions for improvement regarding the mobile app in 2013 was to offer a native app (Sched.org by default is a web-based app). Sched.org does offer a native app for iOS and Android, and we plan to purchase this option in 2014 and make it available a few weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.

Main Website Redesign

The first phase of the main website redesign is completed. A small team of staff reviewed the menu structure of the website, taking into account analytics of web traffic, marketing priorities, and usability best practices. The entire staff was then involved in a review process, resulting in a working framework for the content.

We are now working with a designer to determine the basic aesthetic of the site. We are approaching the aesthetic with the intent to preserve the basic branding of SAA (i.e., keep the logo and signature blue color) while augmenting it with a fresh, bold look.

In The Loop

We've improved the template for our biweekly email newsletter, *In The Loop*, and have begun using a new email service for this publication. These changes debuted on April 30, 2014.

The recommendations from the Communications Task Force provided an excellent opportunity for staff to improve *ITL*. Our work includes all of the CTF's recommendations and adds several more improvements. Highlights:

- Kept basic feel of previous design: logo, basic layout, and "tab" design of section headings.
- Implemented "tab" headings with CSS instead of images: more versatile, better performance.
- Better reading experience: larger text, increased spacing.
- Responsive, mobile-friendly design.
- Ads now appear between sections rather than on the side. Ads have been resized to work better on smaller screens.
- Navigation bar at top to jump to specific sections.
- Introduced lead article(s) at top to better highlight our top stories.

Some of these changes are facilitated by departing from Lyris ListManager, which until now has managed both our group discussion lists as well as our "Email Marketing" or "Announcement" emails. *ITL* is now operated via MailChimp, an industry leader in email marketing and newsletter formats. MailChimp provides features that have allowed us to minimize the staff time required to make these improvements (most notably responsive design). MailChimp also provides more robust tracking of user behavior and email performance, as well as better integration with social media.