Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 20-22, 2019
Chicago, Illinois

Agendas and background materials for SAA Council meetings are publicly available via the SAA website at: http://www2.archivists.org/governance/reports. Each Council meeting agenda comprises Consent Items, Action Items, Discussion Items, and Reports, and the number/letter in the minutes (e.g., II.A.) corresponds to an item listed on the agenda. The minutes summarize actions taken and the outcomes of discussions. Reports generally are not summarized in the minutes, but provide a wealth of information about the work of component groups and the staff. To view the reports–and all other background materials–see the SAA website.

Vice President Meredith Evans called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. on Monday, May 20. Present were Treasurer Amy Fitch; Executive Committee Member Erin Lawrimore; Council members Steven Booth, Courtney Chartier, Melissa Gonzales, Petrina Jackson, Bertram Lyons, Ricardo Punzalan, and Audra Eagle Yun; and SAA Executive Director Nancy Beaumont, Publications Director Teresa Brinati, Finance/Administration Director Peter Carlson, Education Director Rana Hutchinson Salzmann, Information Systems Administrator Matt Black, and Governance Manager Felicia Owens.

Absent was Council member Brenda Gunn.

I. COUNCIL BUSINESS

A. Adoption of the Agenda

Evans introduced the agenda. The Council agreed to re-order several agenda items to enhance the efficiency of the meeting. (Agenda items are presented in these minutes based on the original sequencing to minimize confusion.) Yun moved adoption of the agenda as revised, Punzalan seconded, and the agenda was adopted unanimously (**MOTION 1**).

B. Status of Council To-Do List

Council members briefly reviewed and provided updates on the status of actions listed in this internal working document.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were adopted by consent (**MOTION 2**).

Move Consent Items: Jackson
Second Consent Items: Yun
Vote: PASSED

A. [Ratify Council Interim Actions](#)

THAT the following interim actions taken by the Council between February 28, 2019, and May 9, 2019, be ratified:

- Appointed Dr. Meredith Evans to complete the full term of SAA Vice President/President-Elect Michelle Light (2018-2020), to take effect upon [Light's resignation](#) on May 15, 2019. (February 28, 2019)

  Support Statement: Appointing Evans to fill the vacancy created by Michelle Light's resignation as Vice President/President-Elect (2018-2020) will help to ensure the continuity of the organization as the Council and staff take on an ambitious three-year Strategic Plan. In the absence of an SAA President from May 15, 2019, to August 5, 2019, Vice President/President-Elect Evans will preside at meetings of the Executive Committee, the Council, and the membership and will perform such duties as may be directed by the Council. Evans will accede to the presidency on August 5, 2019, will present a presidential address at the 2020 Annual Meeting, and will serve as immediate past president of SAA on the SAA Foundation Board of Directors in 2020-2021. (The latter position will remain vacant in 2019-2020.) Legal counsel has advised that this action is within the purview of the Council as provided in the SAA constitution and bylaws.

- Approved the February 11, 2019, Council [conference call minutes](#). (March 12, 2019)

- Nominated Cheryl Beredo (Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library), David Carmicheal (Pennsylvania State Archives), and Gabrielle Dudley (Emory University) to serve on the Civil Rights Cold Case Review Board, created by the "[Civil Rights Cold Case Records Collection Act of 2018](#)" and responsible to "ensure and facilitate the review, transmission to the Archivist, and public disclosure of civil rights cold case records." (March 22, 2019)

- Published a statement, "[SAA Response to Hollins University Removal of Yearbooks](#)," voicing concerns about the recent decision by Hollins University President Pareena G. Lawrence to remove from the University's institutional repository yearbooks containing offensive imagery of blackface. (April 3, 2019)

- Reviewed a [statement](#) that SAA representative William Maher prepared and presented at a meeting of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights in Geneva, Switzerland. (April 4, 2019)

- Approved a new virtual special-interest discussion group for Professional Writing. (See Appendix A) (April 30, 2019)

- Re-elected Scott Cline, Wilda Logan, and Margery Sly to the SAA Foundation Board for three-year terms (2019-2022). (See Appendix B) (May 9, 2019)

- Reviewed a confidential report from William Maher, SAA representative to the WIPO Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights. (May 10, 2019)

- Gathered feedback for and conducted SAA Executive Director Nancy Beaumont's annual performance appraisal. (May 2019)

B. Ratify Executive Committee Interim Actions

THAT the following interim actions taken by the Executive Committee between January 21, 2019, and April 9, 2019, be ratified:

- Approved a statement, "Government Shutdown Compromises the Work of Federal Archivists," drafted by the Committee on Public Policy, supporting all archivists, federal employees, and others who were affected by the government shutdown. (January 21, 2019)

- Drafted and published the "SAA Statement on Obama Presidential Library." (February 28, 2019)

- Signed on to a statement issued by the Council of State Archivists expressing concern about Texas House Bill 1962, which would change the existing statutes governing archival records of the Texas legislature. (April 9, 2019)

III. STRATEGIC PLANNING

A. Current Strategic Plan

The current Strategic Plan 2018-2020, as adopted in November 2017, was provided for reference.

B. Approve 2020-2022 Strategic Plan Actions and Timelines

At its November 2018 meeting, the SAA Council reviewed the Society's Strategic Plan 2014-2018 and discussed SAA's evolving priorities, with a goal of revising the plan to reflect those priorities in the mid-term future. In a facilitated session, Council members identified three major areas of focus—Advocacy, Research, and Culture—as well as its highest priorities. Based on this work, the SAA staff drafted activities that staff members believe are 1) responsive to the Council's priorities and 2) achievable given SAA's resources. Council members discussed the "dashboard" of activities, recommended several changes, and asked the staff to provide a clean copy for online vote after the Council meeting.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

A. Proposed Fiscal Year 2020 Budget

SAA Treasurer Amy Fitch provided an overview of the budget development process, including review by the Finance Committee prior to the Council's consideration. The staff had prepared a

draft based on activities outlined in the current Strategic Plan and operational needs and trends, with an overall goal of ensuring sustainability and growth of key programs. Council members reviewed and asked questions about each association program, suggesting several changes in the budget before approving it. They noted that the approved budget, which anticipates a net loss for the fiscal year, reflects the leadership's commitment to investing in the future of the profession and the organization. This conservative approach to the future acknowledges SAA's continuing investment in development and marketing of new products and services for members, in several important member-led projects, and in technology to enhance the availability of Annual Meeting content.

As part of the budget review, the Council considered six funding requests from component groups and, based on recommendations from the Finance Committee, agreed to fund a request from the Human Rights Archives Section to develop a webinar series on "Rights and Records"; a request from the International Archival Affairs Section and the Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Heritage Archives Section to support attendance of two speakers for their joint section meeting at the 2019 Joint Annual Meeting in Austin; a request from the Reference, Access, and Outreach Section to cover the cost of supplies and shipping for the annual Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) Unconference held in conjunction with the 2019 Joint Annual Meeting; and a request from the Tragedy Response Initiative Task Force to hold a "think tank" session at the 2019 Joint Annual Meeting to advance the work of the task force.

MOTION 3

THAT the Fiscal Year 2020 Proposed Budget, as submitted by the Finance Committee and staff and modified by the Council, be approved, with revenues of $2,805,696, expenses of $2,843,162, and a projected net loss of $37,465.

Support Statement: The approved budget reflects an investment in the future of the profession and the organization. This conservative approach to the future acknowledges SAA's continuing investment in development and marketing of new products and services for members, in several important member-led projects, and in technology to enhance the availability of Annual Meeting content.

Move: Chartier
Second: Gonzales
Vote: PASSED

B.1. Committee on Public Policy: Public Policy Agenda

The Committee on Public Policy recommended several revisions in the SAA Public Policy Agenda, primarily in the sequencing of information, and noted its intent to review the Agenda for possible revision every two years. The Council reviewed and agreed unanimously with the proposed changes.

MOTION 4

THAT the following SAA Public Policy Agenda 2019-2020 be approved.
(Revisions to the 2017-2018 Agenda are indicated by underline [for additions] and strikethrough [for deletions].)

SAA Public Policy Agenda 2019-2020

INTRODUCTION

SAA's Public Policy Agenda outlines the organization's public policy priorities.

Individual members or groups may request that SAA address these issues by following these procedures; SAA will consider them on a case-by-case basis. Requests for SAA to take action on a specific public policy issue will be more vigorously pursued if that issue aligns with this Agenda. However, many worthy advocacy issues lie outside the scope of this Public Policy Agenda.

SAA recognizes that social issues and archival concerns may overlap (e.g., in matters of personal privacy, access to public information, or misuse of records for political purposes). Therefore, SAA may reserves the right to speak out on human rights or social justice issues that affect archivists or researchers.

As an organization that values social responsibility, the public good, and the completeness of the public record, SAA encourages its members to engage in advocacy as individuals, in accordance with their own values and priorities.

Many SAA groups discuss issues of importance to archivists and the archival community and work to empower SAA members to learn about and engage in advocacy. SAA members are encouraged to read about these groups and volunteer to become involved in them:

SAA Committee on Public Policy
SAA Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct
SAA Intellectual Property Working Group
SAA Issues and Advocacy Section

SAA also collaborates with the Council of State Archivists, the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators, and the Regional Archival Associations Consortium on the CoSA/NAGARA/SAA/RAAC Joint Working Group on Issues and Awareness.

PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

Archival sources protect the rights of individuals and organizations, enable ensure the accountability of governments and institutions, and provide access to historical information and cultural heritage. The Society of American Archivists (SAA) will work with the archives profession to advocate for public policies and resources that ensure that such records are identified, preserved, and made accessible. SAA defines public policy as any government policy—federal, state, or local—that directly affects archivists or the archival record, including legislation, executive orders, judicial decisions, funding priorities, and other regulatory matters. In alignment with our Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics, SAA is committed to supporting policies that will make accessible evidence of the diverse and complex elements of the human experience; ensure the protection of privacy and individual rights; ensure the transparency and accountability of government at all levels; guarantee the administrative continuity necessary for good governance; make accessible evidence of the diverse and complex elements of the human experience; and preserve historical documentation for future generations. SAA defines public policy as any government

policy—federal, state, or municipal–that directly affects archivists or the archival record, including legislation, executive orders, judicial decisions, funding priorities, and other regulatory measures.

SAA firmly believes that the critical nature of information in a democracy places the burden to prove the need for confidentiality, or the legitimacy of excluding information from the public domain, on those asserting such claims. Unless there are legal or other compelling reasons to the contrary, SAA will consistently value the general good obtained through open access to information over the limited good achieved by information closure or proprietary use. SAA also is committed to actively resisting policies that undermine existing records authority and privacy laws or that endanger the integrity of the historical record held in both public and private institutions.

~~SAA recognizes that social issues and archival concerns may overlap (e.g., in matters of personal privacy, access to public information, or misuse of records for political purposes). Therefore, SAA reserves the right to speak out on human rights or social justice issues that affect archivists or researchers.~~

SAA will prioritize the following public policy areas:

- Raising awareness of public policy issues that affect archivists and their ability to do their work in accordance with SAA's Core Values and Code of Ethics ~~Public policy issues that affect archivists and their ability to do their work~~;
- Advancing the diversity of the archival record;
- Protecting privacy and individual rights of archival subjects and users;
- Promoting the public's right to access information held or created by public and publicly funded bodies;
- Strengthening ~~of~~ federal, state, and municipal ~~local~~ records authority over information created by public and publicly funded bodies;
- Supporting impartial and non-partisan federal, state, and municipal records authorities;
- Ensuring adequate funding for government archives at the federal, state, and municipal level;
- Ensuring adequate funding for federal and state programs that support archives and archival projects, including, but not limited to, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS);
- Supporting a robust public domain, which forms the backbone of creative and research activities by ensuring access to unambiguously free cultural content; and
- Advocating for copyright rules that preserve the incentives for creators to make and publish new works without unduly constraining the work archivists do in pursuit of their ~~our~~ mission.

~~Requests for SAA's commitment to a specific policy issue will be more vigorously pursued if that issue fits within these priorities. However, many worthy advocacy issues lie outside the scope of this policy agenda. Individual members or groups may request that SAA address these issues using the same procedures as for public policy issues; SAA will consider them on a case-by-case basis.~~

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

SAA Committee on Public Policy
How to Suggest SAA Take Action on an Issue
SAA's Criteria for Advocacy Statements

~~For more information and perspectives, see the Committee on Public Policy's microsite.~~

Several other SAA groups track issues of importance to archivists and the archival community. See, for example, the microsites of SAA's Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct, Intellectual Property Working Group, and Issues and Advocacy Section. SAA also collaborates with the Council of State Archivists, the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators, and the Regional Archival Associations Consortium on the CoSA/NAGARA/RAAC/SAA Joint Working Group on Issues and Awareness. [Moved]

Approved by the SAA Council: May 2019.
To view previous versions, see:
2017-2018 Public Policy Agenda
2015-2017 Public Policy Agenda
2012-2014 Advocacy Agenda
2009-2010 Advocacy Agenda

Support Statement: The revised Public Policy Agenda provides members and other prospective audiences with an understanding of SAA's priorities related to public policies that affect archivists, archives, the archives profession, and the communities we serve.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: Addresses Goal 1: Advocating for Archives and Archivists, Strategy 1.1. Provide leadership in promoting the value of archives and archivists to institutions, communities, and society; 1.2. Educate and influence decision makers about the importance of archives and archivists; 1.3. Provide leadership in ensuring the completeness, diversity, and accessibility of the historical record; and 1.4. Strengthen the ability of those who manage and use archival material to articulate the value of archives.

Fiscal Impact: Approval of the Public Policy Agenda does not commit SAA to expend funds on any particular advocacy effort. See Agenda Items IV-B-2-COPP-LegisAgenda and IV-B-3-COPP-WorkPlan for information about specific activities that may require funding.

Move: Jackson
Second: Booth
Vote: PASSED

B.2. Committee on Public Policy: 2019-2020 Legislative Agenda

The Committee on Public Policy first proposed (and the Council approved) a Legislative Agenda and Action Plan in January 2018. Because a new Congress has convened in Washington, DC, and several new state governments have convened across the country, COPP revised the Legislative Agenda to coincide with the current Congressional term. The proposed revisions are intended to guide SAA's efforts to influence legislation and regulations that have an impact on the archival mission. The Council discussed and approved the proposed revisions.

MOTION 5

THAT the following SAA Legislative Agenda 2019-2020 be approved.

SAA Legislative Agenda (2019-2020)

INTRODUCTION

The SAA Legislative Agenda lists objectives for legislative and regulatory action at the national level on issues that affect archives and archival programs in the United States. The Agenda identifies four high-priority issues for which legislative or regulatory action is already underway, has been scheduled to take place, or is anticipated to emerge during this legislative term. This is an organic document; the list may be amended or reprioritized as legislative and regulatory developments take place during the legislative term.

In addition to the priorities for advocacy, issues are identified for monitoring and potential action. First are national issues that will be monitored for unanticipated developments that may need immediate response. Second are state, regional, or municipal issues for which the most effective advocacy will be through actions by individual members, institutions, and regional archival organizations.

SAA, guided broadly by the 2019-2020 Public Policy Agenda **[insert link]**, will advocate or take other action on the following public policy priorities, either separately or in collaboration with other organizations.

2019-2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Public Policy Priority:
Ensure robust federal funding for archives.

Public Policy Action: Advocate for robust federal funding for grant programs that benefit archival projects, including electronic records preservation initiatives and cultural heritage disaster recovery efforts. Support legislation reauthorizing the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

Advocate for adequate funding for the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Adequate funding ensures that NARA has the capacity to accomplish its mandated functions to guarantee the transfer and management of the permanently valuable records of the presidency and federal government. Further, funding is essential to support effective management of and access to federal electronic records.

Advocate for the following federal budget funding levels:

NHPRC:	$10 million in appropriations
NEH:	$167.5 million in appropriations
IMLS:	$270.6 million in appropriations
NARA:	$425 million in appropriations

Background: Federal funding for NHPRC, NEH, and IMLS must be sustained to ensure that the historical record of our collective human experience is preserved and accessible for use by the American public, including teachers and students, scholars, scientists, family historians, the business community, and governments themselves.

Federal funding for the National Archives must be increased, not simply maintained or reduced. The challenges of managing federal electronic records are substantial, from ensuring the comprehensive transfer of records to providing access to those securely preserved records years and decades after they were originally acquired. These challenges require focused staffing, robust technology, and

implementation of new approaches to assure that the essential information created by all branches of the federal government is appropriately preserved and made accessible, and so that NARA meets its mandate to ensure the accountability and transparency of the federal government on behalf of the American people.

SAA Statements/Issue Briefs on This Topic:

- Archives, Public Policy, and You: Federal Funding Programs for Archives and Historical Records (2019)
- Issue Brief: Federal Grant Funding for Archives (2017)
- Backgrounder: Funding for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (2017)
- Backgrounder: Funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (2017)
- Issue Brief: Strengthening of Federal Records Authority (2015)
- Issue Brief: Adequate Funding of Government Archives and Archival Programs (2014)

*Public Policy Priority***:**
Support network neutrality.

Public Policy Action: Support the maintenance of net neutrality in the United States and legislative proposals that would ensure that Internet providers are designated as common carriers under Title II of the Communications Act of 1934.

Background: Net neutrality is the principle that Internet service providers must treat all data on the Internet in the same way, and not discriminate or charge differently by user, content, website, platform, application, type of attached equipment, or method of communication.[1] Under these principles, Internet service providers are unable to intentionally block, slow down, or charge for specific websites and online content.

Access to essential documentation of our government and society is made available to a wide array of users through the Internet. Archival institutions use the Internet to provide access to finding aids, discovery tools, and digital collections. In this way, they are able to reach large audiences, including governments and policy researchers, K-12 teachers and students, college/university students and academic researchers, family historians, legal and medical researchers, and many other users. The principles of net neutrality are indispensable for the transparent and democratic distribution of information available online from thousands of archival repositories throughout the country.

Our nation—and the mission of our profession—are best served if government regulations ensure archives' ability to provide equitable and unfettered access to our shared cultural heritage and support access for all users of archival information.

[1]Gilroy, Angele A. (March 11, 2011). Access to Broadband Networks: The Net Neutrality Debate (Report). DIANE Publishing. p. 1. ISBN 978-1437984545.

SAA Statements/Issue Briefs on This Topic:

- Issue Brief: Net Neutrality (June 2018)
- SAA Letter to the FCC Commissioner (December 2017)

*Public Policy Priority***:**
Address inadequacies in intellectual property law and regulations.

Public Policy Action: Oppose any legislation or regulatory actions related to intellectual property rights that reduce or impede the ability of archives and libraries to preserve and provide access to archival materials. Such actions include extending the duration of copyright or changes to Section 108 of the U.S. Copyright Act that are not made specifically to expand permitted uses by archives and libraries.

Background: Lengthy terms of copyright protection inhibit the growth of the public domain to the detriment of the public interest. Section 108 of the U.S. Copyright Act is one of several provisions in the law ensuring a balance between the important interests of rights holders and the equally important interests of the public—a balance critical to archives' missions. By permitting archives to duplicate copyrighted material for preservation and access, Section 108 empowers archivists to carry out their core work. Although aspects of Section 108 might be updated, the statute is remarkably resilient and is used every day by practicing archivists. Combined with the Fair Use doctrine as codified in Section 107, Section 108 is an invaluable tool for archivists in conducting their collective mission to preserve the historical record.

SAA Statements/Issue Briefs on This Topic:

- [Archivists and the Term of Copyright](#) (2016)
- [Statement on Draft Revision of Section 108](#) (2016)
- Issue Brief: [Orphan Works](#) (2014)
- View a one-page [overview](#)of SAA's positions on copyright issues.

*Public Policy Priority***:**
Support efforts to strengthen transparency and ensure access to open government data.

Public Policy Action: Monitor forthcoming or in-progress legislation that affects the ability of the public, researchers, and government agencies/officials to ensure open access to public records as provided for by law. Issues that will emerge cannot always be predicted or anticipated, hence the need for regular monitoring of ongoing government action and legislation that may require a quick response. Focus must be on supporting legislation to ensure access to public records and opposing legislation designed to limit such access unless there are compelling and demonstrable reasons.

Support efforts to develop open public information for all government agencies. Support legislation that enhances federal electronic records management, such as H.R.745, the Federal Records Modernization Act of 2017.

Background: SAA promotes the protection and accessibility of records found in governments, organizations, and archival repositories. Records ensure the protection of individuals' rights, the accountability of governments and organizations, and the accessibility of historical information.

Government has long sought to achieve a balance between providing open access to public records and information and ensuring restrictions that respect concerns of privacy, intellectual property, and national security. In general, the public requires broad access to government records and information to ensure transparency and accountability. Some agencies and officials have found a balance that provides the public with a great deal of information, while others have tended to restrict information and access to public records, believing it necessary to protect their work and decision-making.

To ensure that federal records can serve the purposes of ensuring transparency and accountability, the National Archives and Records Administration should be granted the statutory authority that will allow it to carry out its crucial responsibility for the proper management of federal records.

Issues may arise relating to access and restrictions that are complex and/or difficult to anticipate. For example, the creation and use of ephemeral social media content by public officials and entities raise questions about what constitutes a public record. Additionally, the use and abuse by public officials and agencies of electronic mail and social media have led to growing questions about what requirements must be met to ensure that official records are created and can be managed and preserved. Finally, issues relating to classification/declassification of public records require constant consideration to balance the public's interest in having access to information with the desire of government officials and agencies to protect the information.

SAA firmly believes that the critical nature of information in a democracy places the burden to prove the need for confidentiality, or the legitimacy of excluding public access to information, on those asserting such claims. Therefore, SAA strongly opposes any effort by government officials to deny the public access to government information found in archives and records.

SAA Statements/Issue Briefs on This Topic:

- [Congressional Records as Public Records](#) (2018)
- Issue Brief: [Police Mobile Camera Footage as a Public Record](#). (2017)
- Issue Brief: [Federal Classified Information and Controlled Unclassified Information](#) (2017)
- [Statement on the Value and Importance of Transparency in Government](#) (2017)
- Issue Brief: [Declassification of Federal Records](#) (2017)
- [Statement on Conducting Public Business in Non-Government Email Accounts](#) (2015)
- Issue Brief: [Presidential Records Act of 1978](#) (2014)

NATIONAL ISSUES TO BE MONITORED IN 2019-2020

*Public Policy Issue***:**
Address weaknesses in classification of federal records.

Public Policy Action: Collaborate with interested organizations to support efforts to improve classification and declassification and avoid over-classification of federal records. Actions to support include simplification of classification categories and provision of additional funding for training and technology to assist and improve the process.

Background: The core values of archivists as defined by the Society of American Archivists and the profession include accountability and access and use. To ensure a more open and transparent government, there is a demonstrated need to reform the federal classification process, reduce over-classification, and ensure that the Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) system does not become yet another system of "classification."[2] In particular, the federal government should strive for the greatest possible openness when declassifying national security information.

[2]"Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) is information that requires safeguarding or dissemination controls pursuant to and consistent with applicable law, regulations, and government-wide policies but is not classified under

Executive Order 13526 or the Atomic Energy Act, as amended." For further information see "About Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI)" [link: https://www.archives.gov/cui/about]

SAA Statements/Issue Briefs on This Topic:

- Issue Brief: Declassification of Federal Records (2017)
- Issue Brief: Federal Classified Information and Controlled Unclassified Information (2017)

*Public Policy Issue***:**
Promote effective management of federal records.

Public Policy Action: Monitor any developments with, and advocate as appropriate for, legislation and agency regulations that strengthen the records management authority of the National Archives and Records Administration, and support NARA in pursuit of these goals.

Background: The Congress should pass, and the President should sign, legislation that gives NARA the authority and resources to investigate violations of records management laws and policies. Such legislation should also set appropriate penalties – levied according to the degree of authority and responsibility granted to the offender – for noncompliance with existing records management laws and policies. Cases in which violation of records management law are suspected should be referred to the Department of Justice for adjudication.

NARA should be provided the necessary additional resources to carry out a system of robust, regular audits of the records management practices of federal agencies to determine their level of compliance with existing laws and regulations. While agencies currently conduct self-assessments, the inherent weaknesses of self-reporting require comprehensive audits at least once every five years for continued improvement and compliance.

SAA Statements/Issue Briefs on This Topic:

- Issue Brief: Strengthening of Federal Records Authority (2015)

*Public Policy Issue***:**
Improve the Freedom of Information Act.

Public Policy Action: Support strengthening of FOIA implementation, especially through expansion to all federal agencies of the "Release Once Release to All" pilot project.

Background: Many agencies across the federal government have backlogs in responding to FOIA requests from citizens, and "the average processing times at many agencies are hundreds of days longer than the 20-day response time established by law."[3].

[3] "Feinstein, Grassley, Leahy, Cornyn Push for Better FOIA Compliance." March 15, 2019

SAA Statements/Issue Briefs on This Topic:

- Issue Brief: Freedom of Information Act (2014, updated 2016)

STATE / REGIONAL / LOCAL POLICY ISSUES TO BE MONITORED IN 2019-2020

*Public Policy Issue***:**
Support efforts to define police mobile camera footage as a public record.

Public Policy Action: Encourage members to advocate for and support efforts to define police mobile camera footage as a public record under existing public records laws according to local, state, and federal statutes; advocate for standardized practices and policies to ensure effective management, preservation, and access.

Background: Police mobile camera video—recorded in the course of operations and preserved as evidence—falls under the professionally accepted definition of public records, i.e., any documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by a government entity in the conduct of public business and preserved (or appropriate for preservation) as evidence of the entity's organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities, or because of the information contained therein. However, state laws diverge widely on the treatment of body camera recordings as public or open records. Effective management of these records must be addressed, as well as the complex issues involved in balancing the public right to know versus personal privacy.

SAA Statements/Issue Briefs on This Topic:

- Issue Brief: Police Mobile Camera Footage as a Public Record (2017)

*Public Policy Issue***:**
Promote improvements in state Freedom of Information laws.

Public Policy Action: Closely monitor state legislation pertaining to state records laws, work with other organizations that are interested in FOIA, and encourage members to advocate within their states for strengthening of state FOI laws.

Background: To ensure the public's right to equal and equitable access to government information found in archives, SAA supports state government efforts to examine all freedom of information laws and strengthen all pertinent legislation. All state records laws should include specific language to prevent restrictions and exemptions for records of public officials and other government employees, other than those that are explicitly required by law.

SAA Statements/Issue Briefs on This Topic:

- Issue Brief: State Freedom of Information Laws (2015)

Support Statement: The SAA Legislative Agenda 2019-2020 is intended to be an organic document that provides SAA with the flexibility needed to address unforeseen legislative and regulatory developments, and that informs members and other prospective audiences about SAA's priorities related to legislation and regulations affecting archivists, archives, the archives profession, and the communities we serve. SAA will prioritize four public policy actions during the 2019-2020 legislative term:

- Ensuring robust federal funding for archives.
- Supporting network neutrality.
- Addressing inadequacies in intellectual property law and regulations.
- Supporting efforts to strengthen transparency and ensure access to open government data.

SAA will also monitor legislation and regulations at the national, state, and local levels that may have an impact on archivists, archives, the archives profession, and the communities we serve.

Fiscal Impact: Approval of the Legislative Agenda does not commit SAA to expend funds on any particular advocacy effort. However, robust advocacy efforts on any particular issue could involve expenditures related to any of the following: SAA staff time, outreach documents for agencies and government officials, outreach to SAA members for advocacy training (e.g., webcasts), and individual or group face-to-face meetings with government officials. The FY20 budget for Advocacy and Public Awareness (Program 107) includes $9,130 for activities (2.a., 2.b., 2.c., and 2.e.) that will directly support the COPP work plan. In addition, staff time allocations reflect staff involvement in those activities.

Move: Chartier
Second: Lyons
Vote: PASSED

B.3. Committee on Public Policy: 2019-2022 Work Plan

During the COPP mid-year meeting in February 2019, the committee worked with a facilitator to develop a long-term work plan for advocacy and public policy work. After mapping COPP's accomplishments, current projects, and potential goals, the committee identified three thematic areas in which to focus their efforts: legislative advocacy, committee governance, and communication and outreach. The Council reviewed and approved the work plan as presented.

MOTION 6

THAT the following 2019-2022 Work Plan for the Committee on Public Policy be approved.

Committee on Public Policy
Work Plan, 2019-2022

Committee Governance	Due Date
1. Write work plan with timeline, tasks, and responsible parties.	May 2019
2. Develop standard internal operating procedures for COPP. - Onboarding documents for new COPP members. - Define roles and responsibilities for Chair, Vice Chair, and committee members.	August 2019 Spring 2020
3. Develop a set of assessment metrics by which COPP can evaluate the success of its initiatives.	Spring 2020

Communication and Outreach	Due Date
1. Increase direct communication from the committee.	
- Make periodic contributions to internal SAA communications vehicles, including *Off The Record, In The Loop*, and *Archival Outlook*.	Ongoing
- Plan a brown-bag lunch for the 2019 Joint Annual Meeting focused on illuminating COPP's work and SAA's advocacy procedures.	August 2019
- Review and update COPP microsite.	August 2019
2. Develop internal and external communications plans.	Spring 2020
3. Collaborate with COPA to identify, write, and schedule "evergreen" press releases/statements about recurring archival issues.	Fall 2020 (tentative pending COPA's agreement)
4. Renew and revitalize partnerships with allied groups.	
- Joint Working Group on Issues and Awareness (with CoSA, NAGARA, RAAC).	Ongoing
- National Coalition for History.	Ongoing
- Map areas of overlap/synergies with COPA.	Aug 2020 (pending COPA)
- Implement in-reach strategy to encourage relationship building/new partnerships with SAA constituent groups.	Fall 2020
5. Draft/revise statements and issue briefs.	
- Continue to respond to and advise the Council on legislative and policy issues as they arise.	Ongoing
- Assess existing documents to identify gaps and need for rewrites or revisions.	Fall 2020
- Schedule and assign briefs and statements.	Spring 2020
- Write and submit for approval issue brief on judicial records.	Spring 2020
Legislative Advocacy	**Due Date**
1. Revise Public Policy Agenda.	May 2019 and May 2021
2. Revise Legislative Agenda.	May 2019 and May 2021
3. Develop and implement legislative advocacy training.	
- Create pre-conference workshop to train SAA members in state and local legislative advocacy.	August 2019
- Develop advocacy training for the SAA Council.	August 2020
- Roll out workshops/training as regular offering (in collaboration with SAA Education staff).	2021
4. Develop and implement federal legislative advocacy strategy.	
- Assess 2018 Archives on the Hill (AOH) initiative.	Spring 2020
- Build on AOH and subsequent trainings to increase capacity for future advocacy events, such as NHA Advocacy Day and/or	Ongoing

additional AOH initiatives.				
5. Create a new long-term federal funding campaign for archives. (See SAA Strategic Plan, Goal 1.2.) - Prepare a white paper to initiate discussion with members and partner institutions about what federal funding is most needed by/for archives.		August 2020		
- Identify next steps and proceed.		2021		

Committee on Public Policy
RACI Chart for 2019

Activity	**R**esponsible	**A**ccountable	**C**onsulted	**I**nformed
Committee Governance				
Work plan	Quigley, Winn, Greggs	Council	COPP	SAA Members, Partner Groups
SOP: Onboarding documents	Quigley, Tansey	Winn	COPP, SAA Staff	SAA Council
SOP: Define committee roles/responsibilities	Quigley	SAA Council	COPP	SAA Members
Communication and Outreach				
Brown-bag lunch forum (August 2019)	Tansey, Winn	Quigley	COPP, SAA Staff	SAA Members, SAA Council
Review and update COPP microsite	Hagenmaier, Tansey, Whitledge	Quigley	COPP, SAA Staff	SAA Members, SAA Council
Federal Legislative Advocacy				
Public Policy Agenda revision	Hagenmaier, Winn	Quigley SAA Council	COPP, Relevant Committees & Sections	SAA Members, Partner Groups
Legislative Agenda revision	Roe, Whitledge, Labinsky	Quigley SAA Council	COPP, Relevant Committees & Sections	SAA Members, Partner Groups
Pre-conference workshop in Austin 2019	Winn, Whitledge, Roe, Greggs, Hagenmaier, Millington	SAA Education	Quigley, COPP, SAA Staff	SAA Members, SAA Council

Support Statement: Approval of the three-year work plan for the Committee on Public Policy serves to structure and focus the work of the committee so that it can be more efficient and effective, advance SAA's legislative and policy advocacy goals, increase awareness of COPP's activities within SAA, and increase capacity among SAA members to engage in legislative and policy advocacy.

Fiscal Impact: The FY20 budget for Advocacy (Program 107) includes $9,130 for activities (2.b., 2.d., 2.f., and 3.b.) that will directly support the COPP work plan. In addition, staff time allocations reflect staff involvement in those activities.

Move: Lawrimore
Second: Booth
Vote: PASSED

C.1. Proposed Revisions to DACS Principles

The Standards Committee recommended that the Council approve revisions to the Preface and Statement of Principles in *Describing Archives: A Content Standard,* as prepared by the Technical Subcommittee on DACS (TS-DACS). The subcommittee began review of the standard in 2016 to ensure alignment with current archival theory and practice. They identified a number of components that were absent from the document, including providing maximum access to records; prioritizing users and use of records over preservation; building relationships with creators; using accessible language to document traditionally underrepresented communities; and documenting archival interventions and the role of archivists in shaping the historical record. TS-DACS also considered *Records in Context (RiC),* a new draft data model for archival description that was released by the International Council on Archives in 2016. Following a number of review periods and open calls for comments, the proposed revisions were put forward to the Standards Committee in March 2019.

The Council agreed with the Standards Committee's recommendation and approved the revisions. The Publications Board will work with TS-DACS to ensure that a new physical publication of the revised standard is available as soon as possible.

MOTION 7

THAT the proposed revisions to the *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* Preface and Statement of Principles (see Appendix) be approved.

Support Statement: The revised principles are evidence of a thorough and deliberate effort over time by TS-DACS members and many experts who volunteered their time. Documentation of their efforts in both GitHub and Google Drive is robust. By making announcements via listservs, hosting in-person sessions at annual meetings, and tapping key individuals with critical perspectives, TS-DACS met expectations for consulting others. TS-DACS took special care to document their revisions, community feedback, and the reasoning behind their decisions.The revised principles bring DACS up to speed with current archival theory and practice, and provide users of the standard with argumentation concerning how archival theory and ethics are inextricably linked to archival description. This change de-emphasizes a "one-size-fits-all"

approach and empowers archivists to create sound practices within a local context rather than limiting archivists by emphasizing rote compliance.

Fiscal Impact: Costs associated with printing the revised standard.

Move: Booth
Second: Yun
Vote: PASSED

C.2. Proposed Addition of New Rights Statements Elements to DACS

In 2017, TS-DACS received a change proposal requesting that new rights statements for archival description be introduced in *Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS).* Upon review, TS-DACS agreed with the request; the subcommittee drafted a new required element for Description Control (chapter 8, element 8.2) for a Rights Statement for Archival Description as well as an addition to chapter 13 to include a new Rights Statement for Archival Authority Records (element 13.10). The Council discussed concerns about requiring the provisions detailed in these new elements and that TS-DACS and the Standards Committee provide further information on the benefits and potential drawbacks of making these elements required.

D. Increase Number of *American Archivist* Editorial Board Members

The *American Archivist* Editorial Board requested that the board size be increased to include two additional members, and that an international member be added to enhance the journal's international recognition. The Council strongly agreed with expanding the number of board members—suggesting four additional members—as well as including an international representative on the board. The Council asked Journal Editor Cal Lee to resubmit a proposal within 30 days.

E. Petition for SAA Accessibility and Disability Section

The Council reviewed a member petition to create a new section on accessibility and disability. Following a detailed discussion, the Council decided to seek feedback on the proposal from the Diversity Committee and the recent Task Force to Revise the Best Practices on Accessibility to determine if this aspect of the profession would be best served by a section or a standing appointed group (such as a subcommittee of the Diversity Committee or a working group). The Council will reconsider the proposal once they have received feedback from the Diversity Committee and Task Force.

F. Select 2019-2020 Executive Committee Member and Nominating Committee Members

By anonymous ballot, the nine Council members who are not officers elected Audra Eagle Yun to serve as the 2019-2020 Executive Committee member and Steven Booth and Brenda Gunn to serve on the 2020 Nominating Committee.

G. Other Action Items from Council Members

1. Allocate Funds for Live Streaming at 2019 Joint Annual Meeting

The Council discussed the benefits and logistics of live streaming portions of the 2019 Joint Annual Meeting in Austin, Texas. The Council agreed to allocate funds from the Technology Fund to support live streaming in two session rooms through four days of the conference, Saturday through Tuesday. This will allow for 18 program sessions and the two plenaries to be accessed in real time by anyone around the world. The Council noted that the staff should package access to the live stream with on-demand (post-conference) access to the stream video as well as MP4 audio recordings synched with slides. This package should be made available to non-attendees for approximately $99 (for members) and at a price to be determined for nonmembers.

MOTION 8

THAT $44,000 be allocated from the Technology Fund to support live streaming of two education tracks and two plenaries at the 2019 Joint Annual Meeting.

Move: Lyons
Second: Punzalan
Vote: PASSED

H. Executive Session

The Council met in executive session to discuss potential recipients of the Council Exemplary Service Award and Council Resolutions as well as Beaumont's annual performance evaluation and contract.

V. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. SAA Internship Program

At the Council's request, Owens compiled information on the SAA internship program since its inception in 2016. Given current concerns about unpaid internships within the profession, the Council decided to retool the SAA program to better represent the goal – to provide strong mentorship and leadership opportunities to students and new professionals. SAA will establish an "Early Career Member" position on each SAA appointed group (committees, boards, task forces, and working groups), with a focus on mentoring archivists who are new to the profession. Early Career Members will serve a one-year appointment and must be a current student or new professional in the first three years of their first job in the profession.

For the coming year, the program will focus on SAA appointed groups so that the Council can ensure that group leaders are providing a strong mentorship experience. The new call for Early Career Member volunteers will not include Sections, but steering committees are encouraged to include this position on the call for candidates for their upcoming election ballots. The Council

will monitor the program throughout the year and reassess in May 2020 to determine how the program is functioning.

B. Requirements for SAA Job Board Listings

The Council discussed recent comments posted on social media and SAA email lists suggesting that listings on the SAA job board include salary information. Aware that a few member groups are conducting surveys on the topic, the Council plans to hold an open forum at the 2019 Joint Annual Meeting to discuss the matter further. Following this forum and pending member reports, the Council agreed to discuss the issue further in the fall.

C. SAA and CoSA Financial Relationship

Gonzales had raised the issue of whether entering into financial relationships with other organizations—specifically the Council of State Archivists in 2019—as part of holding a "joint" annual meeting is an appropriate financial decision for SAA. Beaumont provided her rationale for recommending joint meetings and her approach to negotiating financial agreements. Noting that SAA has a memorandum of agreement for a joint meeting with CoSA in 2020, the Council agreed that SAA should not enter into such an agreement for 2021.

D. A*CENSUS II Update

Evans updated the Council on the progress made by the Task Force on Implementation of A*CENSUS II, the next iteration of the census of the archives profession conducted in 2004. SAA will be partnering with Ithaka to build and implement the survey. Evans has been in contact with a number of funding agencies and will work with the task force to draft grant proposals. She noted that at this stage, the task force envisions that A*CENSUS II would repeat some questions from the first survey as a means of gathering trends data, but would also delve into some new areas (to be determined). She will continue to update the Council as the project progresses.

E. Guidelines for Exhibits, Sponsorships, and Advertising

Beaumont noted that she has not yet secured a vendor representative to serve on the task force, which has stalled progress on developing Guidelines for Exhibits, Sponsorships, and Advertising. The Council agreed to remove the requirement for a vendor representative and requested that the task force be finalized as soon as possible so that they can prepare a report for the fall Council meeting.

F. Council Exemplary Service Awards / Resolutions

This item was discussed in executive session.

G. 2019 Joint Annual Meeting Activities

Evans and Beaumont provided a summary of activities that will involve Council members at the 2019 Joint Annual Meeting, including diversity and inclusion activities, Council meetings and

new Council member orientation, the Leadership Orientation and Forum (organized by first-year Council members Melissa Gonzales, Petrina Jackson, and Ricardo Punzalan), and Exhibit Hall visits. Council members Booth and Gonzales shared their plans for a Council-sponsored open forum on archivists' salaries.

J. Other Discussion Items from Council Members

1. **Committee on Public Policy/Congressional Papers Section Conversation regarding SAA Issue Brief on Congressional Records**

   Yun shared that the Committee on Public Policy and the Congressional Papers Section have been in discussion regarding the COPP-drafted Issue Brief on Congressional Records (which was not approved by the Council) as well as the statement on Congressional Records issued by the Council in 2018. The section has reservations about several of the stipulations in the brief and statement. The committee and section will continue to collaborate and plan to prepare a revised recommendation to the Council in the near future.

2. **SAA Code of Conduct Revisions**

   Booth, Gunn, and Yun provided an update on their revisions to the SAA Code of Conduct. The group recently met with staff by phone to discuss the logistics of implementing an anonymous email box and voicemail line to report Code of Conduct violations. Beaumont has sent the revised code to legal counsel and, once feedback has been received, staff will post the Code of Conduct and Equal Opportunity Statement for member comment. Council and staff hope to have the revisions approved by July 1 so that the revised Code of Conduct can be shared and put into effect at the 2019 Joint Annual Meeting.

VI. REPORTS

Reports are discussed by the Council only as needed and generally are not summarized in the minutes (with the exception of the Executive Committee report, which details interim actions of the Executive Committee). They do, however, provide a wealth of information about the work of appointed and component groups and the staff. To view the reports–and all other background materials–see http://www2.archivists.org/governance/reports.

The Council reviewed, but did not discuss, the following reports:

A. **Executive Committee**

B. **Vice President / President-Elect**

C. **Treasurer**

D.1. **Staff: Executive Director**

D.2. **Staff: Membership**

D.3. Staff: Education

D.4. Staff: Publications

D.5. Staff: Annual Meeting

D.6. Staff: Technology

E. *The American Archivist* **Editor**

F. Publications Editor

G. SAA Foundation Board

H. Other Reports from Council Members/What Are You Hearing from Members?

No additional reports were brought forward.

I. COUNCIL BUSINESS (continued)

A. Review of May 2019 To-Do List / Talking Points

Council members reviewed the draft list of action items stemming from the meeting.

B. Adjournment

Chartier moved adjournment, Jackson seconded, and the Council meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 12:26 p.m. on Wednesday, May 22.

🗐 **saa-ts-dacs** / **dacs**

Revised Preface and Principles #20

⟩↰ Open   **michelsd** wants to merge 15 commits into `saa-ts-dacs:master` from `michelsd:New-Principles` 🖺

💬 Conversation   14   ⟜ Commits   15   ☰ Checks   0   📄 Files changed   4

Changes from **all commits** ▾   **File filter...** ▾   **Jump to...** ▾   +197 −153 🟥🟥🟩🟩⬜

18 🟩🟩🟩🟥⬜   `part_I/chapter_1.md`

Chapter 1 Levels of Description

┃ Archival material can be described at many different ~~levels (see Statement of Principles: Principle 3)~~levels.

A finding aid may consist of only one level of description (single-level descriptions), or it may include many different levels of description (multilevel descriptions). A finding aid that consists of multiple levels of description may provide information at successively narrower levels of arrangement (such as subseries, files, and even items) for some series while confining information to a single level of hierarchy for others.[1]

⚡

DACS does not attempt to define the proper level of description for any set of archival materials. Archivists should follow the prescriptions of their institutions and apply their own judgment in making such determinations.

DACS defines twenty-five elements that are useful in creating systems for describing archival materials. These systems can be of any type, ranging from simple paper-based files to complex digital information management systems. The output products of these systems—archival descriptions of all kinds and formats, printed on paper or encoded in EAD or MARC 21—must include at minimum a set of discrete descriptive elements that convey standardized information about the archival materials and creators being described. These DACS elements constitute a refinement of the twenty-six high-level elements of archival description defined in the General International Standard Archival Description (ISAD[G]).

Not all of the DACS elements are required in every archival description. Combinations of descriptive elements will vary, depending on whether the archivist considers a specific description to be preliminary or complete and whether it describes archival materials at a single level (e.g., collection level or item level) or at multiple levels that have a whole-part relationship.

Simple archival descriptive systems can be constructed using only the twenty-five elements articulated and defined by this standard; however, more detailed archival descriptive and management systems may require a number of additional elements, either defined by companion standards or standardized at the local level to meet the requirements of a specific repository.

The following requirements specify particular elements from Part I of DACS that should be used in output products—from basic collection-level accession records to fully encoded, multilevel finding aids—intended for the use of archivists or researchers in managing and using archival materials. They articulate a "minimum," "optimum," and "added value" usage of the elements defined by DACS but are not intended to preclude use of other descriptive data that a repository deems necessary for its own descriptive systems or products. DACS does not specify the order or arrangement of elements in a particular descriptive output. Some systems or output formats, such as MARC 21 or EAD, provide specific guidance on the ordering of some or all elements. Others, such as a repository's preliminary accession record or a print finding aid, should include DACS elements in a logical and consistent manner determined by the repository's own procedures and standard practices. The requirements that follow are divided into two sections, one for single-level descriptions and one for multilevel descriptions.

Requirements for Single-level Descriptions

Following are examples of single-level descriptions:

- A preliminary accession record
- A MARC 21 record not linked to other MARC 21 records
- A database record in a repository's collections management database that describes archival materials only at a single level
- A METS (Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard)[22] record for a description of archival materials

Single-level descriptions can describe archival materials at *any level*, from large accumulations commonly referred to by archivists as collections, record groups, fonds, or record series, to single items and any level in between. They can, however, only describe that material at one level.

⌖

Single-level Required

A single-level description with the minimum number of DACS elements includes:

- Reference Code Element (2.1)
- Name and Location of Repository Element (2.2)
- Title Element (2.3)
- Date Element (2.4)
- Extent Element (2.5)
- Name of Creator(s) Element (2.6) *(if known)*
- Scope and Content Element (3.1)
- Conditions Governing Access Element (4.1)
- Languages and Scripts of the Material Element (4.5)

Single-level Optimum

A single-level description with the optimum number of DACS elements has all of the elements included in Single-level Minimum above, plus the following:

- Administrative/Biographical History Element (2.7)
- Access points (See Overview of Archival Description)

Single-level Added Value

A single-level description using DACS elements to provide added value for researchers includes all of the elements in Single-level Optimum above, plus any other relevant elements the repository wishes to include.

Requirements for Multilevel Descriptions

Following are examples of multilevel descriptions:

⌖

- A preliminary collection inventory or register (regardless of whether presented in print or encoded in EAD or another encoding scheme)
- A full collection inventory or register (regardless of whether presented in print or encoded in EAD or another encoding scheme)
- Multiple linked MARC 21 records
- A database record in a repository's collections management database that describes archival materials at more than one level

Multilevel descriptions can describe archival materials beginning at any level (e.g., collection level, series level) and must include at least one sublevel. Typical multilevel descriptions begin with large accumulations commonly referred to by archivists as collections, record groups, fonds, or record series. ISAD(G) envisions a descriptive framework that recognizes four levels: fonds, series, file, and item; however, DACS elements can be used to describe materials arranged according to this or any other scheme of articulating levels of arrangement of archival materials.

Within systems that communicate archival description to users, it is often the case that descriptive elements may be shared, inherited, or otherwise linked across and between entities. Traditionally, inheritance has been implicitly presented as hierarchy within the idiom of the print finding aid where frontmatter (collection-level descriptive notes, creator elements, conditions governing access and use, repository information, etc.) applies to archival descriptions on subsequent pages. However, in modern networked archival information systems (relational databases, linked data systems, etc.) linkages, relationships, and inheritances can be non-hierarchical. This makes it particularly important for outputs from these systems to clearly explain relationships so that a user understands which records, agents, or activities an archival description governs.

When a multilevel description is created, the information provided at each descriptive aggregate must be relevant to the material being described within that group.[3] For instance, archivists should provide administrative and biographical information appropriate and specific to the records being described within that aggregation. Information that is common to component parts should be provided where most generally appropriate and should not be repeated within component parts unless doing so would provide clarity.

Multilevel Required

The *top* level of a multilevel description with the minimum number of DACS elements includes:

⚜

- Reference Code Element (2.1)
- Name and Location of Repository Element (2.2)
- Title Element (2.3)
- Date Element (2.4)
- Extent Element (2.5)
- Name of Creator(s) Element (2.6) *(if known)*
- Scope and Content Element (3.1) *Note: In a minimum description, this element may simply provide a short abstract of the scope and content of the materials being described.*
- Conditions Governing Access Element (4.1)
- Languages and Scripts of the Material Element (4.5)
- Identification of the whole-part relationship of the *top* level to at least the *next subsequent* level in the multilevel description. This may be done through internal tracking within a particular descriptive system; if so, the output must be able to explicitly identify this relationship.

Each *subsequent* level of a multilevel description should include:

- All of the elements used at higher levels, unless the information is the same as that of a higher level or if it is desirable to provide more specific information.

Notes:

- Name of Creator(s) Element (2.6): *At subsequent levels of a multilevel description, this element is required only if the person(s) or organization(s) responsible for the creation or accumulation of the material at the subsequent level differs from the higher level(s). This can also be accomplished by using the Name Segment of the Title Element (2.3).*

- Scope and Content Element (3.1): *Scope and contents are typically necessary for large units of aggregation and are not required at the file or item level if the Title Element (2.3) is sufficient to describe the material.*

- Identification of the whole-part relationship of *each* level to at least the *next subsequent* level in the multilevel description. This may be done through internal tracking within a particular descriptive system or through an explicit statement of the relationship.

Multilevel Optimum

The *top* level of a multilevel description with the optimum number of DACS elements includes all of the elements in Multilevel Minimum above, plus the following:

- Administrative/Biographical History Element (2.7)
- Scope and Content Element (3.1) *Note: In an optimum description, this element should include a full description of the scope and content of the materials being described.*
- Access points (See Overview of Archival Description.)

Each *subsequent* level of that multilevel description should include:

- All of the elements included at the higher levels of the multilevel description, unless the information is the same as that of a higher level or if it is desirable to provide more specific information.
- Identification of the whole-part relationship of *each* level to at least the *next subsequent* level in the multilevel description. This may be done through internal tracking within a particular descriptive system or through an explicit statement of the relationship.

Multilevel Added Value

A multilevel description using DACS elements to provide added value for researchers should include all of the elements in Multilevel Optimum above, plus any other elements the repository wishes to include.

Each *subsequent* level of that multilevel description should include:

- All of the elements included at the higher levels of the multilevel description, unless the information is the same as that of a higher level or it is desirable to provide more specific information.
- Identification of the whole-part relationship of *each* level to at least the *next subsequent* level in the multilevel description. This may be done thorough internal tracking within a particular descriptive system or through an explicit statement of the relationship.

[1]: For more information, refer to International Council on Archives, *ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description,* 2nd ed., adopted by the Committee on Descriptive Standards, Stockholm, Sweden, September 19–22, 1999, accessed February 19, 2013, http://www.icacds.org.uk/eng/ISAD(G).pdf.

[2]: The METS standard is an XML schema for encoding descriptive, administrative, and structural metadata for objects within a digital library. It is an initiative of the Digital Library Federation and is maintained by the Library of Congress. Information is available at http://www.loc.gov/standards/mets/.

[3]: In the voluminous papers of a prominent family, there may be one letter from George Washington within a small cache of a distant cousin's correspondence. It would be inaccurate and inappropriate to say that the collection is about George Washington, although an archivist may include this kind of description within the series or file that includes that letter. Similarly, if part of a collection has specific conditions governing access, it is useful to provide an overview of all access restriction types at the collection level but it is also important to provide specific conditions governing access at the more granular level where this information would be relevant.

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12 ▦▦▦▦▢ part_II/introduction_to_archival_authority_records.md

Introduction to Archival Authority Records

The structure and content of archival materials cannot be completely understood without some knowledge of the context in which they were created. It is insufficient for the archivist simply to include the name of the creator in the title of the description of the materials. Additional information is required regarding the corporate bodies, persons, and families responsible for the creation, assembly, accumulation, and/or maintenance and use of the archival materials being described. Part II describes the information that is required to establish this context. It is the logical outcome of Principle 84 in the Statement of Principles: that the creators of archival materials, as well as the materials themselves, must be described.

Definition of Terms

- Corporate body: an organization or group of people identified by a name and that acts, or may act, as a unit, or an institutional position held by a person

- Person: an individual of the human species

- Family: two or more people related through marriage, birth, adoption, or other legal manner, or who present themselves as a family

These definitions disallow the creation of headings for personas, bibliographic identities, and animals but otherwise would not create significant divergence from library authority file structures.

There are three steps in the process of creating the documentation that establishes archival context.

⚏

- The archivist must first identify the corporate bodies, individuals, and families that played a significant role in the creation of the materials.

Element 2.6, Name of Creator(s), provides specific guidance as to which of these entities need to be associated with the description of the materials, based on their role in the creation, assembly, accumulation, and/or maintenance and use of the records.

- The archivist must assemble biographical information about these individuals and families or data about the history, structure, functions, and relationships of the relevant organization.

Element 2.7, Administrative/Biographical History, provides guidance on recording biographical data or administrative histories.

- Finally, the names of these entities must be rendered in a standardized form using standardized vocabularies (e.g., *Library of Congress Authorities*) or with rules for formulating standardized names such as those found in AACR2, ISAAR(CPF), or RDA to facilitate the retrieval of information across descriptions, systems, and institutions.

Once formulated, this information may be presented to the user in either of two ways. Traditionally, archivists have incorporated the names of creators and contextual information about them directly into archival descriptions, both in catalog records and in finding aids. Such information, created according to DACS rules, may certainly continue to be employed in this manner.

However, DACS also provides an alternative: information about creators of archival materials can be captured and maintained in a separate system of archival authority records that are linked to the archival descriptions rather than being embedded within them. This approach reflects the model created by the International Council on Archives where the General International Standard for Archival Description (ISAD[G]) provides rules on description and the International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families (ISAAR[CPF]) governs the creation of information about creators. Chapters 9 through 14 provide guidance on the construction of archival authority records based on the structure of ISAAR(CPF).

Separating the capture and maintenance of contextual information has a number of advantages. The ability to link a description of a creating entity to several descriptions of records from the same creator held within the same repository eliminates the need to duplicate the administrative/biographical history in each description. Furthermore, the practice enables the linking of descriptions of creating entities to descriptions of records from the same creator(s) held by more than one repository, as well as to descriptions of related library and museum materials, websites, and so on. Relationships between creating entities also can be documented in authority records. Finally, certain functions can be efficiently performed in authority records, such as maintaining a record of variant and related terms, which cannot be done well (or at all) within descriptions.

Where several repositories hold records of the same provenance, they can share or exchange contextual information about the creator more easily if it has been maintained in a standardized manner. Archival authority records do not merely *record* contextual information, they also provide a means of *standardizing* access points and the contextual information. They are similar to library authority records in that both support the creation of standardized access points in descriptions. Such standardization has two aspects: consistency and uniqueness. *Consistency* requires that the name of a creator be identical each time it is used as an access point in the descriptive system. This is achieved by implementing rules that establish an authorized form of the name where different forms exist. *Uniqueness* requires that each person, family, or corporate body have a heading that applies to it alone. This is achieved by making additions to otherwise identical names in order to distinguish between them. Whenever possible, repositories should use the form of personal and corporate names found in the *Library of Congress Authorities* (formerly *Library of Congress Name Authority File* [LCNAF]) or use rules for formulating standardized names such as those found in AACR2, ISAAR(CPF), or RDA.

While archival authority records and the bibliographic authority records used in library systems are similar, they differ in significant ways. A bibliographic authority record consists of an authorized heading that standardizes the form of the name, as well as other information elements that describe the named entity or point to other authority records. Archival authority records contain the following elements similar to bibliographic authority records:

- The authority entry (i.e., a standardized access point established by an archival agency uniquely identifying the corporate body, person, or family associated with the creation of the archival materials)
- References to related names and variant names
- Documentation of how the authority record was established and maintained

Beyond this, archival authority records support a much wider set of requirements than library authority records. These additional requirements derive from the importance of documenting the context of records creation in archival description and control systems. As such, archival authority records usually contain much more information than library authority records.

While archival authority records generally are distinguished from library authority records in that they focus on identifying and providing information about those associated in some way with the creation of archival materials, they do not include topical subjects, forms or genres, functions, or uniform titles. Archivists may also maintain authority files to control the terms used to provide access in these ways; however, such applications are beyond the scope of this standard.[1]

The two methods of presenting archival context information, i.e., within the description or in a separate authority file, are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, archives may quite reasonably maintain separate files of authority data for internal control purposes even when the names reflected in those records are embedded in descriptions. Archivists may also wish to describe some contextual information only in the Administrative/Biographical History Element (see Element 2.7) embedded in descriptions of archival materials.

Purpose and Scope

Part II provides rules on the creation of authority records based on the data elements found in ISAAR(CPF).

Exclusions

Instructions for describing the archival materials themselves are found in Part I.

Instructions for identifying creators are found in Part I, Element 2.6, and instructions for creating contextual information embedded in descriptions of archival materials are found in Part I, Element 2.7.

Instructions for formatting names of persons, families, or corporate bodies identified as creators using the rules in Element 2.6 are found in companion standards.

Structure and Numbering

Part II consists of six chapters. Chapter 9 provides general rules for creating authority records for repositories that wish to maintain separate authority systems. Chapters 10 through 14 provide rules for the different areas of archival authority records.

Descriptive Outputs

The rules provide for data input but do not prescribe particular outputs or display. Presentation of this information to the user, including the way that the authority information is linked to the descriptions of the materials, will be determined by institutional policy within each repository's descriptive system.

Examples

The examples in Part II are illustrative, not prescriptive. They illustrate only the application of the rule to which they are appended. Furthermore, the presentation of the examples is intended only to assist in understanding how to use the rules and does not imply a prescribed layout, typography, or output.

[1] DACS does not provide rules for the construction and maintenance of subject authorities. However, a corporate body, person, or family can also be the subject of a unit of description, and an archival authority record that conforms to DACS may also serve to control the form of name and identity of a corporate body, person, or family named in a subject access point. See Appendix B, Companion Standards.

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Preface

About This Standard

The Society of American Archivists adopted Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) as the official content standard of the U.S. archival community in 2005. DACS was designed to be used to create a variety of archival descriptions, including finding aids and catalog records. It replaced ~~Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts,~~*Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts,*[1] which had served the U.S. archival community for more than two decades.

In 2013, following a call from the Council of the Society of American Archivists and after soliciting feedback from the community, DACS underwent a major revision. The revisions addressed the growing convergence between archival, museum, and library descriptive standards—particularly the promulgation and adoption of RDA.[2] Another significant issue was the development and adoption of Encoded Archival Context[3] and the need to provide guidance on the creation of archival authority records.

Continuous Revision Cycle

In 2013, DACS was moved to a continuous revision cycle; this means that DACS may be revised as needs from the community arise. The most current version of DACS (and a history of revisions) can be found on the TS-DACS GitHub site.[4]

The subcommittee continues to monitor the development of other descriptive standards, particularly Records in Contexts (RiC)[5] and RDA, to ensure compatibility and reduce duplication where necessary.

Ecosystem of Interrelated Standards for Providing Access to Archives

As a content standard, DACS is part of an ecosystem of interrelated and, in some cases, interdependent standards which support the process of archival description. Sometimes referred to as "companion standards," these include structure standards, other content standards, and communication standards.

Relationship to Other Descriptive Standards

DACS is related to other standards. Descriptions created according to DACS are shared electronically using encoding standards, such as MAchine-Readable Cataloging (MARC 21),Encoded Archival Description (EAD), and Encoded Archival Context (EAC). There are also close connections with Resource Description and Access (RDA) and with standards promulgated by the International Council on Archives (ICA), including International Standard Archival Description—General (ISAD[G]), the International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families (ISAAR[CPF]), and the International Standard for Describing Functions (ISDF).

In particular, DACS largely conforms to the standards created by the ICA: ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF). All of the data elements of ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF) are incorporated into DACS—in some cases, virtually word for word. The exception is the exclusion of the Level of Description element from ISAD(G). It is hoped that these close ties will allow U.S. archivists to readily share information about their collections around the world. This revision continues to rely heavily on the ICA standards while recognizing that there is a growing convergence between museum, library, and archival practice.

This growing convergence and the removal of a glossary from DACS make it important to carefully define the entities described in DACS. Here, the following terms rely on the definitions shown:

Corporate body: an organization or group of people identified by a name and that acts, or may act, as a unit, or an institutional position held by a person

Person: an individual of the human species

Family: two or more people related through marriage, birth, adoption, or other legal manner, or who present themselves as a family

These definitions disallow the creation of headings for personas, bibliographic identities, and animals but otherwise would not create significant divergence from library authority file structures.

Revision Decisions

As a descriptive standard of the Society of American Archivists, DACS was placed on a periodic revision cycle. With the release of Resource Description and Access(RDA)[2] in 2010, the Council of the Society of American Archivists asked the Technical Subcommittee on Describing Archives: A Content Standard (TS-DACS) to initiate a revision of DACS. TS-DACS was asked to pay particular attention to how DACS and RDA could be brought into closer alignment. TS-DACS was also charged with looking at the relationship between DACS and the archival standards developed by the International Council on Archives.

In the fall of 2010, TS-DACS began soliciting feedback from the U.S. archival community about how DACS could better meet the needs of that community. Subcommittee members carefully reviewed that feedback and prioritized the recommended changes. Early on, it was recognized that one of the most important issues for the revision was to confront the growing convergence between archival, museum, and library descriptive standards—particularly the promulgation and adoption of RDA. Another significant issue was the need to align DACS with the descriptive standards developed and supported by the International Council on Archives. A final issue was the development of Encoded Archival Context and the Society of American Archivists' adoption of it as an encoding standard and the need to provide guidance on the creation of archival authority records.

Resource Description and Access (RDA)

A careful review of the descriptive rules in DACS and comparison with the descriptive rules contained in RDA quickly demonstrated that many of the rules in Part III of DACS had been superseded by RDA and that important archival rules (particularly those related to the creation of family names) had been included in RDA. This led to the most obvious change from DACS 2004—the removal of Part III.

RDA rules for titles provided by archivists ("devised titles") were in closer agreement with archival practices. DACS 2004 had used the term *supplied* for these titles, in alignment with ISAD(G). Recognizing the growing convergence between library, museum, and archival descriptive standards, and the predominant use of the term *devised* by companion archival standards to DACS, as well as the greater clarity of the term, the subcommittee has chosen to change the term *supplied* to *devised*.

Finally, the subcommittee considers it important that the U.S. archival community continue to monitor the development of RDA. Its reliance on entities and their linkages provides promise for informing the developing archival conceptual model and for greater cooperation between archives and libraries in the future.

Standards of the International Council on Archives

Part I of DACS was initially developed to mirror the components of the General International Standard Archival Description (ISAD[G]) developed by the International Council on Archives (ICA). Part II was designed to mirror the International Standard Archival Authority Record For Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families (ISAAR[CPF]). This structure and concordance is maintained in the revised version of DACS.

ICA has also developed standards for describing functions (International Standard for Describing Functions [ISDF]) and archival institutions (International Standard for Describing Institutions with Archival Holdings [ISDIAH]). These standards are not currently addressed by DACS.

ICA is currently in the process of developing "a single reference model for descriptive standards to enable archivists to describe different types of archival entities (archival materials, corporate bodies, persons, or families, and functions) and to document these entities in relationship to each other at particular points of time, or over time."[3] The purpose of this reference model is to bring the ICA descriptive standards into closer alignment with one another. The current revision of DACS recognizes the convergence of descriptive standards, and TS-DACS will continue to monitor developments in this area with the goal of keeping DACS aligned with ICA descriptive standards.

Encoded Archival Context and the Need for a Content Standard for Archival Authority Records

ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF)

DACS relies on two international content standards for archival description: *International Standard Archival Description-General (ISAD(G))*[6] and the *International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families (ISAAR(CPF))*.[7] All of the data elements of ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF) are incorporated into DACS—in some cases, virtually verbatim. Part I of DACS was initially developed to mirror the components of ISAD(G) and Part II was designed to mirror ISAAR(CPF). This structure and concordance is maintained in the revised version of DACS.

The review of the ICA descriptive standards and the development and adoption of the Encoded Archival Context encoding standard by the Society of American Archivists led TS-DACS to heavily revise Part II of DACS in 2013. Part II of DACS ~~has been reworked to contain~~contains rules for the creation of archival authority records.~~Part II~~ and is broken into six chapters to align with ISAAR(CPF).[8]

The decision to make Part II into rules for archival authority records also necessitated moving Chapters 9 (Identifying Creators) and 10 (Administrative/Biographical History) into Part I as elements 2.6 and 2.7. Element 2.7 has been refocused on information necessary for understanding the collection in hand.

Digital Records

Perhaps the single area that received the most comments from community members was the need to make DACS more relevant to modern records, which increasingly include or consist exclusively of born-digital formats. Of particular concern were rules prescribing *papers, records,* and *collections* as the collective terms describing the nature of the archival unit. Commenters felt that these terms did not adequately convey the increasingly digital format of the records. However, there was no community consensus as to what terms should be used instead. Subcommittee members considered this issue in depth and decided to revise the corresponding rule in DACS to permit local practices for new collective terms (such as *personal archives* or *personal records*). TS-DACS recommends that this issue be readdressed during the next revision of DACS.

In response to community members' requests for electronic records examples in DACS, a few such examples were added to Part I. These examples are meant to be illustrative of a growing presence of digital records in archival collections.

Examples

Another recurring theme in the community feedback was the desire for more examples to be included in DACS. The subcommittee agreed that extensive and varied examples would be a valuable help in using DACS. However, several factors pushed the subcommittee's response in a different direction. The DACS revision cycle is coinciding with that for EAD; MARC is undergoing revisions as a result of RDA implementation and will eventually be replaced; and EAC-CPF examples are just now becoming widely available. The subcommittee decided that the best way to respond to the desire for more examples would be to focus its efforts on improving and expanding DACS education offerings. The print edition of DACS retains text examples illustrating specific rules, and additional examples have been supplied as needed.

Comparison to DACS2004

Those accustomed to using DACS 2004 will have little difficulty continuing to utilize the revised DACS. DACS is now divided into two parts: Part I, Describing Archival Materials, and Part II, Archival Authority Records. The numbering schema from DACS 2004 has remained unchanged in Part I and a similar numbering schema has been developed for the revised Part II

What's New in DACS?

DACS 2013	DACS 2004
Minimum, Optimum, Added Value indicated with each element	Minimum, Optimum, Added Value indicated in Chapter 1
Encoding examples not embedded in text	Encoding examples embedded in text
Devised used to indicate titles created by an archivist	_Supplied_ used to indicate titles created by an archivist
Acronyms should be spelled out at least once	No guidance on acronyms
Abbreviations discouraged	No guidance on abbreviations
Square brackets not prescribed	No guidance on square brackets
Papers, _records_, and _collection_ not prescribed for titles	_Papers_, _records_, and _collection_ prescribed for titles
Part II covers Archival Authority Records	Part II covers Describing Creators
Element 2.6 discusses Identifying Creators	Chapter 9 discusses Identifying Creators
Element 2.7 discusses Administrative/Biographical History	Chapter 10 discusses Administrative/Biographical History
Part III eliminated	Part III discusses Forms of Names
Preface to 2004 edition included as Appendix A	Preface to 2004 edition
Relies on the SAA Glossary at http://www2.archivists.org/glossary	Glossary included as Appendix A
The number of crosswalks in Appendix C has been reduced	Crosswalks in Appendix C
Appendix D removed with emphasis reoriented to DACS educational offerings	Appendix D included full encoding examples

Records in Contexts (RiC)

Following the draft release of its conceptual model in 2016, DACS and Records in Contexts (RiC) are now entering a period of coevolution. Much of the 2018 revision of the Statement of Principles on Archival Description attempts to bring DACS in closer alignment with RiC. Of particular importance is the structuring of Principle 4, which outlines three entities that must be described: records, agents, and activities, as well as the relationships between them. This structure allows archivists to create more complex and networked representation of records, including both their content and context(s). As opposed to archival description represented as hierarchy, this network of linked entities and the relationships between them will allow for deeper understanding and discovery of records and their creators.

Other Companion Standards

Archivists should look to DACS for guidance about how to describe the qualities of archives as records -- their creation, provenance, maintenance, and relationship to other records and creators. Archivists should consult companion standards for guidance on creating authorized forms of names and portraying the particular artifactual characteristics of specialized materials (like music, archived websites, or any example of the vast variety of other materials that may be found in an archive's holdings).[9]

Implementation Neutrality

DACS is implementation-neutral and can be expressed in any data format that maps to its record structure. It has been most closely implemented by, and co-evolved with, the *Encoded Archival Description* (EAD)[10] suite of XML schemata but can equally be encoded in MARC21,[11] RDF,[12] a database-backed archives management system, or any other communication standard. Whereas DACS primarily serves a U.S. audience, the stakeholders of many encoding standards represent an international community rooted in sometimes diverging descriptive practices. This has necessitated encoding implementations that err on the side of permissiveness, and practitioners may opt to strengthen the alignment between the respective encoding standard of their choice and DACS by producing a narrower implementation of the chosen encoding standard at the local level.

The Relationship between the Principles and the Rules

Describing Archives: A Content Standard provides a set of principles and elements (with rules for formulating elements) that unite archival professionals in the United States with common understanding and practice toward the creation of descriptions of archival holdings.

Principles are fundamental propositions that support and shape the practices of a profession and reflect its basic values. One key value shared by archivists is their responsibility to provide maximum access to the holdings in their custody.[13] An essential precondition for providing access is the sufficient and effective description of their holdings. The eleven principles that precede DACS represent the fundamental propositions that, if collectively adhered to, can help ensure the success of archival description in promoting user access. The elements and rules of DACS, in turn, elaborate on those principles, providing the practical instructions required to produce archival description that realizes the sense and purpose of the principles.

Collectively, the principles, elements, and rules of DACS provide a framework to guide practitioners through a range of activities from concrete descriptive tasks to the development of repository-wide descriptive programs. Adherence to DACS promotes consistency for users, ensures interoperability with systems for maintenance and display, and helps to maintain the authenticity and integrity of records. The inherent flexibility of DACS requires practitioners to use their professional judgment and expertise when writing principled, standards-compliant description. Local implementation guidelines remain integral to the success of *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

[1]: Steven Hensen, comp., *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1989). The first edition was published in 1983.

[2] Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA, *Resource Description and Access* (Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2010).

[3] International Council on Archives, Committee on Best Practices and Standards, *Progress Report for Revising and Harmonising ICA Descriptive Standards*, July 4, 2012, accessed November 6, 2012, http://www.ica.org/13155/standards/cbps-progress-report-for-revising-and-harmonising-ica-descriptive-standards.html, p. 15.

[2]: *RDA: Resource Description and Access* (RDA Steering Committee), http://rda-rsc.org/.

[3]: *Encoded Archival Context—Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families* (Society of American Archivists, Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards), http://eac.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/.

[4]: https://github.com/saa-ts-dacs/dacs.

[5]: *Records in Contexts: A Conceptual Model for Archival Description* (International Council on Archives, September 2016), Consultation Draft v0.1, https://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/RiC-CM-0.1.pdf.

[6]: *ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description*, 2nd ed. (Ottawa: International Council on Archives, 2000), https://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/CBPS_2000_Guidelines_ISAD%28G%29_Second-edition_EN.pdf.

[7]: *ISAAR(CPF): International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families*, 2nd ed. (International Council on Archives, 2004), https://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/CBPS_Guidelines_ISAAR_Second-edition_EN.pdf.

[8]: Between 2010-2013, a careful review of the descriptive rules in DACS Part III revealed that much duplication existed with AACR2 rules for forming names with minor variations such as additional rules for forming family names. With the release of RDA (which incorporates additional rules better-suited to archival description), along with a growing convergence of goals (consistent, reusable, and clear description whether bibliographic or archival) amongst libraries, archives, and museums, it seemed prudent for the archival community to rely on bibliographic standards rather than support two parallel but slightly divergent content standards. This led to the most obvious change from DACS 2004—the removal of Part III.

[9]: See Appendix B: Companion Standards. https://github.com/saa-ts-dacs/dacs/blob/master/appendices/appendix_b_companion_standards.md.

[10]: *Encoded Archival Description* (Society of American Archivists), http://www.loc.gov/ead/index.html.

[11]: *MARC 21* (Library of Congress), http://www.loc.gov/marc/.

[12]: *Resource Description Framework (RDF) 1.1* (W3C, 2014), https://www.w3.org/RDF/.

[13]: International Council on Archives. Committee on Best Practices and Standards Working Group on Access, "Principles of Access to Archives," August 24, 2012, https://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/ICA_Access-principles_EN.pdf.

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Statement of Principles

The following statement of principles forms the basis for the rules in this standard. It is a recapitulation of generally accepted archival principles as derived from theoretical works and a variety of other sources. These include earlier statements about description and descriptive standards found in the reports of working groups commissioned to investigate aspects of archival description,[1] national rules for description,[2] and statements of the ICA Committee on Descriptive Standards.[3] In recognizing the disparate nature of archival holdings, the statement is also grounded in accepted professional practice in the United States.

Holdings of archival repositories represent every possible type of material acquired from a wide variety of sources. How archives manage and describe their holdings is rooted in the nature of the materials, the context of their creation, and two hundred years of archival theory. Archival descriptive practices have increasingly been applied to all of the materials held by archives, regardless of their provenance or method of acquisition. These principles examine the nature of archival materials and their context and reflect how those aspects are made apparent in description.

The Nature of Archival Holdings

Archival collections are the natural result of the activities of individuals and organizations and serve as the recorded memory thereof. This distinctive relationship between records and the activities that generated them differentiates archives from other documentary resources.

Principle 1: Records in archives possess unique characteristics.

Archival materials have traditionally been understood to consist of the documents organically created, accumulated, and/or used by a person or organization in the course of the conduct of affairs and preserved because of their continuing value. They most often consist of aggregations of documents (largely unpublished) and are managed as such, though archival institutions frequently hold discrete items that must also be treated consistently within the institution's descriptive system. In the course of their regular activities, individuals, archival repositories, and other institutions may also consciously acquire and assemble records that do not share a common provenance or origin but that reflect some common characteristic, such as a particular subject, theme, or form. Such collections are part of the holdings in most institutions and must be described in a way that is consistent with the rest of the holdings. All of these materials may be described using this standard.

Principle 2: The principle of *respect des fonds* is the basis of archival arrangement and description.

The records created, assembled, accumulated, and/or maintained and used by an organization or individual must be kept together (i.e., identified as belonging to the same aggregation) in their original order, if such order exists or has been maintained. They ought not to be mixed or combined with the records of another individual or corporate body. This dictum is the natural and logical consequence of the organic nature of archival materials.[4] Inherent in the overarching principle of *respect des fonds* are two sub-principles—provenance and original order. The principle of provenance means that the records that were created, assembled, accumulated, and/or maintained by an organization or individual must be represented together, distinguishable from the records of any other organization or individual. The principle of original order means that the order of the records that was established by the creator should be maintained by physical and/or intellectual means whenever possible to preserve existing relationships between the documents and the evidential value inherent in their order. Together, these principles form the basis of archival arrangement and description.

In the context of this standard, the principle of provenance requires further elaboration. The statement that the records of one creator must be represented together does not mean that it is necessary (or even possible) to keep the records of one creator physically together. It does, however, mean that the provenance of the records must be clearly reflected in the description, that the description must enable retrieval by provenance, and that a descriptive system must be capable of representing together all the records of a single creator held by a single repository.

The Relationship Between Arrangement and Description

If the archival functions of arrangement and description are based on the principle of *respect des fonds*, what is the relationship between arrangement and description? While the two are intimately intertwined, it is possible to distinguish between them in the following way. *Arrangement* is the intellectual and/or physical processes of organizing documents in accordance with accepted archival principles, as well as the results of these processes. *Description* is the creation of an accurate representation of the archival material by the process of capturing, collating, analyzing, and organizing information that serves to identify archival material and to explain the context and records systems that produced it, as well as the results of these processes.

Principle 3: Arrangement involves the identification of groupings within the material.

Arrangement is the process of identifying the logical groupings of materials within the whole as they were established by the creator, of constructing a new organization when the original ordering has been lost, or of establishing an order when one never existed. The archivist then identifies further sub-groupings within each unit down to the level of granularity that is feasible or desirable, even to the individual item. This process creates hierarchical groupings of material, with each step in the hierarchy described as a level. By custom, archivists have assigned names to some, but not all, levels of arrangement. The most commonly identified are collection, record group, series, file (or filing unit), and item. A large or complex body of material may have many more levels. The archivist must determine for practical reasons which groupings will be treated as a unit for purposes of description. These may be defined as the entire corpus of material of the creator (papers, records, or collection), a convenient administrative grouping (record and manuscript groups), or a reflection of administrative record-keeping systems (series and filing units).

Principle 4: Description reflects arrangement.

Archival repositories must be able to describe holdings ranging from thousands of linear feet to a single item. The amount of description and level of detail will depend on the importance of the material, management needs and resources of the repository, and access requirements of the users. That being the case, an archival description may consist of a multilevel structure that begins with a description of the whole and proceeds through increasingly more detailed descriptions of the parts, or it may consist only of a description of the whole. Within a given body of material, the repository may choose to describe some parts at a greater level of detail than others. A single item may be described in minute detail, whether or not it is part of a larger body of material.

Introduction

What is archival description and what should it do?

Archival description exists to facilitate the use of archives by people in order to understand the past through traces in records. Its efficacy can be measured by how well it achieves that goal. *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* provides a set of principles for archivists to consider when conducting the work of a descriptive program, and a set of elements (and rules for creating these elements) for archivists to use when creating archival description.

Archival description enables archivists to distill masses of information about records into a small set of characteristics describing aggregations of records. Archivists do this work because it would often be impractical to fully represent the entirety of each record in a repository and because it would be difficult for a user to make sense of masses of records without a guide to what they *are*, what they *mean* and the historical *process* by which they were created and maintained.[1] For this distillation to be intelligible, archivists must understand the evidence of people, places, ideas and activities provided by records so that they can adequately represent the records to users and communicate their nature, value, and significance. Good archival description cannot just depict the physical and intellectual characteristics of documents. It must communicate how the accumulation of documents in a collection represents and provides evidence of the major functions of an organization or individual. This contextual description is key to meaning-making and gives users the tools necessary to effectively evaluate the value of records as evidence and information.

Archivists describe information about the lifecycle and administration of records that may not be present in the records themselves. Information about appraisal, custodial history, administrative interventions, restrictions, reformatting, or any other activity that has the power to change users' understanding of records' content or context should be faithfully documented and presented to the user. Without this information, the user may not be able to make a reliable determination about the historical events, ideas, places, and people that records document. Descriptive work should document a program of archival administration that maintains the authenticity, integrity, and reliability of records.

~~The Nature of~~User-centered Aarchival Ddescription

Archival holdings are varied in their nature and provenance, and archival description reflects this fact. If archival materials are to be described consistently within an institutional, regional, or national descriptive system, the rules must apply to a variety of forms and media created by, and acquired from, a variety of sources.

Principle 5: The rules of description apply to all archival materials, regardless of form or medium.

It is acknowledged that archival materials come in a variety of forms and media, and rules for archival description must therefore accommodate all forms and media (and the relationships between them). Inherent in the principle of provenance—that the records created, assembled, accumulated, and/or maintained and used by an organization or individual must be kept together—is the assumption that no records are excluded from the description because of their particular form or medium. Different media of course require different rules to describe their particular characteristics; for example, sound recordings may require some indication of playing speed and photographs may require some indication of polarity and color.

Principle 6: The principles of archival description apply equally to records created by corporate bodies, individuals, or families.

The documents that are the product of the functions and activities of organizations may differ in extent, arrangement, subject matter, and so on, from those that result from the activities of individuals or families. While there may be valid reasons to distinguish between them in the workflow of a repository, the principles of archival arrangement and description should be applied equally to materials created by individuals, families, or organizations.

> **Principle 7: Archival descriptions may be presented at varying levels of detail to produce a variety of outputs.**

The nature and origins of a body of archival materials may be summarized in their entirety in a single collective description. However, the extent and complexity of archival materials may require a more detailed description of their various components as well. The resulting technique of multilevel description is "the preparation of descriptions that are related to one another in a part-to-whole relationship and that need complete identification of both parts and the comprehensive whole in multiple descriptive records."[5] This requires some elucidation regarding the order in which such information is presented and the relationships between description(s) of the parts and the description of the whole.[6]

> **Principle 7.1: Levels of description correspond to levels of arrangement.**

The levels of arrangement determine the levels of description. However, because not all levels of arrangement are required or possible in all cases, it follows that not all levels of description are required. It is understood that description is an iterative and dynamic process; that is, descriptive information is recorded, reused, and enhanced at many stages in the management of archival holdings. For example, basic information is recorded when incoming material is accessioned, well before the material is arranged. Furthermore, arrangement can change, particularly when a repository receives regular accruals of records from an ongoing organization. In that situation, the arrangement will not be complete until the organization ceases to exist. Thus, it is more appropriate to say that description reflects the current state of arrangement (whatever that may be) and can (and does) change as a result of further arrangement activities.[7]

> **Principle 7.2: Relationships between levels of description must be clearly indicated.**

While the actual work of arrangement and description can proceed in any order that makes sense to the archivist, a descriptive system must be able to represent and maintain the relationships among the various parts of the hierarchy. Depending on the point at which the descriptive system is entered, an end user must be able to navigate to higher or lower levels of description.

> **Principle 7.3: Information provided at each level of description must be appropriate to that level.**

When a multilevel description is created, the information provided at each level of description must be relevant to the material being described at that level. This means that it is inappropriate to provide detailed information about the contents of files in a description of a higher level. Similarly, archivists should provide administrative or biographical information appropriate to the materials being described at a given level (e.g., a series). This principle also implies that it is undesirable to repeat information recorded at higher levels of description. Information that is common to the component parts should be provided at the highest appropriate level.

The Creators of Archival Material

An important aspect of understanding archival materials is the description of the context in which they were created.

> **Principle 8: The creators of archival materials, as well as the materials themselves, must be described.**

Because the principle of provenance is fundamental to the arrangement and description of archival materials, it follows that the provenance, or the creator(s), of archival materials must be described as well. Except in cases in which the creator or collector is truly unknown, this means that the creator or collector of the materials must be identified and included in (or linked to) the description of the materials. In addition, the functions or activities of the creator(s) that produced the archival materials must be described. Finally, standardized access points must be provided that indicate not just the primary creator but also the relationships between successive creators, for example, the parts of a corporate body that has undergone reorganization(s). DACS includes rules for providing all of this information in a consistent way. The repository as collector does not need to be described.

[1] Working Group on Standards for Archival Description, "Archival Description Standards: Establishing a Process for their Development and Implementation," *American Archivist* 52, no. 4 (Fall 1989):440–443 (source hereinafter cited as the WGSAD Report); *Toward Descriptive Standards: Report and Recommendations of the Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards* (Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1985), 6–9, 55–59, 63–64; Wendy M. Duff and Kent M. Haworth, "Advancing Archival Description: A Model for Rationalizing North American Descriptive Standards," *Archives and Manuscripts* 25, no. 2 (1997):198–199, 203–204 (source hereinafter cited as the Bentley Report).

[2] *Rules for Archival Description* (Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1990), xi–xvi, rules 0.1, 0.2, 0.22, 1.0A1, 1.0A2 (source hereinafter cited as *RAD*); Hensen, *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts*, rules 0.3, 0.9, 0.10, 0.12, 1.0A (source hereinafter cited as *APPM*).

[3] International Council on Archives "Statement of Principles," *Archivaria* 34 (1992): 8–16; ICA Committee on Descriptive Standards, *ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description*, 2nd ed. (Ottawa: International Council on Archives, 1999), 7–12 (source hereinafter cited as *ISAD[G]*).

[4] S. Muller, J. A. Feith, and R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives,* translation of 2nd edition (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2002), 19. "An archival collection is an organic whole."

[5] *RAD*, p. D-5.

[6] The rules for multilevel description are found in *RAD*, rule 1.0A2, and in *ISAD(G),* p. 12.

[7] *ISAD(G)*, Statement I-3, p. 7.

Because it facilitates use, archival description is a user-centered product and process. This approach to archival description helps archivists remain connected to communities of users throughout the entire lifecycle of archives administration, dynamically and iteratively adjusting to new understanding of users and their needs.

Uses for and users of records should be considered comprehensively, and will vary from repository to repository. Users include not only those outside the repository, but the repository's own staff. It is imperative that repositories identify, engage, and seek to understand the motivations and needs of *their* users, which may include but are not limited to scholarly production, collection care and control, institutional knowledge, connection to family ties, artistic endeavors, government accountability, justice-seeking endeavors, and symbolic purposes of holding records.

Identifying aggregations of records

When describing archives, archivists provide a sensemaking function -- they help the user understand, at deepening levels of granularity, what these records are, who created them, what events they represent, and what they mean.

In order to do this, they must first identify aggregations of records. This is a core added value of archival labor -- the ability to explain masses of information to users in a manner that is both insightful and succinct.[2] It is also a site of archives power, where the archivist has the opportunity to declare what is important and what is not.[3]

Archival theory and tradition privileges description of the relationship between creators of records and the traces they leave behind as a result of events and activities in their lives. Records are often produced and kept according to these qualities, and where common aggregations are discovered, it is useful to maintain them. It is less useful for an archivist to aggregate resources by their common subject, particularly because doing so often results in the loss of information about how and by whom records were created.

Describing aggregations of records

Once an archivist has identified a meaningful aggregation of records, they may avail themselves of any relevant elements within the DACS element set in order to describe characteristics particular and appropriate to that aggregation. As described in Chapter 1, in the section on *Requirements for Multilevel Descriptions*, descriptions of a particular aggregation may (implicitly or explicitly) inherit characteristics from the more general aggregation of which it is a part. Furthermore, each aggregation should include all DACS single-level minimum elements, either described explicitly at that aggregation or inherited from associated archival description.

Provenance

To achieve the goal of faithfully documenting and maintaining information about how individuals and groups created and maintained records, archival practice has relied on the guidance of *respect des fonds* for more than 150 years.[4] Keeping the records of a given creator separate from other records (physically, intellectually, and in descriptive systems) has been an excellent mechanism to ensure that contexts of creation and maintenance are maintained.

However, the application of *respect des fonds* can often flatten existing complexity by obscuring the ways in which human inter-connections, disruptions, false starts, and confusing circumstances produced records in the first place. Users benefit from understanding the ways that records are created, collected, and distributed by multiple agents, beyond the bare details of their shared provenance.

All records within a fonds rarely come from the same creator, even if they are from the same collector and share provenance. In modern organizations, while it is undoubtedly useful to document the person or organization who brought together the group of records given to a repository, it would be even more useful to document the web of activities by which records are collected and created, and by whom, from within and outside of the organization and how structures of power and control brought records into existence. Because information systems have the power to document relationships and contexts between and across records and creators, *respect des fonds* should be considered one articulation of a method for documenting archival content and context, rather than a principle of archival description. One could imagine technical mechanisms by which this web of contexts, records, and creators could be represented in the entirety of its complexity, beyond the directive toward administrative separation that *respect des fonds* demands.

This should not be taken as permission for archivists to create their own physical or intellectual order by subject, genre, form, or other facet -- doing so often destroys context. Instead, archivists should embrace the best information technologies available to them to document and represent records over time as they are understood to the archivist.

Original order and arrangement as archival context

The concept of original order has long been privileged in archival description as representing a state of arrangement with special significance in revealing the context underlying the creation of records. The principle of respect for original order derives from this interpretation. Recent theory and practice have shown this to be much more complex.[5] For instance, there are many arrangements by which a creator may have maintained and used records over time. The order in which records are received by a repository may not match the order in which they were last used or maintained by their creator(s), further complicating the very concept of "originality" and the narrative of authenticity it supports. Similarly, electronic records complicate the idea of a fixed, canonical order because they are commonly moved and maintained in a file system over the course of their life cycles.[6]

Rather than a privileged physical sequence of records, original order is best thought of as an intellectual construct that communicates important activities and relationships inhering in records through identifying key groupings that reflect the main activities and functions of the record creators.[7]

The principle of original order advises archivists to determine and preserve those groupings, and then to describe records, agents, activities, and the relationships between them in a way that illuminates how creators kept their records and how they were sent to the archives. They should never disrupt or obscure evidence of recordkeeping practices through their own interventions; for instance, it is inadvisable to alter the received order of collection material without a compelling, user-driven need to do so.

By not elevating original order to the place of descriptive principle, DACS acknowledges that arrangement consists of a multitude of intellectual and physical relationships over time, and that arrangement itself is but one among many instances of archival context(s) to be documented.

Principles of Archival Description

1. Archival description expresses professional ethics and values.

Professional values and ethics drive archival work, including descriptive practice.[8] Archival description is an iterative, ethical practice that requires continual engagement with core values. Rooting standards in values helps archivists enact these values consistently and makes them explicit to our user communities.

Archival description that is rooted in ethics will produce a richer researcher experience because it:

- produces trust in and between users, archivists, and repositories
- encourages a diverse archival record
- promotes responsible and responsive descriptive practices
- holds archivists accountable to users and to each other
- privileges equitable access and accessibility

2. Users are the fundamental reason for archival description.

Archivists make descriptive choices that impact how users find, identify, select, and use archival records. To make wise choices about descriptive practices, archivists must develop and maintain an awareness of user needs and behaviors.

3. Because archival description privileges intellectual content in context, descriptive rules apply equally to all records, regardless of format or carrier type.

Descriptive standards must recognize that not all cultures and communities document in the same ways, and our descriptive standards must be flexible enough to accommodate all the ways that human experience is recorded.

Archivists must adapt and respond to changing recordkeeping practices and technologies. Applying a common set of descriptive rules allows archivists to create consistent descriptions. It encourages confidence in professional judgment and gives archivists the flexibility to apply standards judiciously and thoughtfully.

Consistent description across formats:

- supports broad description and access
- lowers cognitive load for users
- maintains records' contexts as well as intellectual content

4. Records, agents, activities, and the relationships between them are the four fundamental concepts that constitute archival description.

Meaning in archival records is revealed through their contexts as much as through their contents. Archivists expose contextual significance by describing records, agents, activities, and the relationships between them.

- **Records must be described in aggregate and may be described in parts.**

The whole gives meaning and coherence to the parts. Description of the aggregate is therefore an indispensable component of establishing context and must be provided before proceeding with the description of component parts. Archival description must be appropriate, relevant, and specific to a particular aggregation of records.

- **Record creators and other agents must be described sufficiently to understand the meaning of records.**

Agents act on records or interact with other agents across time. Agents may be human or machine.

A category of agents, those responsible for the creation, compilation, and maintenance of the records is particularly important and must be described. Describing these agents requires archivists to document agents' roles, functions, occupations, and activities.

Archivists must be transparent about the sources of their description and recognize that agents have the right to define their identities, which may change over time.

- **Activities that are essential to understanding records must be described.**

Activities, whether biographical, historical, or administrative, provide important contextual information. Describing biographical and historical activities adds information that may be absent from the records themselves. Describing administrative activities helps users understand how the records were affected over time by the actions of various agents following their creation.

- **The relationships among records, agents, and activities are essential to understanding archives and must be described.**

Relationships, which connect agents, records, and activities, convey meaning that may not be apparent from the contents of records alone. Relationships may be simple or may comprise a complex network of interactions among multiple records, agents, and activities.

5. Archival description must be clear about what archivists know, what they don't know, and how they know it.

Archivists must always provide honest description that mitigates human bias and limitations through open reference to their sources of knowledge. Citation in archival description builds a culture of accountability and trust.

Honest description:

- acknowledges archivists' expertise in records, recordkeeping systems, and documentary forms
- delineates the limitations of archivists' knowledge and authority
- acknowledges that archivists are people, and people are biased

6. Archivists must document and make discoverable the actions they take on records.

Archivists and archival repositories are agents whose actions affect records and the ways that all users can access and interact with those records.

Archivists have an obligation based in professional values of accountability and responsible custody to thoroughly and transparently describe their own interventions in the course of their work. These interventions may potentially affect users' understandings of records and are an essential part of archival description.

7. Archival description is accessible.

Users of archives encounter barriers to accessing archival description. Typical barriers may be physical, technological, linguistic or geographic. Archivists must limit or remove these barriers to finding and interacting with description.

Accessible archival description engages creators and communities being documented to reflect their complexity, nuance, and fluidity. Archivists must be respectful of the knowledge they hold in trust and the norms of the communities from which they collect, particularly when collecting from communities that have been historically marginalized.

Accessible and respectful description builds trust between archives, users of archives, and those being documented.

8. Archival description should be easy to use, re-use, and share.

Archival description is a form of data, consisting of discrete data elements that can be expressed in a variety of useful outputs.

Users are best able to use, re-use, and share archival description when:

- it is discoverable
- it is structured
- it is machine-readable
- it is machine-actionable
- it is available under an open license

Archivists must understand the ways that their data can be consumed by a broad range of users, including people and machines.

9. Each collection within a repository must have an archival description.

The absence of archival description is a barrier to users and good stewardship. In order to access archival collections, users must know which collections a repository holds. No matter how basic a description may be, it is more advantageous to users than no description at all.

Creating these archival descriptions helps archivists meet stewardship needs. This results in:

- access to a better, broader sense of the scope of our holdings
- the ability for archivists to gather information about how collections are used
- guidance for future appraisal and acquisition choices

Archival repositories must deploy their resources in a way that permits them to describe all of their collections as part of their normal business operations.

10. Archivists must have a user-driven reason to enhance existing archival description.

When deciding how comprehensively to describe a collection, the goal should be to maximize the availability of all collection materials to users.

Once all collections in a repository have been described at a minimum level,[9] archivists may choose to add more description. This choice must be based on demonstrated user needs or the mission of the repository.

11. Archival description is a continuous intellectual endeavor.

Description must be iterative. It continually reflects deeper understandings of agents, records, activities, and the relationships between them. It is responsive to users. It is flexible, reflecting changes in knowledge, practice, and values.

[1]: For a literary example of the nature of representation and modelling see Jorge Luis Borges, "On Exactitude in Science," in *Collected Fictions*, trans. Andrew Hurley (Penguin, 2000).

[2]: As Jennifer Meehan notes, this kind of sensemaking is only as good as the archivist's judgment, and is itself an act of research and use. Jennifer Meehan, "Making the Leap from Parts to Whole: Evidence and Inference in Archival Arrangement and Description," *The American Archivist* 72, no. 1 (April 1, 2009): 72–90, https://doi.org/10.17723 /aarc.72.1.kj672v4907m11x66.

[3]: As the anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot noted, we all make meaning of historical events through our observation of them and the power and background we bring to our work. We must acknowledge our power and biases as archivists and never pretend to be impartial stenographers of records. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, 1995). Rand Jimerson makes a similar (and domain-specific) argument in *Archives Power*. Randall C. Jimerson, *Archives Power: Memory, Accountability, and Social Justice* (Society of American Archivists Chicago, 2009).

[4]: Nancy Bartlett, "Respect Des Fonds: The Origins of the Modern Archival Principle of Provenance," *Primary Sources & Original Works* 1, no. 1–2 (1992): 107–115.

[5]: Terry Cook, "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997), 17-63.

[6]: Jefferson Bailey, "Disrespect des Fonds: Rethinking Arrangement and Description in Born-Digital Archives," *Archive Journal* (June 2013), http://www.archivejournal.net/essays/disrespect-des-fonds-rethinking-arrangement-and-description-in-born-digital-archives/.

[7]: Jennifer Meehan, "Rethinking Original Order and Personal Records," *Archivaria* 70 (Fall 2010), 27. As Terry Eastwood insists, "archival arrangement is essentially a process of identifying relationships, not a process of physically ordering and storing documents" Terry Eastwood, "Putting the Parts of the Whole Together: Systematic Arrangement of Archives," *Archivaria* 50 (Fall 2000): 93–94.

[8]: In the United States context, archivists are guided by the Society of American Archivists' Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics. Archivists are also encouraged to consult and follow affiliated ethics and principles statements, including the Protocols for Native American Archival Materials, the International Council on Archives' Principles for Access to Archives and Code of Ethics.

[9]: Chapter 1 of DACS, *Levels of Description*, provides guidance on which elements must be included for description to meet minimum requirements.

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Chapter 1 Levels of Description

Archival material can be described at many different levels (see Statement of Principles: Principle 3).

A finding aid may consist of only one level of description (single-level descriptions), or it may include many different levels of description (multilevel descriptions). A finding aid that consists of multiple levels of description may provide information at successively narrower levels of arrangement (such as subseries, files, and even items) for some series while confining information to a single level of hierarchy for others.[1]

DACS does not attempt to define the proper level of description for any set of archival materials. Archivists should follow the prescriptions of their institutions and apply their own judgment in making such determinations.

DACS defines twenty-five elements that are useful in creating systems for describing archival materials. These systems can be of any type, ranging from simple paper-based files to complex digital information management systems. The output products of these systems—archival descriptions of all kinds and formats, printed on paper or encoded in EAD or MARC 21—must include at minimum a set of discrete descriptive elements that convey standardized information about the archival materials and creators being described. These DACS elements constitute a refinement of the twenty-six high-level elements of archival description defined in the General International Standard Archival Description (ISAD[G]).

Not all of the DACS elements are required in every archival description. Combinations of descriptive elements will vary, depending on whether the archivist considers a specific description to be preliminary or complete and whether it describes archival materials at a single level (e.g., collection level or item level) or at multiple levels that have a whole-part relationship.

Simple archival descriptive systems can be constructed using only the twenty-five elements articulated and defined by this standard; however, more detailed archival descriptive and management systems may require a number of additional elements, either defined by companion standards or standardized at the local level to meet the requirements of a specific repository.

The following requirements specify particular elements from Part I of DACS that should be used in output products—from basic collection-level accession records to fully encoded, multilevel finding aids—intended for the use of archivists or researchers in managing and using archival materials. They articulate a "minimum," "optimum," and "added value" usage of the elements defined by DACS but are not intended to preclude use of other descriptive data that a repository deems necessary for its own descriptive systems or products. DACS does not specify the order or arrangement of elements in a particular descriptive output. Some systems or output formats, such as MARC 21 or EAD, provide specific guidance on the ordering of some or all elements. Others, such as a repository's preliminary accession record or a print finding aid, should include DACS elements in a logical and consistent manner determined by the repository's own procedures and standard practices. The requirements that follow are divided into two sections, one for single-level descriptions and one for multilevel descriptions.

Requirements for Single-level Descriptions

Following are examples of single-level descriptions:

- A preliminary accession record
- A MARC 21 record not linked to other MARC 21 records
- A database record in a repository's collections management database that describes archival materials only at a single level
- A METS (Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard)[2] record for a description of archival materials

Single-level descriptions can describe archival materials at *any level*, from large accumulations commonly referred to by archivists as collections, record groups, fonds, or record series, to single items and any level in between. They can, however, only describe that material at one level.

Single-level Required

A single-level description with the minimum number of DACS elements includes:

- Reference Code Element (2.1)
- Name and Location of Repository Element (2.2)
- Title Element (2.3)
- Date Element (2.4)
- Extent Element (2.5)
- Name of Creator(s) Element (2.6) *(if known)*
- Scope and Content Element (3.1)
- Conditions Governing Access Element (4.1)
- Languages and Scripts of the Material Element (4.5)

Single-level Optimum

A single-level description with the optimum number of DACS elements has all of the elements included in Single-level Minimum above, plus the following:

- Administrative/Biographical History Element (2.7)
- Access points (See Overview of Archival Description)

Single-level Added Value

A single-level description using DACS elements to provide added value for researchers includes all of the elements in Single-level Optimum above, plus any other relevant elements the repository wishes to include.

Requirements for Multilevel Descriptions

Following are examples of multilevel descriptions:

- A preliminary collection inventory or register (regardless of whether presented in print or encoded in EAD or another

encoding scheme)
- A full collection inventory or register (regardless of whether presented in print or encoded in EAD or another encoding scheme)
- Multiple linked MARC 21 records
- A database record in a repository's collections management database that describes archival materials at more than one level

Multilevel descriptions can describe archival materials beginning at any level (e.g., collection level, series level) and must include at least one sublevel. Typical multilevel descriptions begin with large accumulations commonly referred to by archivists as collections, record groups, fonds, or record series. ISAD(G) envisions a descriptive framework that recognizes four levels: fonds, series, file, and item; however, DACS elements can be used to describe materials arranged according to this or any other scheme of articulating levels of arrangement of archival materials.

Multilevel Required

The *top* level of a multilevel description with the minimum number of DACS elements includes:

- Reference Code Element (2.1)
- Name and Location of Repository Element (2.2)
- Title Element (2.3)
- Date Element (2.4)
- Extent Element (2.5)
- Name of Creator(s) Element (2.6) *(if known)*
- Scope and Content Element (3.1) *Note: In a minimum description, this element may simply provide a short abstract of the scope and content of the materials being described.*
- Conditions Governing Access Element (4.1)
- Languages and Scripts of the Material Element (4.5)
- Identification of the whole–part relationship of the *top* level to at least the *next subsequent* level in the multilevel description. This may be done through internal tracking within a particular descriptive system; if so, the output must be able to explicitly identify this relationship.

Each *subsequent* level of a multilevel description should include:

- All of the elements used at higher levels, unless the information is the same as that of a higher level or if it is desirable to provide more specific information.

Notes:

- Name of Creator(s) Element (2.6): *At subsequent levels of a multilevel description, this element is required only if the person(s) or organization(s) responsible for the creation or accumulation of the material at the subsequent level differs from the higher level(s). This can also be accomplished by using the Name Segment of the Title Element (2.3).*

- Scope and Content Element (3.1): *Scope and contents are typically necessary for large units of aggregation and are not required at the file or item level if the Title Element (2.3) is sufficient to describe the material.*

- Identification of the whole–part relationship of *each* level to at least the *next subsequent* level in the multilevel description. This may be done through internal tracking within a particular descriptive system or through an explicit statement of the relationship.

Multilevel Optimum

The *top* level of a multilevel description with the optimum number of DACS elements includes all of the elements in Multilevel Minimum above, plus the following:

- Administrative/Biographical History Element (2.7)
- Scope and Content Element (3.1) *Note: In an optimum description, this element should include a full description of the scope and content of the materials being described.*

- Access points (See Overview of Archival Description.)

Each *subsequent* level of that multilevel description should include:

- All of the elements included at the higher levels of the multilevel description, unless the information is the same as that of a higher level or if it is desirable to provide more specific information.
- Identification of the whole-part relationship of *each* level to at least the *next subsequent* level in the multilevel description. This may be done through internal tracking within a particular descriptive system or through an explicit statement of the relationship.

Multilevel Added Value

A multilevel description using DACS elements to provide added value for researchers should include all of the elements in Multilevel Optimum above, plus any other elements the repository wishes to include.

Each *subsequent* level of that multilevel description should include:

- All of the elements included at the higher levels of the multilevel description, unless the information is the same as that of a higher level or it is desirable to provide more specific information.
- Identification of the whole-part relationship of *each* level to at least the *next subsequent* level in the multilevel description. This may be done thorugh internal tracking within a particular descriptive system or through an explicit statement of the relationship.

[1] For more information, refer to International Council on Archives, *ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description,* 2nd ed., adopted by the Committee on Descriptive Standards, Stockholm, Sweden, September 19–22, 1999, accessed February 19, 2013, http://www.icacds.org.uk/eng/ISAD(G).pdf.

[2] The METS standard is an XML schema for encoding descriptive, administrative, and structural metadata for objects within a digital library. It is an initiative of the Digital Library Federation and is maintained by the Library of Congress. Information is available at http://www.loc.gov/standards/mets/.

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Introduction to Archival Authority Records

The structure and content of archival materials cannot be completely understood without some knowledge of the context in which they were created. It is insufficient for the archivist simply to include the name of the creator in the title of the description of the materials. Additional information is required regarding the corporate bodies, persons, and families responsible for the creation, assembly, accumulation, and/or maintenance and use of the archival materials being described. Part II describes the information that is required to establish this context. It is the logical outcome of Principle 8 in the Statement of Principles: that the creators of archival materials, as well as the materials themselves, must be described.

There are three steps in the process of creating the documentation that establishes archival context.

- The archivist must first identify the corporate bodies, individuals, and families that played a significant role in the creation of the materials.

Element 2.6, Name of Creator(s), provides specific guidance as to which of these entities need to be associated with the description of the materials, based on their role in the creation, assembly, accumulation, and/or maintenance and use of the records.

- The archivist must assemble biographical information about these individuals and families or data about the history, structure, functions, and relationships of the relevant organization.

Element 2.7, Administrative/Biographical History, provides guidance on recording biographical data or administrative histories.

- Finally, the names of these entities must be rendered in a standardized form using standardized vocabularies (e.g., *Library of Congress Authorities*) or with rules for formulating standardized names such as those found in AACR2, ISAAR(CPF), or RDA to facilitate the retrieval of information across descriptions, systems, and institutions.

Once formulated, this information may be presented to the user in either of two ways. Traditionally, archivists have incorporated the names of creators and contextual information about them directly into archival descriptions, both in catalog records and in finding aids. Such information, created according to DACS rules, may certainly continue to be employed in this manner.

However, DACS also provides an alternative: information about creators of archival materials can be captured and maintained in a separate system of archival authority records that are linked to the archival descriptions rather than being embedded within them. This approach reflects the model created by the International Council on Archives where the General International Standard for Archival Description (ISAD[G]) provides rules on description and the International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families (ISAAR[CPF]) governs the creation of information about creators. Chapters 9 through 14 provide guidance on the construction of archival authority records based on the structure of ISAAR(CPF).

Separating the capture and maintenance of contextual information has a number of advantages. The ability to link a description of a creating entity to several descriptions of records from the same creator held within the same repository eliminates the need to duplicate the administrative/biographical history in each description. Furthermore, the practice enables the linking of descriptions of creating entities to descriptions of records from the same creator(s) held by more than one repository, as well as to descriptions of related library and museum materials, websites, and so on. Relationships between creating entities also can be documented in authority records. Finally, certain functions can be efficiently performed in authority records, such as maintaining a record of variant and related terms, which cannot be done well (or at all) within descriptions.

Where several repositories hold records of the same provenance, they can share or exchange contextual information about the creator more easily if it has been maintained in a standardized manner. Archival authority records do not merely *record* contextual information, they also provide a means of *standardizing* access points and the contextual information. They are similar to library authority records in that both support the creation of standardized access points in descriptions. Such standardization has two aspects: consistency and uniqueness. *Consistency* requires that the name of a creator be identical each time it is used as an access point in the descriptive system. This is achieved by implementing rules that establish an authorized form of the name where different forms exist. *Uniqueness* requires that each person, family, or corporate body have a heading that applies to it alone. This is achieved by making additions to otherwise identical names in order to distinguish between them. Whenever possible, repositories should use the form of personal and corporate names found in the *Library of Congress Authorities* (formerly *Library of Congress Name Authority File* [LCNAF]) or use rules for formulating standardized names such as those found in AACR2, ISAAR(CPF), or RDA.

While archival authority records and the bibliographic authority records used in library systems are similar, they differ in significant ways. A bibliographic authority record consists of an authorized heading that standardizes the form of the name, as well as other information elements that describe the named entity or point to other authority records. Archival authority records contain the following elements similar to bibliographic authority records:

- The authority entry (i.e., a standardized access point established by an archival agency uniquely identifying the corporate body, person, or family associated with the creation of the archival materials)
- References to related names and variant names
- Documentation of how the authority record was established and maintained

Beyond this, archival authority records support a much wider set of requirements than library authority records. These additional requirements derive from the importance of documenting the context of records creation in archival description and control systems. As such, archival authority records usually contain much more information than library authority records.

While archival authority records generally are distinguished from library authority records in that they focus on identifying and providing information about those associated in some way with the creation of archival materials, they do not include topical subjects, forms or genres, functions, or uniform titles. Archivists may also maintain authority files to control the terms used to provide access in these ways; however, such applications are beyond the scope of this standard.[1]

The two methods of presenting archival context information, i.e., within the description or in a separate authority file, are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, archives may quite reasonably maintain separate files of authority data for internal control purposes even when the names reflected in those records are embedded in descriptions. Archivists may also wish to describe some contextual information only in the Administrative/Biographical History Element (see Element 2.7) embedded in descriptions of archival materials.

Purpose and Scope

Part II provides rules on the creation of authority records based on the data elements found in ISAAR(CPF).

Exclusions

Instructions for describing the archival materials themselves are found in Part I.

Instructions for identifying creators are found in Part I, Element 2.6, and instructions for creating contextual information embedded in descriptions of archival materials are found in Part I, Element 2.7.

Instructions for formatting names of persons, families, or corporate bodies identified as creators using the rules in Element 2.6 are found in companion standards.

Structure and Numbering

Part II consists of six chapters. Chapter 9 provides general rules for creating authority records for repositories that wish to maintain separate authority systems. Chapters 10 through 14 provide rules for the different areas of archival authority records.

Descriptive Outputs

The rules provide for data input but do not prescribe particular outputs or display. Presentation of this information to the user, including the way that the authority information is linked to the descriptions of the materials, will be determined by institutional policy within each repository's descriptive system.

Examples

The examples in Part II are illustrative, not prescriptive. They illustrate only the application of the rule to which they are appended. Furthermore, the presentation of the examples is intended only to assist in understanding how to use the rules and does not imply a prescribed layout, typography, or output.

[1] DACS does not provide rules for the construction and maintenance of subject authorities. However, a corporate body, person, or family can also be the subject of a unit of description, and an archival authority record that conforms to DACS may also serve to control the form of name and identity of a corporate body, person, or family named in a subject access point. See Appendix B, Companion Standards.

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Preface

The Society of American Archivists adopted Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) as the official content standard of the U.S. archival community in 2005. DACS was designed to be used to create a variety of archival descriptions, including finding aids and catalog records. It replaced *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts,*[1] which had served the U.S. archival community for more than two decades.

Relationship to Other Standards

DACS is related to other standards. Descriptions created according to DACS are shared electronically using encoding standards, such as MAchine-Readable Cataloging (MARC 21),Encoded Archival Description (EAD), and Encoded Archival Context (EAC). There are also close connections with Resource Description and Access (RDA) and with standards promulgated by the International Council on Archives (ICA), including International Standard Archival Description —General (ISAD[G]), the International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families (ISAAR[CPF]), and the International Standard for Describing Functions (ISDF).

In particular, DACS largely conforms to the standards created by the ICA: ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF). All of the data elements of ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF) are incorporated into DACS—in some cases, virtually word for word. The exception is the exclusion of the Level of Description element from ISAD(G). It is hoped that these close ties will allow U.S. archivists to readily share information about their collections around the world. This revision continues to rely heavily on the ICA standards while recognizing that there is a growing convergence between museum, library, and archival practice.

This growing convergence and the removal of a glossary from DACS make it important to carefully define the entities described in DACS. Here, the following terms rely on the definitions shown:

Corporate body: an organization or group of people identified by a name and that acts, or may act, as a unit, or an institutional position held by a person

Person: an individual of the human species

Family: two or more people related through marriage, birth, adoption, or other legal manner, or who present themselves as a family

These definitions disallow the creation of headings for personas, bibliographic identities, and animals but otherwise would not create significant divergence from library authority file structures.

Revision Decisions

As a descriptive standard of the Society of American Archivists, DACS was placed on a periodic revision cycle. With the release of Resource Description and Access(RDA)[2] in 2010, the Council of the Society of American Archivists asked the Technical Subcommittee on Describing Archives: A Content Standard (TS-DACS) to initiate a revision of DACS. TS-DACS was asked to pay particular attention to how DACS and RDA could be brought into closer alignment. TS-DACS was also charged with looking at the relationship between DACS and the archival standards developed by the International Council on Archives.

In the fall of 2010, TS-DACS began soliciting feedback from the U.S. archival community about how DACS could better meet the needs of that community. Subcommittee members carefully reviewed that feedback and prioritized the recommended changes. Early on, it was recognized that one of the most important issues for the revision was to confront the growing convergence between archival, museum, and library descriptive standards—particularly the promulgation and adoption of RDA. Another significant issue was the need to align DACS with the descriptive standards developed and supported by the International Council on Archives. A final issue was the development of Encoded Archival Context and the Society of American Archivists' adoption of it as an encoding standard and the need to provide guidance on the creation of archival authority records.

Resource Description and Access (RDA)

A careful review of the descriptive rules in DACS and comparison with the descriptive rules contained in RDA quickly demonstrated that many of the rules in Part III of DACS had been superseded by RDA and that important archival rules (particularly those related to the creation of family names) had been included in RDA. This led to the most obvious change from DACS 2004—the removal of Part III.

RDA rules for titles provided by archivists ("devised titles") were in closer agreement with archival practices. DACS 2004 had used the term *supplied* for these titles, in alignment with ISAD(G). Recognizing the growing convergence between library, museum, and archival descriptive standards, and the predominant use of the term *devised* by companion archival standards to DACS, as well as the greater clarity of the term, the subcommittee has chosen to change the term *supplied* to *devised*.

Finally, the subcommittee considers it important that the U.S. archival community continue to monitor the development of RDA. Its reliance on entities and their linkages provides promise for informing the developing archival conceptual model and for greater cooperation between archives and libraries in the future.

Standards of the International Council on Archives

Part I of DACS was initially developed to mirror the components of the General International Standard Archival Description (ISAD[G]) developed by the International Council on Archives (ICA). Part II was designed to mirror the International Standard Archival Authority Record For Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families (ISAAR[CPF]). This structure and concordance is maintained in the revised version of DACS.

ICA has also developed standards for describing functions (International Standard for Describing Functions [ISDF]) and archival institutions (International Standard for Describing Institutions with Archival Holdings [ISDIAH]). These standards are not currently addressed by DACS.

ICA is currently in the process of developing "a single reference model for descriptive standards to enable archivists to describe different types of archival entities (archival materials, corporate bodies, persons, or families, and functions) and to document these entities in relationship to each other at particular points of time, or over time."[3] The purpose of this reference model is to bring the ICA descriptive standards into closer alignment with one another. The current revision of DACS recognizes the convergence of descriptive standards, and TS-DACS will continue to monitor developments in this area with the goal of keeping DACS aligned with ICA descriptive standards.

Encoded Archival Context and the Need for a Content Standard for Archival Authority Records

The review of the ICA descriptive standards and the development and adoption of the Encoded Archival Context encoding standard by the Society of American Archivists led TS-DACS to heavily revise Part II of DACS. Part II of DACS has been reworked to contain rules for the creation of archival authority records. Part II is broken into six chapters to align with ISAAR(CPF).

The decision to make Part II into rules for archival authority records also necessitated moving Chapters 9 (Identifying Creators) and 10 (Administrative/Biographical History) into Part I as elements 2.6 and 2.7. Element 2.7 has been refocused on information necessary for understanding the collection in hand.

Digital Records

Perhaps the single area that received the most comments from community members was the need to make DACS more relevant to modern records, which increasingly include or consist exclusively of born-digital formats. Of particular concern were rules prescribing *papers, records,* and *collections* as the collective terms describing the nature of the archival unit. Commenters felt that these terms did not adequately convey the increasingly digital format of the records. However, there was no community consensus as to what terms should be used instead. Subcommittee members considered this issue in depth and decided to revise the corresponding rule in DACS to permit local practices for new collective terms (such as *personal archives* or *personal records*). TS-DACS recommends that this issue be readdressed during the next revision of DACS.

In response to community members' requests for electronic records examples in DACS, a few such examples were added to Part I. These examples are meant to be illustrative of a growing presence of digital records in archival collections.

Examples

Another recurring theme in the community feedback was the desire for more examples to be included in DACS. The subcommittee agreed that extensive and varied examples would be a valuable help in using DACS. However, several factors pushed the subcommittee's response in a different direction. The DACS revision cycle is coinciding with that for EAD; MARC is undergoing revisions as a result of RDA implementation and will eventually be replaced; and EAC-CPF examples are just now becoming widely available. The subcommittee decided that the best way to respond to the desire for more examples would be to focus its efforts on improving and expanding DACS education offerings. The print edition of DACS retains text examples illustrating specific rules, and additional examples have been supplied as needed.

Comparison to DACS2004

Those accustomed to using DACS 2004 will have little difficulty continuing to utilize the revised DACS. DACS is now divided into two parts: Part I, Describing Archival Materials, and Part II, Archival Authority Records. The numbering schema from DACS 2004 has remained unchanged in Part I and a similar numbering schema has been developed for the revised Part II

What's New in DACS?

DACS 2013	DACS 2004
Minimum, Optimum, Added Value indicated with each element	Minimum, Optimum, Added Value indicated in Chapter 1
Encoding examples not embedded in text	Encoding examples embedded in text
Devised used to indicate titles created by an archivist	_Supplied_ used to indicate titles created by an archivist
Acronyms should be spelled out at least once	No guidance on acronyms
Abbreviations discouraged	No guidance on abbreviations
Square brackets not prescribed	No guidance on square brackets

Papers, *records*, and *collection* not prescribed for titles	*Papers*, *records*, and *collection* prescribed for titles
Part II covers Archival Authority Records	Part II covers Describing Creators
Element 2.6 discusses Identifying Creators	Chapter 9 discusses Identifying Creators
Element 2.7 discusses Administrative/Biographical History	Chapter 10 discusses Administrative/Biographical History
Part III eliminated	Part III discusses Forms of Names
Preface to 2004 edition included as Appendix A	Preface to 2004 edition
Relies on the SAA Glossary at http://www2.archivists.org /glossary	Glossary included as Appendix A
The number of crosswalks in Appendix C has been reduced	Crosswalks in Appendix C
Appendix D removed with emphasis reoriented to DACS educational offerings	Appendix D included full encoding examples

[1] Steven Hensen, comp., *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1989). The first edition was published in 1983.

[2] Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA, *Resource Description and Access* (Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2010).

[3] International Council on Archives, Committee on Best Practices and Standards, *Progress Report for Revising and Harmonising ICA Descriptive Standards*, July 4, 2012, accessed November 6, 2012, http://www.ica.org/13155/standards /cbps-progress-report-for-revising-and-harmonising-ica-descriptive-standards.html, p. 15.

[saa-ts-dacs / **dacs**

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Statement of Principles

The following statement of principles forms the basis for the rules in this standard. It is a recapitulation of generally accepted archival principles as derived from theoretical works and a variety of other sources. These include earlier statements about description and descriptive standards found in the reports of working groups commissioned to investigate aspects of archival description,[1] national rules for description,[2] and statements of the ICA Committee on Descriptive Standards.[3] In recognizing the disparate nature of archival holdings, the statement is also grounded in accepted professional practice in the United States.

Holdings of archival repositories represent every possible type of material acquired from a wide variety of sources. How archives manage and describe their holdings is rooted in the nature of the materials, the context of their creation, and two hundred years of archival theory. Archival descriptive practices have increasingly been applied to all of the materials held by archives, regardless of their provenance or method of acquisition. These principles examine the nature of archival materials and their context and reflect how those aspects are made apparent in description.

The Nature of Archival Holdings

Archival collections are the natural result of the activities of individuals and organizations and serve as the recorded memory thereof. This distinctive relationship between records and the activities that generated them differentiates archives from other documentary resources.

Principle 1: Records in archives possess unique characteristics.

Archival materials have traditionally been understood to consist of the documents organically created, accumulated, and/or used by a person or organization in the course of the conduct of affairs and preserved because of their continuing value. They most often consist of aggregations of documents (largely unpublished) and are managed as such, though archival institutions frequently hold discrete items that must also be treated consistently within the institution's descriptive system. In the course of their regular activities, individuals, archival repositories, and other institutions may also consciously acquire and assemble records that do not share a common provenance or origin but that reflect some common characteristic, such as a particular subject, theme, or form. Such collections are part of the holdings in most institutions and must be described in a way that is consistent with the rest of the holdings. All of these materials may be described using this standard.

Principle 2: The principle of *respect des fonds* is the basis of archival arrangement and description.

The records created, assembled, accumulated, and/or maintained and used by an organization or individual must be kept together (i.e., identified as belonging to the same aggregation) in their original order, if such order exists or has been maintained. They ought not to be mixed or combined with the records of another individual or corporate body. This dictum is the natural and logical consequence of the organic nature of archival materials.[4] Inherent in the overarching principle of *respect des fonds* are two sub-principles—provenance and original order. The principle of provenance means that the records that were created, assembled, accumulated, and/or maintained by an organization or individual must be represented together, distinguishable from the records of any other organization or individual. The principle of original order means that the order of the records that was established by the creator should be maintained by physical and/or intellectual means whenever possible to preserve existing relationships between the documents and the evidential value inherent in their order. Together, these principles form the basis of archival arrangement and description.

In the context of this standard, the principle of provenance requires further elaboration. The statement that the records of one creator must be represented together does not mean that it is necessary (or even possible) to keep the records of one creator physically together. It does, however, mean that the provenance of the records must be clearly reflected in the description, that the description must enable retrieval by provenance, and that a descriptive system must be capable of representing together all the records of a single creator held by a single repository.

The Relationship Between Arrangement and Description

If the archival functions of arrangement and description are based on the principle of *respect des fonds*, what is the relationship between arrangement and description? While the two are intimately intertwined, it is possible to distinguish between them in the following way. *Arrangement* is the intellectual and/or physical processes of organizing documents in accordance with accepted archival principles, as well as the results of these processes. *Description* is the creation of an accurate representation of the archival material by the process of capturing, collating, analyzing, and organizing information that serves to identify archival material and to explain the context and records systems that produced it, as well as the results of these processes.

Principle 3: Arrangement involves the identification of groupings within the material.

Arrangement is the process of identifying the logical groupings of materials within the whole as they were established by the creator, of constructing a new organization when the original ordering has been lost, or of establishing an order when one never existed. The archivist then identifies further sub-groupings within each unit down to the level of granularity that is feasible or desirable, even to the individual item. This process creates hierarchical groupings of material, with each step in the hierarchy described as a level. By custom, archivists have assigned names to some, but not all, levels of arrangement. The most commonly identified are collection, record group, series, file (or filing unit), and item. A large or complex body of material may have many more levels. The archivist must determine for practical reasons which groupings will be treated as a unit for purposes of description. These may be defined as the entire corpus of material of the creator (papers, records, or collection), a convenient administrative grouping (record and manuscript groups), or a reflection of administrative record-keeping systems (series and filing units).

Principle 4: Description reflects arrangement.

Archival repositories must be able to describe holdings ranging from thousands of linear feet to a single item. The amount of description and level of detail will depend on the importance of the material, management needs and resources of the repository, and access requirements of the users. That being the case, an archival description may consist of a multilevel structure that begins with a description of the whole and proceeds through increasingly more detailed descriptions of the parts, or it may consist only of a description of the whole. Within a given body of material, the repository may choose to describe some parts at a greater level of detail than others. A single item may be described in minute detail, whether or not it is part of a larger body of material.

The Nature of Archival Description

Archival holdings are varied in their nature and provenance, and archival description reflects this fact. If archival materials are to be described consistently within an institutional, regional, or national descriptive system, the rules must apply to a variety of forms and media created by, and acquired from, a variety of sources.

Principle 5: The rules of description apply to all archival materials, regardless of form or medium.

It is acknowledged that archival materials come in a variety of forms and media, and rules for archival description must therefore accommodate all forms and media (and the relationships between them). Inherent in the principle of provenance—that the records created, assembled, accumulated, and/or maintained and used by an organization or individual must be kept together—is the assumption that no records are excluded from the description because of their particular form or medium. Different media of course require different rules to describe their particular characteristics; for example, sound recordings may require some indication of playing speed and photographs may require some indication of polarity and color.

Principle 6: The principles of archival description apply equally to records created by corporate bodies, individuals, or families.

The documents that are the product of the functions and activities of organizations may differ in extent, arrangement, subject matter, and so on, from those that result from the activities of individuals or families. While there may be valid reasons to distinguish between them in the workflow of a repository, the principles of archival arrangement and description should be applied equally to materials created by individuals, families, or organizations.

Principle 7: Archival descriptions may be presented at varying levels of detail to produce a variety of outputs.

The nature and origins of a body of archival materials may be summarized in their entirety in a single collective description. However, the extent and complexity of archival materials may require a more detailed description of their various components as well. The resulting technique of multilevel description is "the preparation of descriptions that are related to one another in a part-to-whole relationship and that need complete identification of both parts and the comprehensive whole in multiple descriptive records."[5] This requires some elucidation regarding the order in which such information is presented and the relationships between description(s) of the parts and the description of the whole.[6]

Principle 7.1: Levels of description correspond to levels of arrangement.

The levels of arrangement determine the levels of description. However, because not all levels of arrangement are required or possible in all cases, it follows that not all levels of description are required. It is understood that description is an iterative and dynamic process; that is, descriptive information is recorded, reused, and enhanced at many stages in the management of archival holdings. For example, basic information is recorded when incoming material is accessioned, well before the material is arranged. Furthermore, arrangement can change, particularly when a repository receives regular accruals of records from an ongoing organization. In that situation, the arrangement will not be complete until the organization ceases to exist. Thus, it is more appropriate to say that description reflects the current state of arrangement (whatever that may be) and can (and does) change as a result of further arrangement activities.[7]

Principle 7.2: Relationships between levels of description must be clearly indicated.

While the actual work of arrangement and description can proceed in any order that makes sense to the archivist, a descriptive system must be able to represent and maintain the relationships among the various parts of the hierarchy. Depending on the point at which the descriptive system is entered, an end user must be able to navigate to higher or lower levels of description.

Principle 7.3: Information provided at each level of description must be appropriate to that level.

When a multilevel description is created, the information provided at each level of description must be relevant to the material being described at that level. This means that it is inappropriate to provide detailed information about the contents of files in a description of a higher level. Similarly, archivists should provide administrative or biographical information appropriate to the materials being described at a given level (e.g., a series). This principle also implies that it is undesirable to repeat information recorded at higher levels of description. Information that is common to the component parts should be provided at the highest appropriate level.

The Creators of Archival Material

An important aspect of understanding archival materials is the description of the context in which they were created.

Principle 8: The creators of archival materials, as well as the materials themselves, must be described.

Because the principle of provenance is fundamental to the arrangement and description of archival materials, it follows that the provenance, or the creator(s), of archival materials must be described as well. Except in cases in which the creator or collector is truly unknown, this means that the creator or collector of the materials must be identified and included in (or linked to) the description of the materials. In addition, the functions or activities of the creator(s) that produced the archival materials must be described. Finally, standardized access points must be provided that indicate not just the primary creator but also the relationships between successive creators, for example, the parts of a corporate body that has undergone reorganization(s). DACS includes rules for providing all of this information in a consistent way. The repository as collector does not need to be described.

[1] Working Group on Standards for Archival Description, "Archival Description Standards: Establishing a Process for their Development and Implementation," *American Archivist* 52, no. 4 (Fall 1989):440–443 (source hereinafter cited as the WGSAD Report); *Toward Descriptive Standards: Report and Recommendations of the Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards* (Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1985), 6–9, 55–59, 63–64; Wendy M. Duff and Kent M. Haworth, "Advancing Archival Description: A Model for Rationalizing North American Descriptive Standards," *Archives and Manuscripts* 25, no. 2 (1997):198–199, 203–204 (source hereinafter cited as the Bentley Report).

[2] *Rules for Archival Description* (Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1990), xi–xvi, rules 0.1, 0.2, 0.22, 1.0A1, 1.0A2 (source hereinafter cited as *RAD*); Hensen, *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts*, rules 0.3, 0.9, 0.10, 0.12, 1.0A (source hereinafter cited as *APPM*).

[3] International Council on Archives "Statement of Principles," *Archivaria* 34 (1992): 8–16; ICA Committee on Descriptive Standards, *ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description*, 2nd ed. (Ottawa: International Council on Archives, 1999), 7–12 (source hereinafter cited as *ISAD[G]*).

[4] S. Muller, J. A. Feith, and R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives,* translation of 2nd edition (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2002), 19. "An archival collection is an organic whole."

[5] *RAD*, p. D-5.

[6] The rules for multilevel description are found in *RAD*, rule 1.0A2, and in *ISAD(G),* p. 12.

[7] *ISAD(G)*, Statement I-3, p. 7.