Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 19, 2021
Virtual Meeting

Staff Report: Technology
(Prepared by Web and IT Systems Administrator Matt Black and
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Most of the activities of the Technology and Operations team falls under Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan: "Meeting Members' Needs." Our aim is to support the technologies and tools that empower our members and equip staff to deliver excellent service.

Since our last report in November 2020, we have:

- Completed our transition from Authorize.net to BluePay, an upgrade to our credit card payment services that strengthens our tools to manage orders and refunds, improves fraud prevention, avoids extra fees from NimbleAMS, and positions us to add new services to our customers in the future (such as recurring payments).

- Completed revisions to the new Dictionary of Archives Terminology site (dictionary.archivists.org), which is receiving excellent web traffic.

- Conducted a thorough and successful search for a new platform for our virtual 2021 Annual Meeting, incorporating many lessons learned from 2020. The platform we chose, Pathable, is powerful and user-friendly. Pathable also provides an integration that will allow registrants easier access to the platform.

- Completed a major review and overhaul of our membership reports, correcting errors and providing deeper insights into our membership patterns. This not only informs the strategic decisions of the Council and staff, but also allows staff to respond more quickly and accurately to data questions from members.

- Completed a new series of automated welcome emails for new members, a best practice in the industry to improve engagement and member retention. We've been unable to support this type of effort in the past due to our small staff, but our recent investments in better technology—in this case Higher Logic (SAA Connect)—make it possible to automate this type of targeted member communication.

- Reviewed and improved SAA Connect to make our Sections more visible and easier to explore and join.

Education Reports and Transcripts

We are in the final stages of this project, bringing to fruition our work to improve administration and tools for SAA Education. Poor data spread across multiple systems has plagued the Education team for years, and will soon be a thing of the past. We are already seeing huge

efficiencies for the Education team when a user requests transcript data, and in the coming months we'll be able to make robust transcript information a self-service feature for our members.

SAA's Main Website - Drupal

Drupal is the Content Management System (CMS) that hosts our main homepage and website. We are currently on the same version of the software upon which we built the site, Drupal 6. Drupal 6 has not been officially supported since 2016. For years now we have had an upgrade to Drupal 9, the current version, on our roadmap. It has been perpetually delayed for good reasons—prioritizing our new AMS, the pandemic—all related to making the most of our limited resources. We have done our best to keep the old software running in the meantime (occasionally a heroic effort!), but we are now quickly running out of time. In the past month our web host has had to isolate our site on a designated server because the old technology of Drupal 6 cannot keep pace with modern web traffic and robot-hacker attacks that target old software. This incurs an additional cost that would be better spent toward upgrading to Drupal 9. We are beginning the process of exploring an upgrade to Drupal 9, and expect the costs to be included in the FY 2022 budget.

NimbleAMS Contract Renewal

Our contract for our Association Management System (AMS), NimbleAMS, will expire at the end of May. We expect increased costs that will be reflected in the FY 2022 budget. The increases reflect both a price increase for the software license and usage increases related to how many users log in across our various websites (SAA Connect, PathLMS, Drupal, and the MySAA portal).