Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
August 11 – 12, 2014
Washington, D.C.

Staff Report: Technology
(Prepared by Matt Black)

Joint Annual Meeting

Annual Meeting preparation naturally takes a special precedence for staff work in the summer, and our technology efforts are no exception.

Online Schedule and Mobile App: This is our second year using Sched.org for the online schedule. This year we have purchased the native app versions (still among the most affordable options for event apps) for iOS and Android. Native apps perform better and use less bandwidth, so this option should improve users' experience during the conference and put less strain on the onsite wifi. The native app launched on August 4, 2014. The mobile web version, which works on any web-enabled device, has been available since the onsite schedule launched in April.

Sched.org has also made several improvements of their own since last year, and we've relied more heavily on Sched this year to manage conference details. We expect this trend to continue, as using Sched instead of MemberMax is considerably more efficient for certain types of data (e.g., room locations and event categories).

Other technology efforts related to the annual meeting include: preliminary design work for AM2015, call for programs form for AM2015, Navigator program volunteer form, digital signs (TVs) for onsite, speaker management support, Annual Meeting evaluations, and marketing/ communications support.

Listservs

The heated and high-volume discussions on the A&A List in May and June highlighted the technical limitations of our current email system, Lyris. I worked with Peter Kurilecz to set up an alternative forum for his news posts on GoogleGroups. Reducing the volume of Peter's posts in this way, as well as coordinating with him to post primarily outside business hours, has helped reduce the load on our server. Our host also moved us to a new server with a better operating system. I also worked extensively with Lyris technicians to configure our server to improve deliverability, which has also helped performance issues. All of these efforts have combined to improve performance considerably in July, with far fewer slow-downs and crashes than we experienced in June.

Group Elections

Management of group elections went much more smoothly this year than in 2013, but it still takes a considerable amount of staff time.

Infrastructure

We're working with our IT firm, AZBS, to replace our primary server this fall. We're planning to take the opportunity to upgrade not only the hardware but also some of the tools we use for remote access, management of our fileserver and internal shared drives, and server administration.

Word of the Week

Working with the Dictionary Working Group, we've launched a new email service to promote and resource work on the forthcoming *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*. We used MailChimp rather than Lyris for this project, due to its ease of use, stronger design tools, mobile-friendliness, and strong toolset for managing open lists unrestricted by SAA membership.

Main Website Redesign

Mostly, the redesign has understandably taken a backseat to Joint Annual Meeting efforts. We have, however, moved into final stages with our designer and we should be able to begin prototyping soon in the fall (which means there will finally be something meaningful to show you!).