

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

**Update on Progress Toward Council-Adopted  
Recommendations of the 2012 – 2013 Communications Task Force**  
(Prepared by Staff Members Nancy Beaumont, Matt Black, Teresa Brinati, and Anne Hartman)

**BACKGROUND**

At its August 12-13, 2013, meeting the SAA Council reviewed the final recommendations of the Communications Task Force (0813-1-III-B), created in August 2012 to advise the Council on “practical ways to enhance SAA’s communications with a focus on three areas: intended audiences, content/messages, and tools/channels,” and unanimously adopted the following motion:

**THAT the Council receives with gratitude the recommendations of the Communications Task Force,**

**THAT the Communications Task Force be disbanded with thanks, and**

**THAT the Executive Director refer the recommendations to pertinent bodies and forums for further input and implementation as appropriate and commensurate with SAA’s strategic planning tasks, and update the Council on the status of implementation at each Council meeting.**

**UPDATES**

Beaumont, Black, Brinati, and Hartman “charted” the Task Force recommendations and have met monthly to review progress toward achieving them. See pages 2-6 for “Status of Implementation of Council-Adopted Recommendations of Communications Task Force.” **Text appearing in red reflects changes since May 2014.** This chart will be updated for each Council meeting.

## Status of Implementation of Council-Adopted Recommendations of Communications Task Force (0813-1-III-B-CommTF)

Recommendation	Priority	Assigned to	Status/Notes (as of 0814)
<b>Archival Outlook [1A, 1B]</b>			
	<b>H</b>		
Implement opt-in option for receipt of electronic only.		Black	Projected implementation is <del>July</del> <b>October</b> 2014. (See next.)
Design electronic version so that each article and section is individually accessible and/or downloadable.		Brinati, Hartman, Black	Digital edition of AO launched with Jan/Feb 2014 issue using Blue Toad Publishing tools. All six issues from 2013 retro-converted in February. Digital edition allows readers to share an entire issue or specific article via email or social media. Readers can access text-only versions of articles, which also can be shared or printed. Other features: zoom-in tool, option to download a PDF version of issue, option to add notes or mark “favorite” articles.
End embargo.		Brinati, Salgado	Embargo ended with implementation of digital edition of Jan/Feb 2014 issue. (Staff will continue to monitor extent to which end of embargo may [or may not] have an impact on membership.)
<b>In the Loop [2]</b>			
	<b>H</b>		
Reevaluate style and content to focus on brevity and clarity. Specifically:		Brinati, Black, Hartman	<p>We continue to focus on brevity and clarity. In addition a new template, which debuted on April 30, provides for a better reading experience: larger text and increased spacing for those reading on desktop or laptop computers and a single-column format that allows readers to easily read and navigate on smaller smartphone screens. Ads now appear between sections rather than on the side. A handy navigation bar at the top allows readers to jump to specific sections and links are available throughout to bring them back to the top. Included are buttons to share <i>ITL</i> on social media.</p> <p>We moved to a new email service for <i>ITL</i> – Mail Chimp – which will give us detailed analytics that we will use to continue to improve and enhance <i>ITL</i> based on member preferences. <b>We have also been testing optimal times to send out the newsletter (i.e., 7:00 AM vs. 7:00 PM). We will continue to evaluate which times are performing better and adjust practices accordingly.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employ “view more” and “view less” to ensure concise visual flow.</li> </ul>			<b>We continue to make blurbs as concise as possible and provide links to further information.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider less conversational, more journalistic style.</li> </ul>			Ongoing.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discontinue “Miscellaneous” section. If item doesn’t fit in pre-defined category, either create broader or newer categories or re-evaluate if item is of sufficient importance.</li> </ul>			Discontinued in August 2013.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotate order of sections to distribute attention each receives. Consider “top story” section above others.</li> </ul>			New template facilitates rotation of sections and includes “top story.” Top stories have bigger headlines and, when feasible, images to complement text and draw readers’ attention. <b>Sections containing the most pressing information are moved toward the top of the newsletter.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move content from <i>ITL</i> to website or official blog and provide links via <i>ITL</i> to fuller content/story.</li> </ul>			Already being done. Also added to SAA website an archive of back issues of <i>ITL</i> .
<b>SAA Website [3]</b>	<b>H/M</b>		
“Tweak now, overhaul soon.”			Many minor “tweaks” are ongoing. Overhaul has begun!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resolve dual login problem.</li> </ul>	H	Black	Will be done as part of site redesign.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reorganize content for basic usability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase visibility of Search box.</li> <li>Increase visibility of social media links.</li> <li>Move most frequently used content to top of home page.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	H	Black	Initial phase of site redesign is underway. A major point not listed here is to review and improve the overall menu structure of site content, which is currently being finalized by staff. Initial work with designer is focusing on usability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As longer-term priority: Reevaluate dissemination of website content via Global Newsfeed and other RSS channels.</li> </ul>	M	Black	Redesign will move us forward on all of these issues. Major focus is on improving the site in terms of social- and mobile-friendliness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work to increase awareness of newsfeed.</li> </ul>			Included in redesign.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct content to blog featuring news content.</li> </ul>			Included in redesign.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be more judicious in use of automatic updating of newsfeed; should not include every S/RT admin update, but limit to release of “major documents from SAA office.”</li> </ul>			Site redesign will improve segmentation and accessibility of multiple feeds. We are revising our social media procedures and introducing new tools to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each “major document” release should include descriptive title metadata.</li> </ul>			Included in redesign.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve user experience for S/RT lists and microsites.</li> </ul>		Black	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make “significantly easier to find and access,” perhaps by putting direct links to landing pages in top-level site menu.</li> </ul>			Underway. Phase 1, new “nav bar” for microsites, was implemented in January 2014. Phase 2, to streamline navigation to microsites from “top” navigation, <b>was implemented in June 2014.</b> Further attention will be given to this with redesign.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase usability of content creation modules for</li> </ul>		Black	Ongoing. One small step already taken is an admin menu that

component leaders.			includes link to Drupal Manual on every microsite page.
- Encourage appropriate use of microsites. (See App E: Communication Strategy Recommendations for SAA Sections and Roundtables.)		Beaumont Liaisons	Ongoing. <b>Included Appendix E in 2014-2015 Leader Manual. Revised Records Retention Policy adopted by the Council in May 2014 indicates that records of enduring value should be posted to group microsites for capture via web crawl.</b>
<b>Aggregate Content [4]</b>	<b>H</b>		
• Create content aggregator “built into home page.”		Black	Included in website redesign.
• Use other aggregators for Twitter, RSS feeds, new and/or less widespread communication channels.		Black	Included in website redesign.
<b>Elected Leader Social Web Presence [5]</b>	<b>M</b>		
“Encourage [but do not require] elected leaders to develop their presence on various social media platforms.”			
• President to continue to use <i>Off The Record</i> .			Ongoing. Twenty posts (Bell and others) between 8/22/13 and 4/10/14.
• VP/PE to engage in similar activities.			Roe engaged via <i>OTR</i> post on volunteering, periodic FB and Twitter posts.
• Leaders to create Twitter accounts, listen to and participate in discussion of SAA issues via Twitter.			
<b>Annual Meeting Social Media [6]</b>	<b>L</b>		
Extend use of blogs and other social media pertaining to Annual Meeting content to correspond with requirement for a Host Committee blog. Program Committee to determine what is appropriate.			
• Example 1: PC blog populated by attendees’ session reviews and comments. See MAC example ( <a href="http://2013.wordpress.com/category/program-committee/">http://2013.wordpress.com/category/program-committee/</a> ).			
• Example 2: “Designated Tweeter” program, in which volunteer provides “official” live-tweet of all sessions.			
<b>Use of Twitter [7]</b>	<b>L</b>		
Continue/expand practice of “signing” tweets from official SAA account.			
<b>LinkedIn, Flickr, Facebook [8]</b>	<b>L</b>		
• Establish timetable for revisiting functionality and			

reevaluating usefulness of these three platforms:			
- Are these communication channels assets to SAA?			
- How can we best use them?			
- Consider in light of recommendation 5 re: aggregation.			
<b>The American Archivist [9]</b>	<b>M</b>		
		Brinati	<b>High Priority:</b> SAA received a termination notice from MetaPress, the hosting service since 2007 for <i>The American Archivist Online</i> . The agreement to provide services to SAA will expire on 9/30/14. There is additional transition support beyond that date for a period of 120 days, so online content could continue to be accessible without interruption through 1/28/15. <b>Paul Conway, Amy Cooper Cary, Brad Houston, and Bethany Anderson comprise the group investigating a new solution. An RFP was dispatched to 14 vendors on July 21. Proposals are due August 29.</b>
• Include links on landing page to HathiTrust and JSTOR as well as MetaPress to enhance accessibility.		Brinati Hartman	Completed in November 2013.
• Reevaluate Reviews Portal and Briefly Noted:		Brinati Hartman Cooper Cary Orchard	Portal reevaluated in Summer 2013, changes implemented in September 2013: "Briefly Noted" removed in Summer 2013 and content added to "Reviews" section in portal.
- Retool Reviews Portal to blog format?		Brinati Hartman Cooper Cary Orchard	Awaiting website overhaul.
- Promote Reviews Portal more broadly.		Brinati Hartman Cooper Cary Orchard	Regular promotion of Reviews Portal in <i>ITL</i> and on Facebook began in October 2013.
- Resolve issue that Briefly Noted is not linked from any page and is "invisible" without URL.		Brinati Hartman	As noted above, "Briefly Noted" removed in Summer 2013 and content added to "Reviews" section in portal.
• Online supplement:			
- Promote and expand if it is continued.			Since September 2013, Supplement to Vol. 74 promoted in <i>AO</i> , <i>ITL</i> , <i>Off the Record</i> , website.
- Consider benefits of different platform.			Ongoing.
• Promote various methods of interactivity with AA authors:		Brinati, Hunter	

- Continue, and build on success of, special discussion sessions at Annual Meeting.		Brinati, Hunter	Per August 2013 Editorial Board meeting, will continue to build on success of AM article discussions and explore new opportunities. Brown bag lunch discussion on forthcoming journal article slated for Thursday of 2014 Joint Annual Meeting week in DC.
- Consider AA article “book club” on SAA blog.		Brinati, Hunter	Will do!
- Consider author talks and conversations on Reddit, Twitter, or live web chats.		Brinati, Hunter	Will do!
<b>SAA Listservs [10]</b>	<b>M</b>		
Find a solution to generation of “out of office” replies.			Done.
- Does a fix require back-end changes?			-
- Or are user-end reminders the only option?			-
<b>Section/RT Communication Best Practices [11]</b>	<b>L</b>		
Distribute CTF’s “Communication Strategy Recommendations for Sections and Roundtables.”		Beaumont, Craig	
- To staff office for consideration.			Ongoing.
- To sections and roundtables (via list and LOAF?).			Initial distribution via Leader List in April 2014; included on Leadership Resources web page and in <i>Guide for SAA Leaders</i> (annually).
- To TF-Member Affinity Groups.			Done.