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Standards Committee: Proposal to Create a Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards
(Prepared by Co-chairs Dan Santamaria and Meg Tuomala)

The Standards Committee—in collaboration with the Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Description (TS-EAD), the Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Context (TS-EAC), and the Schema Development Team (SDT)—recommends the consolidation of TS-EAD, TS-EAD, and SDT into one Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards (TS-EAS).

This proposal is an outgrowth of the EAD3 revision proposal. In addition to substantive changes to the EAD schema, DTD, and maintenance model, the technical subcommittees charged with maintaining archival data structure standards (TS-EAD, TS-EAC, and SDT) propose their restructuring into a single group, the Technical Subcommittee for Encoded Archival Standards (TS-EAS). The Standards Committee supports this proposal.

BACKGROUND

Background is available in **Appendix A**, Proposal to Subsume TS-EAD, TS-EAC, and SDT into a Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards (TS-EAS), submitted by the chairs of TS-EAD, TS-EAC, and SDT.

This proposal was originally part of the full submission packet compiled by TS-EAD for their revision proposal. A brief summary is included below, quoted from the TS-EAS proposal.

> *We propose that SAA charge a single Technical Subcommittee for Encoded Archival Standards, subsuming TS-EAD, TS-EAC, and the SDT. That group, TS-EAS, will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of EAD and EAC-CPF, including all schemas and related code, as well as the development of future companion standards, including Encoded Archival Context - Functions. Its membership will be sufficient to encompass the necessary domain expertise for each standard and schema development, and will include broad representation from SAA and the international archival community.*

DISCUSSION

The Standards Committee supports the restructuring of the technical subcommittees proposed in Appendix A, which would combine TS-EAD, TS-EAC, and the Schema Development Team (SDT).

TS-EAD, TS-EAC, and SDT are closely interrelated, both formally (the co-chairs of each subcommittee are *ex officio* members of the others and all SDT members are *ex officio* members of the subcommittees) and through other professional and informal networks. Both the chairs of the technical subcommittees and the chairs of the Standards Committee feel that the current structure is at best inefficient and ultimately not well-suited to ensuring the necessary level of coherence and integration across encoded archival metadata standards.

Combining the technical subcommittees is a step toward greater integration and is intended to allow for better planning in the revision process. It would also be a step in reducing administrative overhead for the Standards Committee, for the SAA Council and staff, and in the SAA appointments process. (With the new SAA/RBMS joint task forces, the Standards Committee currently has nine technical subcommittees and joint task forces reporting to it.)

The composition of the committee, appointment process, length of terms, and SAA's general ability to maintain balanced representation and regular infusions of new people has been discussed at several TS-EAD and Standards Committee meetings, over email and informally, but no formal consensus has yet emerged. Much of the discussion has focused on the length of terms for members and the renewal of those terms.

<u>We recommend that the Council carefully consider options for size, composition, and length of terms for membership of this restructured committee.</u> Questions to consider include:

- What is the technical expertise required to make contributions to maintenance of encoding standards?
- How can we best balance the need for technical skills and the need to ensure broad and diverse representation of SAA membership and the international archives community?
- Can we develop strategies that ensure that new, talented archivists with appropriate skills can be included in these groups?
- What is the appropriate term length for an appointment to this technical subcommittee?
- Would staggered appointments, such as those currently utilized by TS-DACS, be workable for this group?

In addition, ICA's Expert Group on Archival Description (EGAD) is currently working to develop a conceptual model for archival description. We need to ensure formal ties and communication mechanisms between EGAD and TS-EAS.

Appendix B includes a draft charge for the subcommittee to help facilitate the Council's consideration of these questions.

There have been several discussions, in particular at the TS-EAD/TS-EAC joint meeting in Washington in August 2014, about SAA's ability to maintain technical standards using the current model, which essentially relies on volunteers. The Standards Committee has received no specific proposals addressing this particular area, although it agrees that this is an area that warrants further consideration by the SAA Council, the Standards Committee, and the technical subcommittees.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Description (TS-EAD), the Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Context-Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families (TS-EAC), and the Schema Development Team (SDT) be combined into a single technical subcommittee, the Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards (TS-EAS).

Support Statement: Combining TS-EAD, TS-EAC, and SDT is a step toward greater integration and more efficient maintenance of the encoding standards that SAA maintains. In addition, it will reduce administrative overheard for the Standards Committee, the SAA Council, and the SAA staff.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: The proposed restructuring will make work related to Goal 3.1 ("Identify the need for new standards, guidelines, and best practices and lead or participate in their development") more agile and efficient and thus will also serve Goal 4.1. ("Facilitate effective communication with and among members").

Fiscal Impact: The restructuring is likely to save volunteer and staff time.

Proposal to Subsume TS-EAD, TS-EAC, and SDT into a Technical Subcommittee for Encoded Archival Standards (TS-EAS)

Problem Statement:

Since 2010, when SAA revised the charge of the Standards Committee and its related standards development and maintenance procedures, the two archival metadata encoding standards maintained by SAA have been the responsibility of separate technical subcommittees, with a Schema Development Team (SDT) existing as third, separate entity responsible for maintenance of the actual schemas and related code.

During those four years the Technical Subcommittee for Encoded Archival Description (TS-EAD) and the SDT have undertaken a thorough revision of EAD, which will be completed this summer. Many of the changes to EAD were in response to the development of the EAC-CPF schema for which the Technical Subcommittee for Encoded Archival Context (TS-EAC) is responsible.

We are committed to the principle that EAD and EAC-CPF (and any future encoded archival metadata standards) are closely related and should be maintained in as coherent and coordinated manner as possible. Toward that end TS-EAD, TS-EAC, and the SDT are closely interrelated, both formally (the co-chairs of each subcommittee are ex officio members of the other and all SDT members are ex officio members of the subcommittees) and professionally/personally. However, our experience as chairs of these committees has led us to conclude that the current structure is at best inefficient, at worst unsustainable, and ultimately not well-suited to ensuring the necessary level of coherence and integration across encoded archival metadata standards.

Problems with SAA's current infrastructure for maintaining encoded archival metadata standards include the following:

- Every effort has been made to keep open the lines of communication between the groups, but we have not always been successful.
- Some members overlap between groups.
- Some members regard the work of the other groups as irrelevant to theirs.
- The revision of EAD has resulted in feedback regarding possible changes to EAC-CPF but it has been impossible to consider changes to both simultaneously.
- Having three groups means three times the effort spent by the committee chairs on reporting to the Standards Committee and three times the effort by SAA to maintain the rosters and charges of the three groups. Considered in the context of the massive amount of work that has gone into revising EAD, that duplication of bureaucracy is not an inconsiderable burden.
- As work on Encoded Archival Context – Functions begins in the near future, all of these problems will be further exacerbated.

- Experience has shown that more roster flexibility is necessary for all groups. Contributors come and go throughout the standards development and maintenance process.

Goals

We regard the following as critical goals for the ongoing maintenance and further development of SAA's encoded archival metadata standards.

- Achieve greater efficiency and more effective communication
- Decrease duplication of effort
- Maintain similar look, functionality, and detail across documentation (e.g. tag libraries)
- Expedite development of encoding standards to harness early energies and creativity and to ensure an easy process
- Deliver schema revisions to fix bugs or make minor adjustments on an as-needed basis
- Welcome feature requests on an ongoing basis
- Distribute work more evenly amongst committee members
- Conduct development work in a transparent, publicly accessible forum (GitHub).
- Move toward sharing elements common to multiple standards

Proposal

We propose that SAA charge a single Technical Subcommittee for Encoded Archival Standards, subsuming TS-EAD, TS-EAC, and the SDT. That group, TS-EAS, will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of EAD and EAC-CPF, including all schemas and related code, as well as the development of future companion standards, including Encoded Archival Context - Functions. Its membership will be sufficient to encompass the necessary domain expertise for each standard and schema development, and will include broad representation from SAA and the international archival community.

TS-EAS will have a minimum of 15 members appointed by the SAA vice president, at the recommendation of the Standards Committee or the TS-EAS co-chairs. Appointments will be for terms of 5 years, and may be renewed. Additional members may be added as particular expertise is required. [*Note:* Per TS-EAD Chair Michael Rush: "This requires further discussion. These are just my first thoughts."]

The Technical Subcommittee for Encoded Archival Standards will have co-chairs, one a member of SAA, the other a member of the international archival community. Appointed by the SAA vice president, the co-chairs will serve as the primary contact between TS-EAS, SAA, the Standards Committee, and other related organizations. They will submit necessary reports and proposals to the Standards Committee, coordinate meeting logistics at the SAA annual meeting and elsewhere, establish TS-EAS priorities and agendas,

coordinate dissemination of news from TS-EAS, work with related SAA section and roundtable leaders, and oversee and support the work of various TS-EAS standard leads.

Within TS-EAS, a member will be designated by the co-chairs as the lead for each standard being maintained or developed. Each standard lead will be responsible, with the support of the co-chairs, for soliciting and compiling comments, logging bugs, leading discussion of proposed changes, articulating and justifying changes to the community, and coordinating as necessary with other standard leads. There will also be a lead for schema design who will be responsible, with the support of the co-chairs, for coordinating work on schemas and related code and maintaining appropriate GitHub repositories. The TS-EAS co-chairs will also designate a committee member to serve as a secretary, responsible for taking and distributing meeting minutes. Additional ad hoc subgroups within TS-EAS may be formed on a project basis (e.g. a tag library editorial team).

Anila Angjeli, Co-chair, Technical Subcommittee on EAC-CPF
Terry Catapano, Chair, Schema Development Team
Michael Rush, Co-chair, Technical Subcommittee on EAD
Bill Stockting, Co-chair, Technical Subcommittee on EAD
Kathy Wisser, Co-chair, Technical Subcommittee on EAC-CPF

Draft Charge for Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards (TS-EAS)

Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards (TS-EAS)

I. Purpose

The Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards (TS-EAS) is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of EAD and EAC-CPF, including all schemas and related code, as well as the development of future companion standards, including Encoded Archival Context - Functions. Its membership will be sufficient to encompass the necessary domain expertise for each standard and schema development, and will include broad representation from SAA and the international archives community.

II. Committee Selection, Size, and Length of Term

The technical subcommittee shall be composed of between fifteen and twenty members (including two co-chairs) appointed by the SAA Vice President / President-Elect for staggered five-year terms so that a minimum of three individuals are appointed by the Vice President each year. A minimum of eight committee members will be members of SAA to ensure a majority of the committee membership. All members shall demonstrate significant knowledge of and experience with archival schemas generally, and with EAD and EAC-CPF specifically. The chairs and members of TS-EAS who are members of SAA may be reappointed for one consecutive term. The chairs and members who represent the international archives community may be reappointed for two consecutive terms.

The Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards co-chairs will be appointed by the SAA Vice President / President-Elect, and serve as the primary contacts between TS-EAS and SAA, the Standards Committee, and other related organizations. One co-chair will be a member of SAA and the other will be a member of the international archives community.

Ex officio members of TS-EAS shall include the following if they are not regular members of the subcommittee:

- Co-chairs of the Standards Committee
- Chair or co-chairs of the EAD Roundtable
- Representative from ICA Experts Group on Archival Description or Committee on Best Practices and Standards

III. Reporting Procedures

The co-chairs of TS-EAS shall report at least annually to the chairs of the SAA Standards Committee. They will coordinate meeting logistics at the SAA Annual Meeting and elsewhere, establish TS-EAS priorities and agendas, coordinate dissemination of news from TS-EAS, work with related SAA section and roundtable leaders, and oversee and support the work of various TS-EAS standard leads. If extramural funding is obtained by SAA, the co-chairs shall provide all necessary narrative reports to the SAA office in order that the reporting requirements of SAA and the funding source are met.

IV. Duties and Responsibilities

Within TS-EAS, a member will be designated by the co-chairs as the lead for each standard being maintained or developed. Each standard lead will be responsible, with the support of the co-chairs, for soliciting and compiling comments, logging bugs, leading discussion of proposed changes, articulating and justifying changes to the community, and coordinating as necessary with other standard leads. There will also be a lead for schema design who will be responsible, with the support of the co-chairs, for coordinating work on schemas and related code and maintaining appropriate GitHub repositories. The TS-EAS co-chairs will also designate a committee member to serve as a secretary, responsible for taking and distributing meeting minutes. Additional *ad hoc* subgroups within TS-EAS may be formed on a project basis (e.g., a tag library editorial team).

VI. Meetings

TS-EAS shall carry out its charge primarily via electronic mail, regular mail, and conference calls. It shall meet at the SAA Annual Meeting and as necessary with funding from SAA or from extramural sources (with prior approval by the SAA Council).