Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
November 10, 12, 2021
Virtual Meeting

Annual Report: Crisis, Disaster, and Tragedy Response Working Group (CDTRWG)
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PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

During its inaugural year, the Crisis, Disaster, and Tragedy Response Working Group (CDTRWG) has created three subgroups to address the areas of the working group's charge and goals identified by the predecessor Tragedy Response Initiative Task Force as part of that group's final recommendations. The entire CDTRWG has met monthly via Zoom since January 2021, with each subgroup holding separate regular meetings (typically once per month). These three subgroups are:

- **Toolkit and Outreach subgroup:** Primary responsibility for reviewing, updating, expanding, and managing "[Documenting in Times of Crisis: A Resource Kit.[1]](#)"

- **Collaboration and Funding subgroup:** Exploring areas of potential collaboration between the CDTRWG and allied organizations, and creating a regularly-maintained list of funding opportunities and support resources to be consulted by CDTRWG members (and potential future volunteers) when assisting organizations and communities documenting crises.

- **Assistance and Training subgroup:** Exploring the feasibility and options for developing, implementing, and maintaining a standing response network for organizations and communities documenting crises.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Toolkit and Outreach subgroup:
The subgroup has completed an initial review of the existing Documenting in Times of Crisis: A Resource Kit and identified any broken links, out of date information, errors, or inconsistencies. These edits are being addressed. Moving forward, the subgroup will explore areas of expansion and additions to the resource kit, particularly as concerns trauma-informed collecting and management, resources and recommendations regarding born-digital collecting (particularly for

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[1] https://www2.archivists.org/advocacy/documenting-in-times-of-crisis-a-resource-kit

social media), copyright and licensing concerns, privacy considerations and informed consent forms, and other relevant topics.

Collaboration and Funding subgroup:
The subgroup is creating a vetted list of people and organizations that will eventually be available online for archives and archivists in need. The subgroup is also working to establish the process for vetting the organizations and how often the list should be reviewed and updated.

Assistance and Training subgroup:
This year, the working group developed the Crisis Collecting Assistance Team (CCAT), a program to support archival workers, cultural heritage institutions, and community members documenting or experiencing a crisis, disaster, or tragedy in their community or the community they serve. The CCAT will be the realization of a recommendation set by the predecessor to the Working Group, the Tragedy Response Initiative Task Force, to develop a response team. This work has thus far included the creation of FAQs, a draft press release, and expectations and templates for working group members responding to CCAT inquiries.

Once launched, the CCAT will be available via a webform. A member of the working group will respond within 48 business hours to discuss questions, provide support, and refer users to relevant resources. Members of the working group have tentatively signed up for two week shifts on a shared calendar, with there always being a primary and secondary member to take the lead on conducting initial reference interviews to assess assistance needs.

NEW ACTIVITIES

Toolkit and Outreach subgroup:
The subgroup is interested in eventually hosting focus groups and/or pursuing other forms of feedback solicitation (such as surveys) relevant to specific areas of the resource kit and ongoing and/or emerging needs of archivists and allied professionals and organizations engaged in crisis documentation. Ideally, these conversations would include individuals who have used the resource kit in real-world applications.

Collaboration and Funding subgroup:
The subgroup plans to reach out to the SAA membership to solicit suggestions of relevant colleagues and organizations for the subgroup to contact regarding the development of their resource list. No official contact will be made with an organization without SAA approval.

Assistance and Training subgroup:
Future work for this subgroup will be to solicit additional experts in varying subject areas (web archiving, oral histories, trauma-informed practices, etc.) to assist the CDTRWG team in supporting colleagues who contact CCAT. We will start soliciting volunteers from within the Society of American Archivists but hope to expand beyond to make this a cross-organization effort.

SAA STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 1: Advocating for Archives and Archivists
The CDTRWG addresses goals 1.1 and 1.3 of SAA's strategic plan by providing resources (both online and through individual experts) to cultural institutions in need of support during a crisis. These resources, expertise, and assistance ensure that archives and archivists are better prepared to advocate for the historical and cultural significance of documenting crises and traumatic events in an accurate and inclusive manner, as well as to advocate for the resources (financial, staff, and personnel support services) necessary to conduct this essential work.

Goal 2: Enhancing Professional Growth
The CDTRWG address goals 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 of SAA's strategic plan by developing and providing access to resources, individual expertise, and professional networks of archivists and allied professionals in order to begin forming a community of practice around the needs and concerns of archives and archivists documenting crises. These resources are provided free of charge to both SAA members and the general public alike. The CDTRWG also aspires to continue developing resources and educational opportunities, particularly in the form of an expanded resource kit and response team. The latter may at some point provide opportunities for volunteers, thereby contributing to goal 2.1 of SAA's strategic plan.

Goal 3: Advancing the Field
The CDTRWG addresses all points of Goal 3 of SAA's strategic plan by building on the efforts of its predecessor, the Tragedy Response Initiative Task Force, and marshalling the expertise and experience of SAA members and allied organizations and individuals to create resources and shared understanding of how best to support archives and archivists faced with documenting a crisis. The CDTRWG will continue this work through the expansion and maintenance of Documenting in Times of Crisis: A Resource Kit, the development of the CCAT, and the fostering of collaborative partnerships with allied sections within SAA and external associations, organizations, institutions, practitioners, and scholars.

Goal 4: Meeting Members' Needs
This Working Group evolved from a request from the Diverse Sexuality and Gender Section to provide support for members' needs. The working group has responded to requests forwarded from SAA staff as well as reaching out to communities affected by tragedy, most recently the community impacted by the Miami Surfside Condo collapse. The CDTRWG is also committed to addressing Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan by providing mechanisms for feedback in the development of further resources and assistance in the area of crisis collecting, particularly as concerns trauma-informed collecting and management and cultural competency/sensitivity regarding diverse approaches to grief and trauma.

2021 SAA Annual Meeting - Appointed Group Meeting

Number of Attendees: 11 CDTRWG members and Council Liaison, 25 additional attendees.

CDTRWG's open meeting took place July 23, 2021 via Zoom. Each of the three CDTRWG subgroups presented information and updates about the work they have been pursuing since the Working Group first convened in January 2021.

The Toolkit and Outreach subgroup provided information about their initial review of the existing "Documenting in Times of Crisis: A Resource Kit" contents, areas that have been identified for near-term updates, and plans for continued expansion and addition for the Resource Kit in areas including trauma-informed collecting and staff management.

The Collaboration and Funding subgroup shared a Google spreadsheet of resources and allied organizations in the areas of crisis collecting and relevant funding opportunities and solicited additions to this resource list by attendees. The list will be made available through the CDTRWG microsite for submission of additions, though attendees were also encouraged to contact the CDTRWG chairs or SAA offices with suggestions and additions. This subgroup also discussed their future plans to connect directly with allied organizations, funding entities, and colleagues with experience in crisis collecting to increase awareness of the work of the CDTRWG and identify additional resources for institutions and organizations documenting crises in their own communities.

Finally, the Assistance and Training subgroup discussed plans for the future launch of the Crisis Collecting Assistance Team (CCAT) and solicited volunteers to serve as points of referral for specific questions that may be received by the CCAT core team of working group members. These areas may include but are not limited to: social media archiving, oral histories, and trauma-informed management.

The working group was encouraged by the level of attendance and engagement at this first public meeting of its tenure. Thanks to the efforts and networks of working group members, there were several international attendees who brought valuable insights about the ways in which the CDTRWG can pursue relationships with international groups and organizations engaged in crisis collecting - from both practical and theoretical perspectives. It was further encouraging to engage with domestic attendees who expressed an interest in the ongoing work of the CDTRWG and continuing their use of resources developed by the working group, as well as potentially contributing to future work and calls for feedback from SAA membership.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

The working group is very engaged with its charge, with the Group as a whole meeting monthly and most sub-committees meeting in a separate monthly meeting as well. The number of meetings proved onerous, so moving forward, the subgroups of the Working Group will combine their separate monthly meetings into a single time slot where the entire group will meet, then the subgroups will split up into breakout rooms to work on subgroup activities. This will reduce the number of meetings each month and allow for other times throughout the month to be spent on moving initiatives forward.

The actual launch of CCAT is our biggest near-term goal. After that we are looking to expand CCAT team participation to SAA members outside the working group. In order to both maintain

a sustainable practice and to reach the broadest audiences, we will pursue volunteers from affiliated cultural organizations identified by our predecessor task force and the Collaboration subgroup. This year's working group was appointed solely by the then-SAA Vice President, but we are looking to the fall to solicit new committee members and hope that our outreach efforts and work so far will solicit an excellent pool of committee members/future leaders.

The previous task force gathered an initial list of allied organizations and the Collaboration and Fundraising subgroup has gathered additional resources. Thanks in part to the international roster of the working group, we have access to some (particularly European and Commonwealth) groups doing similar work, with many members from those groups engaging in our appointed group meeting. We look forward to sharing information among the groups and to exploring ways we might partner in the future.