

**Society of American Archivists Description Section Business Meeting  
Meeting Minutes**

Virtually hosted through Zoom

Wednesday, July 29

3:30pm-4:30pm CT

All interested participants will need to register via Zoom Webinar Registration Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMlceuhpjgrH9cczhJSivE6FLnn35lPnmSB>

Note-taker: Sarah Jones, Secretary

~176 attendees

- I. Welcome, Cyndi Shein, outgoing Chair of the Description Section
  - A. Land acknowledgement for Southern Paiute
  - B. This year has highlighted the systemic racism throughout the country, and brought significant loss of life due to police violence and the COVID-19 pandemic
  - C. Housekeeping: All participants are muted. Please send questions for presenters in Q&A box, and use the chat for comments.
  - D. Description Section updates: renewed collaboration with TS-DACS committee, continue work on revising standing rules, continued to publish the newsletter - *Descriptive Notes* (3 articles for increasing access to formerly enslaved individuals, implementing the Native American Protocols, addressing oppressive language in archival description), launched description portal.
- II. Announcements
  - A. **Processing Manual Portal** (*Scott Kirycki, Web Liaison*)
    1. Web Liaison for last 1.5 years
    2. Portal was just getting started; inspired by the collection management section and wanted to develop a collection of resources that could be used by the archival community for describing content.
    3. Soft launch of portal earlier this year with materials from members of the section; received more that needs to be added. Call is still open for more documentation.
    4. Link to portal landing page:  
<https://www2.archivists.org/groups/description-section/description-section-documentation-portal>
    5. Collecting documentation in all formats (Lib Guides, github repositories, webpages, PDFs, etc.). Links to complementary resources as well.
    6. Started a page for inclusive description, building on this next year with the incoming steering committee.
- III. Updates
  - A. **Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards [TS-EAS]** (*Mark Custer*)
    1. Maintains two XML encoding standards currently (EAD (collections) EAC-CPF (creators) <https://github.com/SAA-SDT>)
    2. Relatively new subcommittee, formed in 2016; 20 members in 5 different time zones!
    3. Participated in the SAA Early-Career member program, appointed Jessica Perkins from Archives of American Art
    4. Agreed to explore a new schema for Functions

5. Release of EAD3, version 1.1.1
6. EAC-CPF major revision process continued (to be released 2021)
7. EAD/EAC reconciliation project
8. New webinar series, thanks to the Outreach team!
9. Assertion Description (Ex: if there are conflicting birthdates for a person. Who made a statement? When? Based on what supporting evidence? Optional feature planned for the major revision of EAC-CPF)
10. Coming soon: EAC-CPF call for comments before the end of the calendar year
11. August 13, 2020 TS-EAS open meeting 11am-12:30pm CT  
<https://sched.co/dQd6>
12. **Q:** Would the birthdate adjustment allow for erroneous birthdates? LOC example of satirically 1807-1742 PDQ Bach **A:** YES  
**Q:** How much collaboration/coordination is happening with BIBFRAME and linked data initiatives? **A:** Not directly with Bibframe right now for EAC but we are making significant changes to support linked data encodings in the relations section.

**B. Technical Subcommittee on Describing Archives: A Content Standard [TS-DACS]**  
(*Sue Luftschein & Dan Michelson*)

1. What is TS-DACS? One of the permanent subcommittee of Standards Committee
2. Overall responsibilities: ongoing maintenance and development of DACS, ensure compatibility, promote knowledge and use of
3. Also participated in the Early Career program this last year and upcoming year.
4. Launched new user friendly web version of DACS; making changes is much easier using GitHub version
5. Extensive work in support of the proposed Rights Statement for Archival Description (DACS top priority change). Most recently (a few days ago) put out a call for feedback and are particularly looking for feedback from smaller institutions. This will make finding aids easier to share under current US copyright laws (the intention of most repositories).
6. Submitted public comments on the draft ontology for Records in Contexts (RIC-O)
7. Updated documentation and instructor guide for DACS Part I course
8. Launched Twitter campaign in support of new DACS principles
9. Clarified process for creating PDF and print versions of DACS with SAA Publications
10. **Q:** Any updates about the approval or adoption of the TS-DACS music subject supplement to DACS? **A:** Recommended for endorsement by SAA, believes it is endorsed by SAA at this time.

**C. Social Networks and Archival Context [SNAC]** (*Jerry Simmons*)

1. Jerry is also the National Archives and Records Administration external liaison to SNAC, and SNAC Operations Coordinator and lead instructor for SNACSchool training program.
2. [What is SNAC?](#) A cooperatively maintained resource for the description of CPF entities interrelated to one another and to the historical resources that provide evidence of their lives and work. Serves as a platform for sharing labor intensive work, for connecting CPF entities, and puts holdings of repositories within context of another repository

3. Added new members to the cooperative since the pandemic began (and more and more people were working remotely).
4. University of Virginia Library and NARA are co-leaders of the cooperative. Working groups lead the majority of the day-to-day activities of SNAC. SNACSchool team develops and delivers official training programs and events throughout the year. Large increase in programming in 2020 (due to increased demand).
5. [SNACSchool](#) offered monthly, free, all virtual. Actively onboarding new datasets, extracted data from EAD-encoded finding aids and OpenRefine for batch editing. ArchivesSpace plugin coming in 2020.
6. **Q:** IF our institution is already a member, how do you find out who the liaison is? Are liaisons the only people in an institution who work with the cooperative?  
**A:** Get in touch with Jerry and let him know the institution and he can tell you who that is. Anyone can be an editor and go to SNACSchool and participate.  
**Q:** Additional details on ArchivesSpace SNAC plugin? **A:** Mark Custer can share more about that. There is a [working plugin](#) right now, but it is still being revised. Wait for ArchivesSpace update with changes to agent module (v.2.8). Similar to LOC import; still questions about syncing data between the two systems.  
**Q:** Can individuals join SNACSchool? **A:** Yes! It can help start the ball rolling for your institution to join, but independent researchers can join as well.  
**Q:** How do you retain one person's constellation while looking for another to compare? **A:** Follow up with Jerry.

**D. SAA Council Liaison report** (*Audra Eagle Yun*)

1. Next council meeting isn't until August 3, 2020
2. June 30 approved the budget with a FY net loss of \$54,000. Anticipate loss of income due to COVID-19 pandemic. How to address this loss: Zero out on travel, digital only American Archivist (January 2021) and Archival Outlook (May 2021), ending pilot funding for sections, and not filling vacant positions.
3. Following the statement on Black Lives in Archives over 900 people joined June 11 town hall, and the July 24 follow up session had over 300 attendees. Both are recorded and available online. Next meeting is August 7 and is in the Annual Meeting in Sched.
4. Encouraged everyone to RSVP ahead of time for sections,
5. August 9 - Audra's term ends. Pleasure to represent this section to Council. Steven Curley is an incoming liaison. [ae Yun@uci.edu](mailto:ae Yun@uci.edu)
6. No questions.

**E. Introduction to and words from incoming Descriptive Section Chair** (*Katie Duvall*)

1. Thank you to Cyndi, has been a thoughtful and organized leader this year, and thanks to members rotating off the section.
2. **Election Results**
  - a) Kate Madison (Vice Chair/Chair-Elect), Will Clements (Secretary), Kelly C. Bolding (Member-at-Large) Welcome everyone!
3. **Vision/agenda for upcoming year**

- a) Focusing the group on inclusive and anti oppressive descriptive practices. A lot of guidelines have been created but there is still a way to go for our description systems and descriptions. How? The committee will be working on how we can move forward with this. The portal is a start, but we can godfather with learning and engagement with the wider section. We are all faced with different professional situations but the Description Section should be a resource to enable people to step forward. How best to focus the time and energy. Compliment and not duplicate work of other groups. Standing rules, documentation portals, and a plug to run for the positions next year.