

FROM THE CHAIR
Gordon Daines

I hope that you are all looking forward to an exciting annual meeting in Cleveland, Ohio. The Description Section meeting will be held on Thursday August 20th from 3:00 to 4:30 pm. Following our business meeting, we will have several interesting presentations. Kathy Wisser and Anila Angjeli will discuss the description of functions work that TS-EAC is working on, Karin Bredenberg will give a report on the continuing activities of the eARD project out of Sweden, and Section leadership will report on the survey of descriptive practices that they conducted last year. We hope to see many of you there.



Image courtesy of BYU Photo

On a personal note, I have thoroughly enjoyed serving on the Description Section steering committee. It has been exciting to watch the evolving landscape of description and to think about how we can impact that landscape. I hope that you are all actively involved in using the second edition of *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*, reviewing EAD3, and thinking about the potential of linked data. Description touches every aspect of the archival enterprise and we need to make sure that the standards and tools that we are using enable us to meet our ultimate goals.

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FROM THE VICE CHAIR

Jennifer V. Mitchell

Greetings from the Vice-Chair! Summer is fast approaching which means that the SAA 2015 is coming soon. I am very excited about all of the programming and workshops being announced. We have a good slate of presenters for the Description Section meeting this year and there are many fascinating presentations in the offing and I think we will all learn a lot.

I have really enjoyed learning more about descriptive practices via the Description Section Survey results that Gordon has shared. One particularly positive outcome I am pleased to announce is that this summer the Description Section will be hosting a portal for sharing processing manuals. This will be an opportunity for archivists from all different types of repositories that deal with all types of records to share their processing practices with their colleagues. This will be an excellent resource and be useful for students, new professionals, and veterans alike. Please stay tuned for more information and procedures as we work out the details and start preparing your submissions! See you in Cleveland!

SECTION LEADERSHIP

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Gordon Daines

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Newsletter Editor

Alexandra A. A. Orchard

NEWSLETTER EDITOR TRANSITION

Alexandra A. A. Orchard

I am honored and excited to begin my term as Description Section newsletter editor! Many thanks to the Section leadership for selecting me, and to Olga Virakhovskaya for her fantastic stewardship, and help during this transition.

I look forward to keeping the section up-to-date on the latest description-related news, events, and practices. Please feel free to send me suggestions and comments at alexandra@wayne.edu.

THREE YEARS AS AN EDITOR

Olga Virakhovskaya

Dear Descriptive Notes readers:

It's been an honor and a privilege to serve as the Descriptive Notes editor for the past three years. The field of archival description underwent a number of truly revolutionary developments in the past few years including introduction of DACS2 and RDA, the birth of ArchivesSpace, EAC-CPF, SNAC, NAAC, to name a few exciting new tools and standards.

As the newsletter editor, I tried to keep everyone current with new projects, initiatives, and conferences. I also did my best to attract the best minds in the field to write for Descriptive Notes: Barbara Aikens, Kate Bowers, Daniel Pitti, and Katherine Wisser were just some of the talented people that graciously contributed their time. Thank you!

I tried to inject humor when and where appropriate. Rebecca Goldman's witty cartoons and Michael Bucci's humorous sketches were a source of entertainment by both archivists as well as others outside the profession.

It was a pleasure to put a newsletter together. It was also a source of inspiration and a great opportunity to learn as I was looking for interesting content.

Thank you for reading and don't forget to write!

NEWS AND NOTES

Dalhousie University Archives

Elisabeth Mann Borgese Digitization Project

John Yolkowski and Kevin Hartford

The Dalhousie University Archives is finishing a one-year project to digitize the archival holdings of Elisabeth Mann Borgese (1918-2002). The daughter of German novelist Thomas Mann, Borgese was a key figure in the negotiations for the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). She also founded an NGO dedicated to ocean governance and development, the International Ocean Institute (IOI), before settling in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada as a Professor of Political Science at Dalhousie University.

The project team (consisting of a project manager, a digitization specialist, and a student assistant) digitized 2,000 folders of archival material, and created over 120,000 high quality TIFFs. This represents about one-third of the collection's 182 linear feet (55.5 meters).

The TIFF files were compiled into access-quality PDFs with searchable text, which were then embedded online into [the Archives' finding aid](#). This, along with the nearly 700 photographs digitized, documents the fascinating professional and personal lives of a longstanding oceans expert, educator, and advocate.

This project was funded by a \$100,000 donation to the Archives made by an associate of Borgese's to ensure that her work be preserved and made available to researchers worldwide.

Introducing The BitCurator Access Project

Alex Chassanoff

In October 2014, the [BitCurator](#) project team began work on a new Andrew W. Mellon grant-funded initiative exploring mechanisms for providing access to born-digital materials for institutions. [BitCurator Access](#) focuses on the development of software that simplifies access to content on raw and forensically-packaged disk images. Provision of access to both disk images and associated metadata will enable collecting institutions to easily incorporate these objects into access environments in a manner that reflects the original order and relevant environmental context.

The BitCurator Access project is exploring three approaches to providing access to disk image content.

- (1) Setting up a server that holds the full disk images and then lets end users dynamically walk the directory tree and access the individual folders and files;
- (2) Exporting both the files from the disk and the metadata using forensics tools (in the form of DFXML) and loading the files and DFXML into a more traditional collection access environment so that people can search and navigate the metadata;
- (3) Using an implementation of the [Emulation-as-a-Service](#) architecture to allow users to interact with bootable disk images (or disk images that can be

mounted within emulated environments) via an emulator accessible within a webpage.

This project is also proposing a fourth area of investigation related to access - the development of tools to aid in redacting sensitive data from disk images and other digital collections.

We have enlisted an [advisory board comprised of digital archivists, technologists, and forensics experts](#) to provide technical guidance on development efforts and to make recommendations on practical implementations. BitCurator Access will conclude in September 2016.

To learn more about BitCurator and the use of open-source digital forensics tools and methods in archives, see our white paper here: [From Bitstreams to Heritage: Putting Digital Forensics into Practice in Collecting Institutions.](#)

Request for Feedback: TS-DACS

Gordon Daines

The Technical Subcommittee on *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (TS-DACS) has received a revision proposal related to clarifying the use of the term “level” in *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*. The change proposal and a comment form are available at <http://www2.archivists.org/standards/DACS/revisions>.

Community feedback is a critical element to standards review and TS-DACS strongly encourages you to participate by reviewing the change proposal and sending us your feedback. Feedback will be accepted through **Friday June 19th, 2015**.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT TOOL USER DOCUMENTATION

Collection Management Tools Roundtable

The Collection Management Tools Roundtable (CMTRT) Steering Committee created a Documentation Portal on their microsite that aggregates user-created

documentation regarding planning, implementing, and using collection management tools (ArchivesSpace, Archivists' Toolkit, Archon, Collective Access, Microsoft Access or another homegrown tool) into a single online resource. The documentation portal may be found here:

https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B-0a277FLP36b2hxX1JFb1Ywd00&usp=drive_web

Source: Jillian Cuellar's CMTRT Listserv email

CALLS FOR SPEAKERS, POSTERS, & REVIEWERS

MARAC 2016: Speakers

Pittsburgh, PA April 14-16, 2016

The Program Committee is now accepting session proposals for the Spring 2016 meeting to be held April 14-16, 2016 in Pittsburgh, PA. The conference theme is Archival Confluence: Connecting Theory and Practice.

Please visit the following Google form for more information and to submit session proposals: <http://goo.gl/forms/loyQoO1DRR>.

Proposals will be accepted until **July 10, 2015**.

Source: <http://www.marac.info/upcoming-conferences>

DC-2015: Metadata and Ubiquitous Access to Culture, Science and Digital Humanities

São Paulo, Brazil September 1-4, 2015

The need for structured metadata to support ubiquitous access across the Web to the treasure troves of resources spanning cultures, in science, and in the digital humanities is now common knowledge among information systems designers and implementers. Structured metadata expressed through languages of description make it possible for us to 'speak' about the contents of our treasure troves. But, like all human languages, our languages of description both enable and isolate. The push to break out of the isolation of the metadata silos in which professionals inevitably design, implement and manage metadata in order to discover the intersections of our treasure troves drives much of today's discourse and emerging practice in metadata. The emergence of massively integrated Web presences such as Europeana and the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) along with the reshaping of public access globally

through mechanisms such as Linked Data and schema.org drive our conversations, our excitement, and our fears.

Professional Program Deadlines: Best Practice Posters & Demonstrations

Submission Deadline: 14 July 2015

Author Notification: Ongoing

The non-peer reviewed Best Practice Posters & Demonstrations track provides professionals working on innovative solutions to metadata problems in their organizations with the opportunity to seek community feedback and guidance and to showcase their developments and outcomes. Submissions are encouraged from metadata practitioners, researchers, and organizations including libraries, museums and archives. While the track is not peer reviewed, the posters and demonstration resources as well as their extended abstracts will be citable and become part of the conference's permanent record.

Submissions to the track are accepted through 14 July 2015.

Submit now at <http://purl.org/dcevents/dc-2015/cfp>.

Source: <http://dcevents.dublincore.org/IntConf/dc-2015/schedConf/>

SAA Reviews Portal: Reviewers Needed

Submissions are ongoing

The Reviews Portal changes frequently, hosting new content in [Archival Technologies and Resources](#) (a list of websites useful for archivists working with digital archival materials) and [Reviews](#) (reviews of digital and digitized archival content, technologies, and related resources).

You're invited to contribute a review; contact Reviews Portal Coordinator [Alexandra Orchard](#) for more information.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

ARCHIVES Cleveland 2015

Planning on attending SAA this year? There are numerous description-related workshops, presentations, and events, both before and during the conference. Below are some highlights with a primary focus on archival description.

Monday, August 17

9:00am – 5:00pm

- PREMIS Tutorial [DAS] – Pre-conference Workshop

Monday, August 17 and Tuesday, August 18

9:00am – 5:00pm

- Encoded Archival Description (EAD 3) – Pre-conference Workshop

Tuesday, August 18

9:00am – 5:00pm

- Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) – Pre-conference Workshop

Wednesday, August 19

5:00pm – 7:00pm

- Encoded Archival Description Roundtable
- Metadata and Digital Object Roundtable

Thursday, August 20

11:00am – 12:00pm

- 101- Archives Confidential: Enacting Privacy Policies and Requirements in Digital Archives
- 106- Yes, I Google Better: How Technology Has Changed Archival Reference
- 109- ICA Expert Group on Archival Description: Interim Report on the Development of a Conceptual Model

12:15-1:30pm Open Forums/Brown Bag Lunches

- Guidelines for Reappraisal and Deaccessioning Lunch and Learn
- The Secret Life of Records
- ArchivesSpace and Archivematica Integration

1:45-2:45pm

- 202- Can I Trash This? Managing Physical Media Collections Post-Digitization
- 202- Can I Trash This? Managing Physical Media Collections Post-Digitization
- 203- Marriage, Separation, Divorce: Managing Collections During Organizational Change

3:00 – 5:00pm

- Description Section (Business Meeting and Presentations)

Friday, August 21

10:00am – 11:15am

- 308- Just Take Those Old Records Off the Shelf: Reconciling Legacy Digital Content with Current Preservation Practice

11:30am – 12:30pm

- 401- Arrangement, Description, and Access for Digital Archives
- 404- Digital Archivists and Information Technologists: A Collaborative Challenge
- 410- Identity Management Metadata in Digital Archives and Repositories

3:15pm – 4:15pm

- 506- The Archives as Data Set: Creating Opportunities for Big Data Through Archival Access and Description
- 507- Out of the Frying Pan and into the Reading Room: Approaches to Serving Electronic Records

Saturday, August 22

8:30am – 9:45am

- 601- Don't Break It on Tuesdays and Other Tales: ArchivesSpace in Practice
- 604- Email Archiving in a Curation Lifecycle Context
- 609- Graduate Student Paper Presentations

10:00am – 11:00am

- 701- But Where Is It? Access Tools for Born-Digital Records
- 704- A Different Type of Animal? Advocating for Natural Science Archives

**MAC Fall Symposium: Hard Skills for Managing Digital Collections in Archives
Minneapolis, MN September 17-19, 2015**

The Fall 2015 Symposium is titled “Hard Skills for Managing Digital Collections in Archives” and will be led by Bertram Lyons, consultant with

AVPreserve and archivist and digital assets manager of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

**MARAC Fall 2015
Roanoke, VA October 8-10, 2015**

Source: <http://www.marac.info/upcoming-conferences>

**CIMA 2015 Utah/Nevada Joint Fall Caucus
TBD, Dixie State University St. George, Utah**

Source: <http://cimarchivists.org/conferences/>

**iPres 2015
November 2-6, 2015 Chapel Hill, NC**

iPRES is the premier international conference on the preservation and long term management of digital materials. The conference will present research and innovative practice in digital preservation. Specific topics include: institutional opportunities and challenges, infrastructure (organizational and technological) opportunities and challenges, frameworks for digital preservation, preservation strategies and workflows, innovative practice, and training and education.

iPRES 2015 is being structured around two key strands – research and innovative practice. The purpose of this distinction is to promote work from both a research and innovative practice perspective and work that is clearly rooted in the actual experience of institutions undertaking digital preservation. We expect that there will be work that manages to encapsulate both of these strands.

The conference will include session types such as full and short papers, posters and demonstrations, panels, workshops, and tutorials.

Source: (<http://ipres2015.org/>)

ASIS&T 78th Annual Meeting: Information Science with Impact: Research in and for the Community
November 6-10, 2015 St. Louis, MO

Information science research is inspired by, and designed to, address the needs of various practice communities. Whether researchers investigate the implications of new information technologies in hospitals, or explore best practices for managing collections in academic libraries, the impact of information science research in communities is significant. Information science research shapes policy decisions, informs organizational practices, and changes the lives of individuals. Research designed to contribute to society, culture, the economy, the environment, or other practice contexts outside academe is at the heart of information science research. Research findings, for example, can alter the records management practices of small, local community groups or they can change the ways that large, multi-national companies share information across digital networks. The potential for impact in a discipline that is linked to diverse information settings, populations, technological contexts, and service orientations is a defining feature of information science research.

This year's conference theme provides an opportunity for information science researchers – including academics and practitioner researchers – to discuss the impact of their research on industry, on government, on local/national/global community groups, on individuals, on information systems, on libraries/museums/galleries, and on other practice contexts. The theme highlights the introduction of a new conference focus on Applied Research, which recognizes that basic research in information science is also inspired by, and/or connected to, information practice contexts.

Of particular interest to Description Section members are the following four themes:

Impact on Individuals: information behavior; information retrieval; human-computer interaction; social media use; information literacy; etc.

Impact on Society: digital citizenship; cultural engagement; archival preservation; policy development; copyright; intellectual property; infometrics;

information access; etc.

Impact on Organizations: information architecture; knowledge management; competitive intelligence; digital curation; records and archives management; etc.

Impact on Systems & Technology: cloud computing; digital libraries; automatic indexing; social tagging; classification; semantic web; database design; web usability; etc.

Source: (<http://www.asis.org/asist2015/am15cfp.html>)

**Interested in
Contributing?**

Contact the newsletter
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