Meeting Minutes

August 31, 2001
Washington, DC

Cheryl Stadel-Bevans called the meeting to order by welcoming everyone to the meeting. She then introduced Kris Kiesling who encouraged section members to submit proposals for next year's meeting in Birmingham, Alabama. Then Tom Battle, Council Member and Council Liaison to the ERS, spoke. He asked us to let him know if there were any concerns or issues that he could take to Council for us.

Cheryl then handed out ballots for the election of a new Vice-Chair / Chair-Elect and a new Steering Committee member. The candidates introduced themselves to the group. Geof Huth is the new Vice-Chair / Chair-Elect, and Phil Bantin is the new Steering Committee member. Cal Lee became the new Section Chair at the end of the meeting. Jennifer Jacobs agreed to become the new newsletter editor and Harold Thiele the new webmaster. Cheryl thanked outgoing steering committee members Tom Ruller, Anne Marie Phillips, and Chuck Thomas for their service to the section.

The members in attendance then broke up into three groups to discuss topics of concern to the ERS. Nan Kunde led a group in a discussion about standards. Cal Lee led a group in a discussion about legislation. Nancy Deromedi, Rosemary Pleva Flynn, and David Read led a discussion about membership needs and information sharing among members. At the end of the meeting, each group reported back to the section about what they had discussed. Summaries of these are provided below.

Several announcements were made at the end of the meeting. Steve Hussman encouraged people to attend the annual ECURE conference in Arizona. Rosemary Pleva Flynn announced the formation of a new discussion list for ERS members and that a survey of members' interests would be available soon. Cheryl Stadel-Bevans reiterated the need for session proposals, offered the section's assistance in developing them, and asked that those seeking ERS endorsement submit them to the section by October 1.

The following are summaries of the discussions of the three breakout groups during the meeting:

Legislation

Discussion Leader: Cal Lee
Participants: Christopher Frey, Geof Huth, Paul Lasewicz, Cal Lee, Mike Miller, Cheryl Stadel-Bevans

Most of our discussion focused on intellectual property concerns, specifically those related to the anti-circumvention provisions of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act.

We agreed that one helpful first step in addressing these issues could be an informal white paper laying out some of the specific technical preservation measures that could be problematic under the DMCA. Though the text of the DMCA itself is fairly vague on such points, we can draw some guidance for interpretation from recent case law and the recent document issued by the U.S. Copyright Office.

One format that we discussed at some length is PDF, which is publicly documented quite well, but is still owned by Adobe. In order to advance past the common and divisive "PDF vs. not-PDF" debate, it would be helpful to identify the specific sorts of elements that may or may not raise issues of proprietary control. Can I reverse engineer every functional component of Adobe Acrobat? If not, what are the limits?

There are many other formats that should also be addressed, but PDF does provide one interesting case of a well-documented and (at least to some extent) open format that is still tied to a specific vendor. What implications does this have for the preservation strategies we can adopt in the current legal environment? Are there specific provisions we can advocate for model license agreements - maybe an "archival public license" - to which vendors could agree while still maintaining their ability to make a profit in the short term?

We discussed two general ways to follow up on this discussion:

- Those with ideas for particular preservation measures that would be appear to be either prohibited or simply not adequately addressed by the DMCA could post them to ERECS-L. Cal Lee volunteered to put together a list of these problem areas and then take an initial pass at a very rough draft document.
- Developing a continuing forum for discussion on this particular issue. Cal Lee will send out an announcement asking those interested to email him with their contact information. If we achieve enough of a critical mass, we may want to set up a separate mailing list for more specific discussions of guidance documents, position statements or other related activities. Since these issues obviously are not going away any time soon, we might want to keep a working group going for a while.

Membership Needs and Information Sharing

Discussion Leaders: Nancy Deromedi, Rosemary Pleva Flynn, and David Read
Participants: Phil Bantin, Richard Boyden, Mark Conrad, Jean Deken, Nancy Deromedi, Rosemary Flynn, Howard Lowell, David Read, Jill Tatem

The discussion focused on three main topics: a membership survey, dissemination of electronic records information, and the content to be shared.

Membership Survey:

During the 2000 section meeting in Denver, the idea was to survey membership for "basic" information, i.e. name, contact information, and area of "specialization." Nancy Deromedi and David Read created a survey that they presented to the group. After some discussion, the group decided that they wanted to review the survey and possibly make it a bit broader. The current form of the survey can be found at http://www.umich.edu/~deromedi/ersurvey.htm. After the working group has finalized the survey, it will be distributed via the ER section listserv, Archives & Archivists listserv, and the new Yahoo! Groups list (see below). If you have any comments or suggestions concerning the survey, please send them to either Nancy Deromedi or David Read.

Dissemination of Electronic Records Information:

Yahoo! Group

At the 2000 meeting there was concern expressed about the ER section listserv and the time it took for messages to be posted. For discussion purposes, a Yahoo! Group was started (originally it was E-Groups). The group has not been widely publicized at this point. Before a general announcement is made about the group on the Archives & Archivists listserv, we would like comments on the group site, its functionality and possible uses, and any concerns about the site, Yahoo, and ownership of information, etc.

To subscribe to the list, send a blank email (no subject line and no body text) to:
SAA-ERS-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

You will receive a subscription confirmation message. Simply reply to this message to complete your subscription. You will then receive a welcome message with information on how to post messages and how to unsubscribe from the list. As part of keeping the group service free, Yahoo! inserts ads at the bottom of each message. List members can either follow the links or ignore them as they so choose.

While the group is unmoderated, you must be a member of the group in order to post or read messages. Membership is not limited to members of SAA so please encourage others who are interested in electronic recordkeeping to join the group as well. All messages are archived and can be accessed by members through the website's URL: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SAA-ERS

To access the group site, you will need a Yahoo! ID and password. Visit the Yahoo! Groups main page (http://groups.yahoo.com) for more information on obtaining an ID. This ID is only for logging into the website. All messages go to the email you specified when you subscribed.

Section Newsletter

The ER section has a new newsletter editor, Jennifer Jacobs. To make the newsletter an effective tool for disseminating information, we need to actively feed articles and information to her about electronic recordkeeping projects, conferences, and happenings in our archives and organizations.

Section Website

The group agreed that we need to add information and value to the section website. We discussed several ideas including pointing to Cal Lee's source (http://www-personal.si.umich.edu/~calz/ermlinks/) or developing something on our own based on the content areas below. We also thought we need to put a process in place for the "ERS endorsement" of links posted to Cal's site if we go that route. The exact approach will be discussed further among the working group members before a decision is made. The group essentially agreed that the website would contain the following three sections in one form or another:

- recommended resources
- other resources
- on-going discussion

ER Content:

Some of the content areas or needs that we talked about during the section meeting included:

- defining a core group of information or recommended resources (a place to point IT people with basic articles and information)
- big list/clearinghouse for sites that we would like to add to Cal Lee's website, another website, or a site developed on our own. Key here is adding value to the links through our evaluation of the selections and providing annotations.
- discussions on a variety of topics as needed
- talking points, a list of points that should be discussed now or in the future
- bibliographies
- policies
- project reports
- conference reviews
- online glossary of ER archival terms
- business process modeling

We decided that various working group members would be responsible for developing or organizing the content information for the topics above. Assignments will be made at a future date. If you would like help with a particular area, please let one of the group members know.

Where these areas should be "housed" (the ER section web site or the Yahoo! Groups listserv) needs to be decided.

Down the road:

We had a very good discussion at SAA. We thought this year we really need to concentrate on building the working group first by profiling our membership and providing an initial service to the membership and to SAA as a whole through the ERS website sources (clearinghouse). In the future, we would like to build our services to the membership through endorsement of policies and development of model policies. (Phil Bantin referred to the CIC group here which has worked mainly through e-mail to draft and endorse a Electronic Records Standards document that, hopefully, will be used by the Big Ten Universities). See: http://www.umich.edu/~deromedi/CIC/cic.htm or http://www.indiana.edu/~libarch/ER/NHPRC-2/cic-er-policy.pdf to download the policy.

Standards

Discussion Leader: Nancy Kunde
Participants: Bruce Ambacher, Terry Baxter, Garth Clarke, Fynnette Eaton, Pat Galloway, Jerry Handfield, Steve Hussman, Randy Jones, Janice Krahn, Nancy Kunde, Margaret Merrick, Jonathan Nelson, Richard Pearce-Moses, Betsy Pittman, Sarah Polirer, Rose Roberto, Tom Rosko

Topic 1 - What types of standards efforts are undertaken by which groups?

The group talked about the variety and number of standards making efforts currently underway the difficulty of knowing about them. The group suggested that one project that might undertaken by the Electronic Records Section is the establishment of a clearinghouse on standards. It was also noted that the SAA Standards Committee is in need of liaisons from

each SAA section. The liaison would assist the committee in identifying standards projects as well as being a contact point when the Standards Committee needs individuals with expertise on electronic records issues to review and/or comment on proposed draft standards.

Recommendations:

1. The E-records section should consider establishing a standards clearinghouse and
2. Appoint a liaison to work with SAA Standards Committee

Topic 2 - Related to topic # 1 the need to identify all the standards making associations / groups that are working in areas of interest to or directly impact the work of archivists and records managers. Two projects were discussed in relationship to this topic:

Bruce Ambacher has provided the following information with regard to an effort that he is working on: There are two follow up efforts resulting from the OAIS Reference Model, The French space agency, CNES, is leading an effort to develop a template for electronic records/digital data ingest (accessioning). NARA and the British space agency are leading an effort to develop a self assessment "package" whereby an archives could self-certify itself as an OAIS compliant archives meeting the conditions, standards, and guidelines for operating an archives. As the NARA point for OAIS related activities, I am seeking to learn about any certification criteria, self-evaluation guides, best practices, or similar efforts that could be cited or incorporated into a certification package. We are hopeful that this initiative can be completed within a year. This is an international effort. The project needs to address a variety of areas: administration, delivery requirements, preservation, and others. The goal is to establish benchmarks by which to certify programs managing space data.

Request: Bruce asked for assistance from the group on this effort. He can be reached at bruce.ambacher@nara.gov.

Mark Conrad described an NHPRC funded grant project the goal of which is to develop good electronic records practices for long term preservation and access to e-records. The description of the project from the NHPRC web site is as follows:

The Global Industry Interagency Group, Woburn, MA$199,998 for its Good Electronic Recordkeeping Practices Project to pull together from the best available knowledge and practices Good Electronic Records Practices for the long-term preservation of and access to electronic records. (2001-032)

Further details about the work of GERA, Global Electronic Records Association are available from the following web site: http://www.erecordscentral.org/GERA/GERAPublicWebsite/index.htm

Individuals interested in the work of GERA should contact:

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Topic 3 - **The need for a common vocabulary.**

Richard Pearce-Moses talked about the need for a core set of archival and records management terms when discussing electronic records issues. He mentioned the efforts by a project in Alabama and the work of the Canadian Information Management Forum.

This would also be an invaluable collaborative project for archivists, records manager, library professionals and others to engage in.

Topic 4 - **SAA/ARMA collaborative standards making effort.**

Under the auspices of the ARMA Standards Development Committee, a collaborative standards making effort has been launched. The project is titled, Conversion and Migration Criteria for Records Keeping Systems. During SAA meeting some members of the Task Force were able to meet, and suggestions were made for additions to the scope statement for the project. Nancy Kunde outlined the work of the task force and encouraged those that would like to participate as either writers or reviewers to let her know. She can be reached at nkunde@library.wisc.edu or phone 608-262*3284. Individuals can also officially sign onto the Task Force by clicking on the 'standards' link on the ARMA web site, www.arma.org and completing the Call for Participation Form.

Kunde noted that the project is a large one, and relates to a number of other ongoing electronic records initiatives. The hope of the project is to establish some baseline criteria for conversion or migration projects that could be readily adopted by a variety of organizations working with electronic records.

Minutes prepared by Cheryl Stadel-Bevans, Cal Lee, Rosemary Pleva Flynn, and Nancy Kunde

Submitted by Cal Lee, Chair, Electronic Records Section.

Page last updated: Tuesday, April 29, 2003