Module Proposal – January 2014

Putting Archival Descriptive Standards to Work: Introduction to Encoded Archival Context – Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families (EAC-CPF)

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Theme, purpose and scope: *Introduction to EAC-CPF* is envisioned as an illustrated guide for understanding the purpose of Encoded Archival Context – Corporate bodies, Persons and Families (EAC-CPF) standard, its general structure, its relationship to other national and international standards, and its impact on descriptive practices in the future. It will serve as a companion guide to the Tag Library for those considering the implementation or adoption of the standard.

Format and length: The publication will be between 80-90 pages long and will include descriptive commentary on specific sections of the structure standard as well as examples. It will be issued as part of the Trends in Archives Practice Series, in both print and epub format and will be matched with companion modules, *Implementing DACS* and a similar module on EAD3.

Background: As part of an on-going effort to increase awareness and understanding of the new standard, Encoded Archival Context – Corporate bodies, Persons and Families (EAC-CPF), this manual will extend the reach of the standard beyond workshops and presentations. Increasing attention is paid to national and international efforts to coalesce aggregated strategies for the implementation of the standard both in the United States and in collaboration with the international audience. In order for American archivists to be active members in shaping the future of these initiatives, this manual will serve as a supplement to and extension of the existing dissemination strategies to engage the larger archival community. It will include a basic explanation of the standard, contextualized with examples and options available and the impact of choices. It will include a history of the development of the standard, including early efforts at Yale University and Toronto, early literature written around the concepts and Beta version of the standard, and the formation of the current standard during the period between 2007 and its final release in 2010. It will talk about EAC-CPF in juxtaposition with companion national and international standards, both those focusing on content such as DACS, ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF) and structure standards such as EAD and MARC. In the latter, it will discuss the logic behind the separation of various descriptive components and the impact of that separation on descriptive work. This last point will transition into a

deeper and more fundamental discussion of the impact of EAC-CPF on existing descriptive practices and the challenges and opportunities that EAC-CPF offers the archival community, including how it fits into the Linked Data movement.

Audience: This publication is intended for all archivists interested in learning about EAC-CPF in a textual example-rich format. It is also intended to ground EAC-CPF in the framework of existing standards and to answer some of the questions of how this will alter and improve archival descriptive practices for the future.

Value to the archival community: EAC-CPF holds great promise to the archival community through national and international efforts but will only be successful if individual archivists understand and prepare their own descriptive output in a way that is conducive for harvesting and enhanced data techniques. A baseline understanding of the standard is essential for that objective. It will also serve as an excellent teaching tool for archival descriptive courses in graduate programs and for SAA continuing education workshops.

Relationship to existing archival literature: Publications on the new standard have been limited to date. An article, "Describing Entities and Identities: The Development and Structure of Encoded Archival Context – Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families" in *Journal of Library Metadata* (Wisser, 2011) provides a brief overview of the standard and then focuses on the object of description and its distinction in the structure standard. Additional writings on the beta version of the standard and on the use of EAC-CPF also exist. For example, a special edition of the *Journal of Archival Organization* is forthcoming that focuses on case studies to bring together a variety of approaches to the use of the standard. A foundational work has yet to be published and there are indications that such a publication is wanted. While drafting this piece, care will be taken to align its content with that of companion pieces.

Provisional Outline:

1. Introduction to Archival Description
    a. EAC-CPF as a component of archival description
    b. The history of development of EAC-CPF in the context of archival description development (includes early literature around the standard and an evolving sense of what the standard does)
    c. Archival description as a dynamic and growing prospective in the 21st century
2. Describing entities and identities: the basic structure of EAC-CPF and descriptive possibilities
    a. EAC-CPF: an introduction to its structure
    b. Relationship to ISAAR(CPF) and DACS 2nd edition
    c. Identity
    d. Description

     e. Relations
     f. Multiple Identities: one in many, many in one
     g. Control
     h. Alternative Set
3. EAC-CPF and Other standards
     a. Relationship with EAD
     b. Relationship with MARC Authority
     c. Relationship with MARC bibliographic
     d. Relationship possibilities with other cultural heritage standards
4. Impact of EAC-CPF on descriptive practices
     a. Separating the description of content and the description of context
     b. Changing the way content description is approached
     c. Changing the way context description is approach
     d. Relationships with Linked Data movement
     e. The future of descriptive practices & EAC-CPF
     f. Areas of exploration still needed
5. Appendices
     a. Bibliography/Further readings/Resources
     b. Full examples of EAC-CPF with commentary

Publications Editor Note: This module proposal by Katherine Wisser could potentially complement "Implementing DACS" by Cory Nimer (proposal approved by Publications Board in 2013) and another on EAD (potential author considering preparing a proposal). These three modules then could be clustered together as Putting Descriptive Standards to Work.