Annual Report – Privacy and Confidentiality Section – 2018-2019

The Steering Committee met each month, with a phone call coordinated by Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect Dr. Lydia Tang.

Work continued on the bibliography, with location at our Wordpress site: https://privacyandconfidentiality.wordpress.com/bibliography/

It’s organized by topic (Educational Resources, Web Resources, Government Records, Health Records, Legislation/Policy). We are looking to update the bibliography, and members may contact any of the Steering Committee members about this. The leadership called for submissions to the bibliography and

There was a certain amount of discussion in regards to the microsite. Most action in previous years on the microsite, and when we have had copious blog entries, has been when more high profile privacy issues have dominated the news. This year was more of a low hum, constant, yet not loud. I do wonder whether the prevalence of data breaches, the disregard of corporations, and the fact that so many people have now been at least peripherally hacked has led to an acceptance of privacy constantly being under attack. I wonder if we are having data breach fatigue. Whatever the case, whatever one calls it, hacking, breaches, misuse of electronic data – it’s wrong. We who work with records need to remain especially vigilant and speak out when this happens.

Following the successful 2018 collaboration with Human Rights Archives Section at a joint annual meeting, the leadership of this section explored a wider range of efforts to support other sections and bring matters of privacy and confidentiality in records to wider audiences. We communicated with the Records Management section on what ultimately proved not to be a joint meeting concept. We did, however, learn that efforts outside of regular or annual meetings may be good for addressing specific or timely topics. Such collaborations may take place more through social media platforms and we expect to continue this under the new Steering Committee.

On January 28, the Section posted a reminder to our membership of Data Privacy Day. This “celebration,” is unfortunately becoming more of a warning as more data is compromised from more quarters than ever before. It should be taken as a reminder that the safety and security of information is more under attack than ever and that the archivist has an increasingly important place in safeguarding the sensitive information of individuals and institutions.

Nick Wojick resigned halfway through the year and halfway through his term. We thank Nick for his service and contributions.

The leadership worked earlier this year with representatives of the SAA Science, Technology, and Health Care Section on a matter involving DNA records in medical archives. That Section was seeking input and support on organizing a mini-Task Force of experts relating to DNA records in medical archives to craft an issue brief on the sensitivity of DNA record misuse, particularly relating to the reuniting process of migrant children with their deported parents.

We discussed this at length at our November meeting and continued the discussion into December. Polina Ilieva, a member of that section’s Steering Committee, requested that we as a section respond with feedback by December 12th. We contributed our thoughts on this matter regarding records and DNA.

During the elections for the section’s 2019-2020 leadership, DiAnna Hemsath (University of Nebraska Medical Center) was elected to a 2 year term, while Daniel McCormack was elected to a one year interim term. Other business involved amending the Standing Rules to solidify the position of Past Chair in a third year as part of the leadership while adding an additional member to the Steering Committee.

A major research project spearheaded by Vice Chair, Dr.Lydia Tang, CA, involved creation of a survey on access restrictions. That survey was intended to determine, among other items, the types of collections subject to restrictions, communications relating to restricted collections, as well as issues surrounding oversight, governance, and monitoring.

A total of 144 responses were received from the membership. Section members contributed assistance in distilling the results from the aggregate responses. This survey was discussed in more detail later in the Section’s annual meeting in a presentation by Lydia Tang. At some point in the future, the findings from this survey may be further discussed in an article; however that will be left to Dr. Tang.

Attendance exceeded 100 members from both sections, but did not appear to have been more than the numbers present at the joint P&C/HRA section meeting in 2018. The Section held a joint annual meeting with the Security Section. A major research project spearheaded by Vice Chair, Dr. Lydia Tang, CA, involved creation of a survey on access restrictions. That survey was intended to determine, among other items, the types of collections subject to restrictions, communications relating to restricted collections, as well as issues surrounding oversight, governance, and monitoring. Dr. Tang presented results of the survey. Presentations were made by Cal Lee on the subject of redaction tools, while James Havron provided an update on the ever-changing landscape of the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation and it effect on information providers and custodians both in Europe and beyond. Both presentations were well received, and the Section thanks Messrs. Lee and Havron for their efforts.

At this time I would like to thank the members of the leadership for their work on managing the business of the section throughout the year. In particular, I would like to single out Dr. Tang for her initiative and organizational abilities. We were kept moving forward due to her efforts and I am pleased that she will continue her work as Section Chair. I also want to note the work of Past Chair Heather Oswald. Heather provided not only institutional memory for the Section, but was highly instrumental in helping set our direction and maintain our focus, and I am grateful for her wise counsel.

I would also like to thank our two primary SAA contacts, Felicia Owens and Courtney Chartier. As our Council liaison, Courtney provided an important bridge between our focus and the workings of SAA. Through her, this Section received at all times accurate, relevant and timely information that, above all, showed that our work is valued by the profession and encouraged us to pursue our work with diligence on behalf of our colleagues and those whose information we hold.

Felicia handled well the difficult and trying details of governance matters – and this section had many of them this year. Each time we had a seemingly difficult question or when we had missed a detail, Felicia instinctively found the correct answer or showed us the right approach. I will never cease to be amazed at her breadth of knowledge and expertise and am always grateful for her advocacy and understanding.

We are always looking for feedback and involvement from Section members on topics of interest. As always, members who would like to be more involved with the Section may contact any of the Steering Committee members.

During the past year, your leadership included:

Chair, Daniel McCormack, CA

Vice-Chair/Chair-elect, Dr. Lydia Tang, CA

Steering Committee, Rachel Gattermeyer, Nicholas Wojick, and Katrina Windon

Student Intern, Nicolette Hall, and

Immediate Past Chair, Heather Oswald.

Respectfully submitted

Daniel McCormack, CA

Past chair (now Steering Committee member)

SAA Privacy and Confidentiality Section.