

## Introduction

Since 1970, the publication arm of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) has published more than 200 books. This has allowed the organization to contribute to ongoing archival scholarship and reach archival professionals around the world. As the archival profession is broad, publishing efforts at SAA should strive to reflect the cross-section of society, varied types of repositories and records that archivists work in and with. As such our goal is to conduct an audit of the active SAA book publications to take stock of what areas are over-represented and under-represented within the program. In 2016, the SAA Publications Board, led by Krista Gray, Anna Trammell, and Christopher J. Prom, conducted a survey of how members of the archival profession accessed and used SAA's book publishing program.<sup>[1]</sup> This audit is a continuation of that mission to better understand how it can best serve the profession. Over the year, the project team has looked through the catalog of active titles to further understand what titles, themes and contributors are found within the collection to reach audiences. This audit will aim to set expectations and increase knowledge production, regardless of employment status or titles, in the necessary areas. Initial results from this audit are provided below to be used by the Publications Board as we consider new publishing expectations that might be pursued over the coming years.

## Methodology

- **Audit Instrument Development:** Through an iterative process, the project team formulated the initial audit questionnaire through initial guidance by Publications Board Editor, Stacie Williams. Using existing data sets provided by SAA staff such as the *Publications History Report*, sales reports and the SAA Online store, the project team conducted an initial inventory of SAA books including active book/module titles and issues of *The American Archivist*. This initial inventory determined question categories and as well as limitations given that authors, editors and contributors would not be surveyed. After the audit instrument was drafted, it went through a review process that included gathering feedback from Abigail Christian, Assistant Director of Publishing, Amy Cary, Editor of *The American Archivist* and SAA Publications Board members during a board meeting in December 2022. Feedback from archival practitioners helped in determining a comprehensive set of questions and responses that accurately represented the complexity of the profession as well as seeking guidance from the Census II Report. This report, released by Makala Skinner and Ioana Hulbert from ITHAKA S+R in August of 2022, sought to assess the archival field as it pertains to the archival profession around areas of salary and education standards<sup>[2]</sup>. This stage also determined that this initial audit would only involve active SAA titles as as case studies already have existing documentation. Active titles are publications currently available for sale at the SAA online store. The draft questionnaire was then built on the Google Forms platform and pilot tested by the project team using two sample sets of 10 SAA active publications. This provided insight on question order, follow-up questions and appropriate response methods. For example multiple-choice questions were given the option of allowing

respondents to write in an alternative response to maximize specificity which will help in reporting and interpreting the data. Following a second pilot-testing round, the audit questionnaire was finalized and conducted on Google Forms.

- **Data Set:** To date, this audit looked at 95 active SAA titles which included Books, Brochures and various series such as Trends in Archives Practice, Archival Fundamentals Series and the Archival Futures Series. The last active title included in this audit was published in December of 2022. The project team collaboratively generated the final set of active titles with the help of existing data provided by SAA staff. Initially a list of 125 titles, the list was cleaned and deduced which ultimately brought down the list to 95 distinct publications. For example, several active titles were given a separate ISBN number based on publication format such as print, PDF or as an EBook despite being the same publication. Titles, despite format type, were combined. The project team conducted the audit using the questionnaire using the SAA online store including available book segments such as table of contents, blurbs and in some cases introductions. To answer questions regarding the professional affiliation of authors, contributors, and editors, the project team looked at biographies provided by SAA as well as public LinkedIn pages and professional-affiliated websites. The audit generated 95 individual responses and was conducted between March 2023 and May 2023.

## **Data Analysis and Reporting**

This report focuses primarily on aggregate findings. The project team analyzed the findings using frequency analysis while descriptive analysis was also used for follow-up questions to further elaborate and summarize data points. Percentages were calculated in two manners 1) against the 95 titles which indicates what percentage of titles (*% of titles - n=95*) contained a category asked in the questionnaire as well as 2) stratified breakdowns for multiple response questions. Data from multiple response questions were combined and collectively analyzed. They are referred to as *Percentage of total responses per category* which indicates the percentage found in the total responses in each category. This always sums to 100%. Percentages used in this report were mainly unrounded. Datasets can be viewed in the attached excel sheet.

## **Data Set**

1. **General Information:** This section of the questionnaire asked for general information for each active publication. Out of the 276 individual authors, which included essay contributors, 47 were affiliated with more than one SAA-active title. Most publications were generated in 2013, 2016 and 2020; either categorized as a book or individual modules from the Trends in Archives Practice series. Further data on which authors and editors have contributed to multiple SAA publications can be found in the attached excel sheet.

- **Individual Authors - 276**
- **Individual Editors - 40**
- **Years**
  - 2013, 2016, 2020 - **12%**
  - 2015 - **9.5%**
  - 2017, 2019, 2022 - **6.3%**
  - 2005, 2011 - **4.2%**
  - 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2014 - **3.2%**
  - 2003, 2004, 2007, 2012, 2021 - **2.1%**
  - 1995, 2000 - **1.1%**
- **Series**
  - Books: **47%**
  - Trends in Archives Practice (Modules): **27%**
  - Brochures: **6%**
  - Trends in Archives Practice: **9%**
  - Archival Fundamentals Series III: **6%**
  - Archival Fundamentals Series II: **2%**
  - Archival Futures Series: **1%**

2. **Print editions:** The project team looked at data from the sale of the print editions of the active publications from 1996 to July 2022. These are the physical print editions sold by the online store of the SAA.

- **We only have access to data up until July 2022, so will finalize this question once updated data is gathered.**

3. **Ebook and PDF:** Sales of Ebook and PDF versions of SAA active publications was of interest to discern how many and which publications are purchased versus the print edition. An early observation made is how for manuals/standards booklets, people tended to prefer physical copies

- **We only have access to data up until July 2022, so will finalize this question once updated data is gathered.**

4. **Professionally, whether as a practitioner or academically, what best represents the author at the time of publication? (Multiple Response Set)**

The goal of this question was to determine at what point of the author's career, at the time of the title's publication, were they writing and publishing. Duration of one's professional trajectory, at the time of the title's publication, was a manner to build an employment profile of affiliated authors and editors. As we did contact this group directly, we obtained said information by publicly available biographies, LinkedIn pages and

professional affiliated websites. The results show that those with longer tenure are significantly represented in this group. The option not clear was selected for individuals who we could not find or discern the necessary data to answer this question.

- **Late-Career (10+ years)** - 77.9%
- **Mid-career (3-9 years)** - 30.5%
- **Not Clear** - 9.5%
- **Retired** - 8.4%
- **Early-career (0-3 years)** - 4.2%

**5. Does the author or editor have an ALA degree? If not, what degree?**

This question aims to show the evolution of the archival field in regards to professional accreditation in the form of specialized degrees. The research shows nearly one third of publications have authors and editors that hold primarily a Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) Degree, while half (47.4%) have authors who hold this degree along with another graduate degree such as a PhD (33) or a secondary graduate degree. 12.6% of active publications have authors that do not hold an MLIS degree. Most reported non MLIS graduate degrees were in history (36) and literature/english (5).

- **Yes but includes other degrees** - 47.4%
- **Yes** - 29.5%
- **No** - 12.6%
- **Not Clear** - 10.5%

*56 publications responded No and Yes but includes other degrees*

- Associate - **1**
- Bachelors - **2**
- Masters - **72**
- JD - **6**
- PhD - **33**

**6. At the time of publication, the author(s) is affiliated to an archival institution as a:**

This multiple response set question was to understand how the role and affiliation of the authors and editors might have shaped their writing perspective or whom their writing was geared towards. We found that a majority of publications (53.7%) had practitioner archivists as contributors. However most contributors were senior professionals particularly holding director (37.9%) position or that of a Supervisor/Manager (34.7%) positions.

- Archivist - 53.7%
- Director - 37.9%

- Supervisor/Manager - 34.7%
- Faculty/Professor - 23.2%
- Non-Affiliated/Independent Archival Professional - 18.9%
- Librarian - 10.5%
- Not Clear - 8.4%
- Associate/Assistant Archivist - 7.4%
- Archives Technical Assistant - 1.1%

## 7. Where geographically in the US are authors located?

Geographically, the largest representation came from the Midwest and Northeast as 45% of publications respectively had contributors, authors and editors from those regions. The Southwest on the other hand had the lowest representation (8%), even lower than contributors located outside the United States. This question perhaps can help us better understand where geographically, archival knowledge contribution for the SAA has emerged.

- Midwest - 45%
- Northeast - 45%
- West - 36%
- South - 18%
- Not in the US/International - 13%
- Southwest - 8%
- Not Clear - 1%
- Non-Continental US - 0%

## 8. Target audience of the publication

This multiple response question was created to better understand the diversity of audiences, by which publications were geared towards. We provided a wide range of responses to acknowledge that many publications were geared to multiple audiences. We determined this information using publication blurbs from the SAA online store as well as available table of contents or introductory chapters. This data found Universities and Colleges were by large the target audience at 83% of analyzed publications, followed by Historical Societies and Cultural Heritage Institutions (75%). Government and Nonprofit related archives at 46% and 44% respectively followed as growing thematic areas. Secondary audiences, outside of traditional archives, are historians and professionals in corporate settings.

- Universities & Colleges - 83%
- Historical Societies & Cultural Heritage Institutions - 75%
- Government - 46%

- Non-profit Organizations - 44%
- Archival Students - 42%
- Community/Independent Archives - 42%
- Historians - 35%
- Corporate Settings - 27%
- Public Libraries - 26%
- Religious Organization - 17%
- General Public - 9%
- Genealogists - 6%
- K-12 Education - 4%
- Archivists - 3%
- Not Clear - 2%
- Architectural Firm/Research - 2 %
- Design Firm 1%
- Developers, systems administrators, technology service providers - 1%
- Law Students - 1%
- Small Institution - 1%

**9. The archival institution featured in the publication has how many employees?**

This question looked at the size of the institutions or initiatives by which featured archives or case studies were situated. Most importantly this question aimed to compare how many larger institutions were represented versus smaller institutions and how might this preference be relevant to the larger archival field. This proved to be the trickiest question to answer given that departments might differ in resources despite being in the same institution. Data was gathered from job review sites such as Glassdoor.com or publicly available annual reports for non-profit entities. However, as for-profit companies were also featured, we largely estimated or relied on the Not Clear option which after 20+ Employees (48% of publications) represented 38% of surveyed publications.

- **20+ Employees - 48%**
- **Not Clear - 38%**
- **0-10 Employees - 8%**
- **10-20 Employees - 5%**

**10. What themes does the author(s) in this particular publication touch upon?**

Most publications had more than one thematic focus. Chosen responses were presented to have a wider net of more granular data. The top three themes found in analyzed publications were Records Management (43%), Accessioning (40%), Digital Preservation and Archive Management 39% each. Themes with the lowest representation were Essays (11%), Rare Books & Manuscripts ( 11%) and SAA History with 3%.

- Records Management - 43%
- Accessioning - 40%
- Digital Preservation - 39%
- Archives Management - 39%
- Arrangement & Description - 36%
- Preservation - 33%
- Ethical Standards - 32%
- Reference & Access - 29%
- Appraisal - 26%
- Archival History - 26%
- Archiving in Specific Environments - 26%
- Archival Education - 24%
- Archival Formats - 25%
- Archival Theory - 24%
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility - 21%
- Copyright/Legal - 20%
- Outreach - 20%
- Community Archiving - 17%
- Advocacy - 13%
- Essays - 11%
- Rare Books & Manuscripts - 11%
- SAA History - 3%
- Architectural/Design - 3%
- Museum Standards - 1%
- Anthropological - 1%
- Privacy - 1%
- Media Requests - 1%
- Archival Collections with Notated Music - 1%

The question also had an "other" selection which was added for an additional response irrelevant/unrelated to what was already on the list. Architectural/Design was covered by 3% of publications. For further specificity on the selected responses for this question, a follow-up question was added: *If applicable, from each category selected for question 9, provide additional information to further specify.* The project team entered additional data for 71 publications (out of the 95) from which biographical archivists, EAD Standards and Solo Archivists were the most popular.

**11. From your reading, which of the following best reflects how this publication approach the theme(s) it touches on:**

This question looks at how a SAA publication disseminates knowledge to its intended audience. We determined that publications generally fall in two categories: a theoretical approach teaches the reasoning, techniques and theory of knowledge. While a technical publication focuses on day-to-day experiences, practical applications or industry standards. More than half of SAA publications fell under both categories while technical publications were closer to a third of total publications. For theoretical publications, 7.4% were present in the form of biographies and books on the history of the archival scholarship.

- **Both - 68.4%**
- **Theoretical - 7.4%**
- **Technical - 24.2%**

## **12. How many publications have the authors and/or editors contributed to SAA**

This question sought to gather data on how authors or editors have previously contributed to SAA affiliated publications. Given that surveyed publications have multiple authors and editors, this question allowed for multiple responses. Almost half of surveyed publications had authors and editors who had written in at least 6 or more SAA affiliated publications while a third had 2-3 published books or articles to their name. Authors listed under the option of Not Clear was because authors were committee-based so we were unable to obtain individual names.

- **6+ more - 40.0%**
- **2-3 - 26.3%**
- **1 - 14.7%**
- **4-5 - 11.6%**
- **Not Clear - 7.4%**

## **13. SAA publications by which authors and editors contributed to**

This question looked at what type of SAA publications, authors or editors of surveyed publications have contributed to. We looked at online databases of the following publications as well as compiled lists provided by SAA staff. This question also allowed for multiple responses. By far, most surveyed publications have authors and editors who have previously contributed to an SAA book/module whether as an author, editor or contributor. American Archivist is second with 60% of contributors of analyzed publications having written for the journal.

- **Books/Modules - 89%**
- **American Archivist - 60%**
- **Reviews - 45%**



- **Archival Outlook** - 21%
- **Case Studies** - 12%
- **Other** - 7%

**14. Does this publication include the writings and or the perspectives of historically excluded groups or a Federally Protected Class?**

This question sought to better understand whether surveyed SAA publications have incorporated perspectives of historically excluded groups in the United States. We have defined this category using Equal Employment Opportunity terminology from the [National Archives](#), more specifically Protected Class which defines groups protected from employment discrimination by law. This includes groups on the basis of gender, race, religion, color, or national origin; people over 40; and people with physical or mental handicaps. As we are not directly surveying authors and editors, we are only looking if said perspectives explicitly form part of the themes found in the SAA publication. We do so by looking at the publication table of contents and in some instances publication introduction or segments found through the SAA online shop. By the option *Not Clear*, we understand that a publication might thematically address this question but do not have enough data to accurately answer this question.

- **Yes** - 16%
- **No** - 70%
- **Not Clear** - 9%

By large, most SAA publications (70%) did not incorporate perspectives of historically excluded groups. To gather more detailed data, we incorporated a follow-up question which asks if this question was answered with Yes or Not Clear, to expand further. This question revealed themes of accessibility, diversity and social justice are explicitly present in active SAA publications, more specifically Women, Black, Asian, Native American/Indigenous peoples, Latin American/Latinx perspectives. Some publications focused on topics outside of the United States such as Indigenous land disputes in Canada as well as the memory and reconciliation process in South Africa.

**15. From the perspectives of historically excluded groups, are the authors or editors representative of said perspectives they are writing about in this publication?**

This question followed up on Question 14 to determine whether SAA contributors, authors and editors were representative of the perspectives they are writing about? This sample used the 25 publications that answered Yes or Not Clear for Question 14.

- **Yes** - 9 Publications
- **No** - 3 Publications
- **Not Clear** - 13 Publications

Only 9% of the 94 analyzed publications were written or edited by someone who identified with the perspective being written about. We looked at some publication introductions which at times had rationale by authors and editors. We also looked at listed author and editors' public LinkedIn pages as well as biographies found in personal websites or sites of employment. To gather more detailed data, we incorporated a follow-up question which asked what perspective was being written about. This included authors Janet Ceja Alcalá, Tonia Sutherland, Joel A. Blanco-Rivera, Steven Booth, Masahito Ando, Tywana Whorley and Verne Harris as well as authors of the book *Perspectives on Women's Archives*.

**16. Does the publication refer to non-English or bilingual archival collections?**

This question looked at what percentage of surveyed SAA publications included non-English or bilingual archival collections whether in thematic focus or via a case study. We answered this question by looking at a publication's table of contents and in some instances its introduction found through the SAA online shop. Overwhelmingly, 93% of surveyed publications did not feature a Non-English or bilingual archival collection. 6% of publications that did, broadly featured references to Indigenous languages, a music collection from Cuba and East Asia. More specifically the section "*More Voices, Less Clamor: Reflections on Valuing Diversity*" by Joel Wurl referred to several immigration-related projects undertaken by museums, historical societies, libraries, and civic organizations.

- **No - 93%**
- **Yes - 6%**
- **Not Clear - 1%**

**17. Publication in or translated to another language other than English**

- **Yes - 5%**
- **No - 95%**

Out of 95 analyzed SAA publications, 5% were published or translated to a non-English language, more specifically Spanish and Korean. All publications were translated from English.

**Project Team**

This research study was led by the project team, who guided the questionnaire development process, compiled and gathered existing data, presented updates to the Publications Board staff, and provided an accompanying report. The members of the project team are:

- Yvette Ramirez: Publications Board Member and Doctoral Student at the School of Information at The University of Michigan.
- Sarah Coffman: Publications Board Member

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### **Significance and Implications of the Audit**

- **So what**
- **How do we intend to use the data moving forward**

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[1] <https://www.bluetoad.com/publication/?m=30305&i=341966&p=29&ver=html5>

[2] <https://sr.ithaka.org/publications/acensus-ii-all-archivists-survey-report/>