Society of American Archivists (SAA) Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment (CORDA)

SAA Research and Innovation Roadmap, beta version 1.2

Updated April 2023

The SAA Research and Innovation Roadmap identifies critical research needs and gaps in the archival profession. The roadmap is an active and evolving document, developed by the SAA Committee on Research, Data and Assessment, and represents research interests that have been identified by members across the profession. The roadmap reflects an analysis of current and emerging research, assessment, and data needs, to frame and inform the work that the profession might undertake. Key among the goals of the roadmap is to articulate the profession's research priorities. Those priorities can help funders, conference organizers, publication editors, and leaders within the profession allocate the necessary attention and resources to support research and innovation. The agenda will also help individual archivists and allied practitioners identify research topics that will advance the profession in priority areas. The agenda may also influence graduate school course development.

Archivists throughout North America are actively engaged in research, assessment, and evaluation related to the archival profession. A multitude of independent and SAA section-based research activities are conducted every season and those research results and data subsequently appear in just as many venues and outlets. The goal of the roadmap is to be inclusive of these efforts, and to frame larger themes that research within the profession seeks to address. As in any other applied field, practice leads to research questions and research leads to improved practice. The roadmap has been inclusively developed, and yet is necessarily bound by time and place. To address inclusivity, the design of the document is flexible to allow for continued contributions, and to position it as representative of professional needs and priorities at any given time.

History of roadmap development:

Initial goals, topics, and themes of interest to SAA and the archival profession were identified during interviews that the Task Force on Research/Data and Evaluation conducted for the purpose of a persona needs analysis in 2017-2018, and from key literature sources concerning archival research. These themes have been further analyzed through facilitated discussions with CORDA, SAA Section and Committee Chairs, and through a period of open membership feedback. Select examples of past research, existing resources, standards, and guidelines for collecting data are annotated in this document. The roadmap further incorporates priority

areas identified in the SAA 2020-2022 strategic plan and the 2020-2021 DEIA plan. The gathering of topics has been inclusive rather than exclusive. Where possible, research efforts have been identified by title, with an active URL, and date, if known. We have intentionally emphasized ideas, projects, and initiatives and have deemphasized individuals. The research identified includes reports, surveys, papers, and projects.

Principles for this Living Document:

The roadmap is collaboratively developed and has the deliberate goal of promoting data-informed innovation and reuse of data about archives, aided by the <u>SAA Dataverse</u>.

NB: CORDA urges that all research be undertaken ethically and with appropriate approvals. Researchers with topics that intersect with SAA committee expertise can engage with SAA groups for advice and counsel. For example, researchers approaching diversity-related research topics can consult with the SAA Diversity Committee or Diverse Sexuality and Gender Section, depending on the nature of the research.

I. Theme: Demographics

Scope: Information about archivists reveals broad trends as well as detailed insight into the profession. Research will enable cross-sectional and longitudinal studies and analysis, and the ability to identify trends over time, as well as surfacing professional gaps. Insights will strengthen the profession and will lead to educational, development, training, diversity, and inclusion efforts.

II. Theme: Metrics and Institutions

Scope: It is critical that archivists have information and data to support efforts to articulate explicit value propositions for special collections and archives and be able to measure change over time. Business analytics enable research-based practice and practice-based research. The goal is to transition from descriptive data to actionable goals through performance measures and service benchmarks. Repository-level information will create a baseline for understanding the costs and resources allocated to the ecosystem of collection formats, as well as their use. Benchmarking can also help break down where resources are allocated, along the spectrum and life cycle of stewardship (donor negotiation, accessioning, processing, digitization, researcher use, donor stewardship, outreach, etc.) to support planning.

III. Diversity and Inclusion

Scope: The beneficiaries of research include practitioners, archival users, as well as society and culture. Research will inform archivists who wield significant power over who society documents, as well as establish policies governing access. A research-informed practice is critical at a time of racial reckoning. Research-informed practice in areas that include recruiting, retention, professional development and mentoring, collections acquisitions and care, access decisions, and policies are essential. Research in this area promotes justice and advances greater accountability within the archival profession. It encourages the adoption of reparative descriptive practices and supports the analysis of the costs of, and impact of, reparative description.

IV. Theme: Ethical Stewardship, Maintenance and Sustainability

Scope: Research in this theme supports public investment in archives' public services and stewardship. Caring for collections, tracking environmental impact, and justifying an archival activity over another is clearer when there is data to inform decisions and assess the costs and impact of archival activities. What is worth doing over time?

V. Theme: Radical Collaboration and Convergence

Scope: Collaboration is a necessary research theme, as archivists act within broader political and economic systems. Archivists enhance value and impact through collaboration and partnership with allied and complementary organizations and their practices. Research in this space will enable archivists to evaluate benefits, outcomes, and affordances of collaborative efforts. This research focus is in the spirit of the SAA Guidelines for Programs of Academic Study (GPAS) curricular component of <u>"complementary knowledge"</u> to expand research with allied organizations.

VI. Theme: Audience Building

Scope: What is the effectiveness of archival efforts to build audiences? What efforts – positions dedicated to outreach or partnerships with journalists and media – build audiences? Elevating archival awareness and advocacy for archives is advanced through many levels of partnership and funded efforts – at the national, regional, local, institutional level. This research theme seeks to ground practice with research.

VII. User Centered Design and Discovery

Scope: How do users approach, find, and use archives? Principles like *respect des fonds* can prejudice the archives to center the records in designing systems for archival use and engagement. If we invert the model to center users, how would we design systems for discovery, access, and archival transfer? Research in this area centers users and has the potential to alter current modes of archival practice.

SAA Research & Innovation Roadmap Table

Topic	Existing Research, Standards, Data, Resources	Areas for Future Research & Innovation	SAA Strategic Plan, DEIA Plan	Related Themes
Theme I: Demographics				
1.a. Longitudinal and Demographic Data about Archival Profession (A*CENSUS, etc.)	 A*CENSUS and A*CENSUS II¹ CoSA "Year in Review" reports, 2013– SAA Facts & Figures "Taking Our Pulse" survey by OCLC (2010) "Research and Learning Agenda" by OCLC (2017) NEMPN Salary Disclosures (2022) 	 Salary reporting and inclusive job description Effects of term employment SAA component group surveys and projects Mobility: (1) upward within profession, (2) in and out of the profession. What and where are barriers to job growth and satisfaction? Why do people leave the profession? What role does burnout play? 	Strategic Plan 2.1.e, DEIA workplan 1.5	Diversity & Inclusion, Inclusive Collaboration

¹ Example: There is wide acknowledgement that the A*CENSUS, fielded in 2004 by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), was the first comprehensive nationwide study of the archives profession. It was a landmark research study that obtained important and original insights about the nature of archival work, archival education (graduate and continuing), and demographics. A*CENSUS II, the second iteration, received funding from National Leadership Project Grant from IMLS for a survey project from September 2020 - February 2023 to capture new demographic data from individuals and administrators with an eye towards diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA). A*CENSUS is an example of a key demographic study.

Topic	Existing Research, Standards, Data, Resources	Areas for Future Research & Innovation	SAA Strategic Plan, DEIA Plan	Related Themes
	 Surveying new archivists (<u>SAA 2012</u> presentation, AA <u>article 2013</u>, "<u>Salary Survey</u>: <u>How Much Did You Earn in 2013</u>") Public Library Archives/Special Collections Roundtable <u>Member Survey</u> (2018) <u>Art + Museum Salary Transparency</u> <u>College & University Archives Landscape Survey</u> (2021) 	Is it getting better?		
1.b. Educational Program Impact and Outcomes	 1998 KALIPER Project (see 2001) The Archival Education and Research Initiative (AERI) Career Satisfaction of Young Archivists: A Survey of Professional Working Archivists, Age 35 and Younger (2010) 	 Impact/outcomes of SAA education courses/tracks (e.g. Management Track) Mentoring Program impact/outcomes Recruitment of diverse students into profession Data on graduate student majors, retention and career paths. Practitioner vs. managerial/leadership education. 	 Strategic Plan 2.1.d. Strategic Plan 2.1.b Strategic Plan 2.1.g, DEIA workplan 1.5 	Diversity & Inclusion
1.c. Labor Practices	 Collective Responsibility: Seeking Equity for Contingent Labor white paper (2019) Survey of project archivists (2019) Survey of archival internships (2020 iConference) Best Practices for Term Positions (2022) 	 Contingent labor and pathways to a secure career for BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and archival workers with disabilities Mentoring programs 	DEIA workplan 1.2	Diversity & Inclusion
Theme II: Metrics & Institutions				
II.a. Standardized Repository Metrics	 Standard: <u>Guidelines for Standardized</u> Holdings Counts and Measures for Archival Repositories and Special <u>Collections Libraries</u> (2018) Shifting value assessments (<u>2013</u>) 	 Consistent and regular census benchmark repository data gathering that supports longitudinal analysis and forecasting. Archivists' data-gathering (2014, 2018) 		Inclusive Collaboration, Audience Building, Ethical Stewardship, Maintenance & Sustainability

Торіс	Existing Research, Standards, Data, Resources	Areas for Future Research & Innovation	SAA Strategic Plan, DEIA Plan	Related Themes
	 Association of Research Libraries: ARL Statistics Repo Data (A project to identify, gather, standardize, and make publicly accessible United States archival repository location data) College & University Archives Landscape Survey (2021) Resources: SAA Standards Committee Resource: SAA Standards Committee 			
II.b. Standardized Usage metrics	 Standard: <u>Standardized Statistical</u> <u>Measures and Metrics for Public Services</u> <u>in Archival Repositories and Special</u> <u>Collections Libraries</u> (2018) Archival Metrics Toolkit (<u>2010</u>) "Importance of State Archives" (<u>CoSA 2013</u>) Resource: SAA Standards Committee 	 Sharing usage metrics (standards already exist) How do we measure and track the impact of public service? How do we move beyond the heartwarming stories towards more quantitative data about use 		Audience building
II.c.Collection Formats: Evolution and Impact on Repository	 Email access (TOMES, RATOM, Email Archives: Building Capacity and Community) "Archives and Artifacts" editorial (2019) "Visualizing archival appraisal" (2017, see also RAMP study with sound recordings, 1987) "Managing acquisitions and appraisal in a music archive" (2016) 	 Surveying institutions on archival activities (appraisal work, accessioning work) What document formats and work processes are most challenging to repositories? How do we identify and break significant logjams to better performance? 		Ethical Stewardship, Maintenance & Sustainability
II.e.Impact of Community-Based Archives	 Community-Driven Archives Team (<u>CDAT</u>, <u>2017-2021</u>) Community Archives impacts: A Toolkit (<u>2018</u>) 	 Impact of community-led archival practice. How to develop partnerships between differently-resourced repositories to increase sustainability 		Diversity & Inclusion

Торіс	Existing Research, Standards, Data, Resources	Areas for Future Research & Innovation	SAA Strategic Plan, DEIA Plan	Related Themes
II.f.Costs of Digitization for Patrons and Income for Repositories	Mass <u>digitization</u> surveys (see also <u>thread</u>)	 Sources/stability of funding for repositories How are archives spending their budgets? 		Audience Building
Theme III: Diversity & Inclusion				
III.a. Accessibility and Disability	 Guidelines for Accessible Archives for People with Disabilities (2019) "A quick guide to accessibility and archives" (2011) Issue post: Digital accessibility (2018) Archives are Accessible: Map (2020) Disability Archives Lab: Preserving Disability Forthcoming edited book "Preserving Disability: Disability and the Archival Profession" "EDI in the OCLC Research Library Partnership: A Survey" (2017) Understanding the Unseen: Invisible Disabilities in the Workplace (2022) 	 Disability representation in archival profession Accessibility of archival collections/spaces/websites UX research into the accessibility of digital spaces (exhibits, websites, etc.) as well as physical spaces Metrics about reparative description work (language accessibility) 	 Strategic Plan 1.3.b Strategic Plan 2.3.f, DEIA Plan 2.7 	Demographics
III.b.Non-custodial / Reciprocal Relationships	 Documenting the Now social media content Nomadic Archivists Project: NAP Archiving the Black Web Roaming Center for Magnetic Alternatives: RCMA Brown & Slavery & Justice (2006) ReConnect/ReCollect: Philippine Collections at UM 	Archives' uses for social change	 Strategic Plan 1.1.a, DEIA Work Plan 1.6, 3.1, 4.2 	Inclusive Collaboration & Convergence

Торіс	Existing Research, Standards, Data, Resources	Areas for Future Research & Innovation	SAA Strategic Plan, DEIA Plan	Related Themes
	How to do archives in the Anthropocene (MITH's Advocacy by Design)			
III.c. Education & Training for DEIA	 "Managing Archival Programs" category by SAA Education Education Committee DEIA Unconference in 2020 and 2021 webinar series "EDI in the OCLC Research Library Partnership: A Survey" (2017) 	 Workplace diversity/inclusion Assessment of publications DEIA in archival graduate education programs 	 SAA Strategic Plan 2.2.h, DEIA workplan 3.1 SAA Strategic Plan , 3.3.b, 4.3.b; DEIA Work Plan 3.4 	Demographics, Metrics & Institutions
III.d. Diversity in Collections	 Case Studies: Diversifying the Archival Record, 2016– Project STAND: Student Activism Now Documented, 2016– "Diversifying the Archives" (2021 post) "What We Don't Have" (2020 exhibit) Diversifying the Digital (2016-17) "EDI in the OCLC Research Library Partnership: A Survey" (2017) 	How are members of historically marginalized groups represented in collections?		Metrics & Institutions
III.e. Critical Reexaminations of Descriptive Practices and Language	 Resource: Inclusive Description "EDI in the OCLC Research Library Partnership: A Survey" (2017) 		SAA Strategic Plan 3.1.F, DEIA Work Plan 4.1	Demographics

Theme IV: Ethical Stewardship, Maintenance and Sustainability

Topic	Existing Research, Standards, Data, Resources	Areas for Future Research & Innovation	SAA Strategic Plan, DEIA Plan	Related Themes
IV.a. Costs of Archiving	Total Cost of Stewardship OCLC white paper	 What are the costs of processing? How much does it cost to steward a cubic foot of 20th century paper records or one oral history interview, or one film, etc. Transparency of archival decision-making. How faithful are archivists to good archival practices of their own records? 		
IV.b. Strengthening Digital Collection Infrastructure	 "An Exploration of Ideal Access Systems" (2022 by DLF Visioning Access Systems subgroup) "Levels of Born-Digital Access" (2020 by DLF BDAWG) Collections As Data Archival Linked Data landscape (2022) Born Digital Design Records Society of American Archivists (2022) 	 Affordances of artificial intelligence and computational data Preservation documentation Impact of enabling across-collection analysis What are the costs or processing? How much does it cost to steward a cubic foot of 20th century paper records or one oral history interview, or one film, etc. 		Metrics & Institutions
IV.c. Indigenous and Tribal Archives	 Protocols for Native American Archival Materials (2007) Case Studies: Access Policies for Native American Archival Materials, 2019– Resource: SAA Cultural Heritage Working Group (2010-2018) 	 Native American relationships to heritage and land acknowledgments Post-custodial collecting 		Demographics, Metrics & Institutions, Diversity & Inclusion
IV.d. Surveys of Archival Positions	 Survey of Senate Archivists (2010) Survey by Congressional Papers archivists of electronic records (2009, 2015) Member surveys of Museum Archives Section (2010, 2014) Member survey of PLASC: Public Library archivists (2013) 	 User-centered and data-informed research studies to support public investment in archives' public services and stewardship Some members are also interested in understanding components of archivists' work, like practices (description, VIP tours, management scope, recruitment criteria), collection surveys, and facilities. Often to 		Metrics & Institutions, Demographics

Торіс	Existing Research, Standards, Data, Resources	Areas for Future Research & Innovation	SAA Strategic Plan, DEIA Plan	Related Themes
	 Member survey of then-Acquisitions and Appraisal Section (2011) Member survey of Preservation Section (2011) Women Archivists Section Salary Survey (2017 and post) Advice for prospective (2012) and curious (2012) archivists "So You Want to Be An Audiovisual Archivist" (2015) Art + Museum Transparency 	make a stronger case to upper administration but also for professional development and educating/training others.		
IV.e. Environment and Sustainability	 Data Refuge Resource: Project ARCC: Archivists Responding to Climate Change Repo Data: Climate change and archives Green Archivist primer (2012) Green Facilities / Green Economy, From Gray Areas to Green Areas (GAGA): Developing Sustainable Practices in Preservation Conference (2007) Material Memory: S2 E2 "Archivists against the climate crisis" podcast (2020) 	 Impact of climate change on archives Disaster planning and preparedness 		Inclusive Collaboration and Convergence
IV.f. Privacy and Intellectual Property Rights	 IFLA / ICA Statement on Privacy Legislation and Archiving (2020) Survey of Civil Rights Movement-era archivists (2017) PII-handling case study (2021) "Intellectual property and audiovisual archives" Keynote (2000) 			

Topic	Existing Research, Standards, Data, Resources	Areas for Future Research & Innovation	SAA Strategic Plan, DEIA Plan	Related Themes
Theme V: Inclusive Collaboration & Convergence				
V.a. Teaching with Primary Sources: K-12 and Higher Education	 <u>Case Studies</u>: Teaching with Primary Sources, 2017– Teaching with Primary Sources (<u>TPS</u>) Collective An archival ethnography of classroom teachers (<u>2017</u>) <u>SOURCES</u> Conference 	 Impact of school library partnerships Integration of archives into K-12 curriculum Spotlighting archives in Home Movie Days National History Day competitions 		Audience Building
V.b. Structures that Encourage Collaboration or Convergence Across Intersecting Professions Repository Types	 Resource: RAAC: Regional Archives Association Consortium ACRL Digital Scholarship Section seeks SAA Liaison 	 SAA Research Forum as venue Impact of structures that encourage collaboration or convergence across intersecting professions. How do emerging academic discourses affect and influence archives? Feminist ethics, critical race theory, etc. How does archival theory influence other disciplines? 	SAA Strategic Plan 2.3.f, DEIA Work Plan 2.6	
V.c. Collaboration on Cross-Disciplinary "Grand" Challenges	 GLAM Collaboration Opportunities and Challenges (RLI 2020) OCLC Collaboration among Libraries Archives and Museums research and publications Research Library Issues (RLI 296) 2018 on radical collaboration including from an archives and archivist lens CALM (till 2017) and Collective Wisdom exchange 2016 (white paper 2017) ARL-CNI-Miami Summit (2016) 	 Evidence of user and resource affordances through shared infrastructure and services Cost and efficiency savings through shared storage infrastructure like high density storage facilities, shared digital storage, and other shared infrastructure. 		Ethical Stewardship, Maintenance & Sustainability

Topic	Existing Research, Standards, Data, Resources	Areas for Future Research & Innovation	SAA Strategic Plan, DEIA Plan	Related Themes
	 Mellon GLAM Fellowships in Oregon, 2018– Closure and transfer of American Textile History Museum collections to Cornell and Simmons universities SUCHO: Saving Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Online 			
Theme VI: Audience Building			•	
VI.a. Partnerships Between Archives + Journalists and Media	 ArchivesAWARE! by Committee on Public Awareness "Archiving Data Journalism" chapter (2018) "ICE Seeks Permission to Destroy Records of Sexual Assaults and Deaths" 	 How do journalists use archives? Accountability and transparency 		Inclusive Collaboration & Convergence, Metrics & Institutions
VI.b. Archival Leadership: Promoting Leaders in the Archival and Memory Professions	 SAA 75th Anniversary trading cards SAA Oral History Interviews Project Harold T. Pinkett's legacy Mosaic Scholars community "Unsung Heroes" in the history of STEM and medicine 			
VI.c. History of Archival Thought	 "Archival Thinking: Genealogies and Archaeologies" in <u>Archival Science</u> <u>Archives in the Ancient World</u> by Ernst Posner 			

Topic	Existing Research, Standards, Data, Resources	Areas for Future Research & Innovation	SAA Strategic Plan, DEIA Plan	Related Themes
VI.d. Effectiveness of Archival Outreach Initiatives	 Resource: Jump In! initiative by Manuscripts Repositories Section (2013-15) Campus Case Studies Resource: #AskAnArchivist 	 Multilingual corporate marketing and sources of revenue-generation Analyze impact of #AskAnArchivist social media posts 		
Theme VII: User Centered Design and Discovery				
VII.a. Finding Aids and User Behavior	 Lighting the Way IMLS Project The Value of a Note: A Finding Aid Usability Study 	User behavior and archives		
VII.b. Aggregated Repository or Collection Level Discovery	 National Historical Publications Records Commission: NHPRC Directory 1978 and 1988 OCLC ArchiveGrid Repo Data (A project to identify, gather, standardize, and make publicly accessible United States archival repository location data) "Lavender Legacies Guide" Lesbian and Gay Archives Roundtable's Guide to Sources in North America (1998-2012) College & University Archives Landscape Survey (2021) 	 What is the impact of aggregated archival description on user engagement with archives? Research into use of aggregated digitized 		Inclusive Collaboration, Audience Building, Ethical Stewardship, Maintenance & Sustainability; Audience Building
VII.c. Open-Source and Open Access Collections Management and Development	 Resource: Greg Eow's plenary SAA 2017 EAD aggregators: Building a National Finding Aid Network: NAFAN "Archiving research data" editorial (2007) 	Develop a broad-scale study of user behavior to inform design of archival discovery systems		Metrics & Institutions

Appendix

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Software Preservation Research Framework RLI 296 Radical Collaboration Special Issue of Research Library - Research Data Management

Prior Member Feedback Received at SAA 2018:

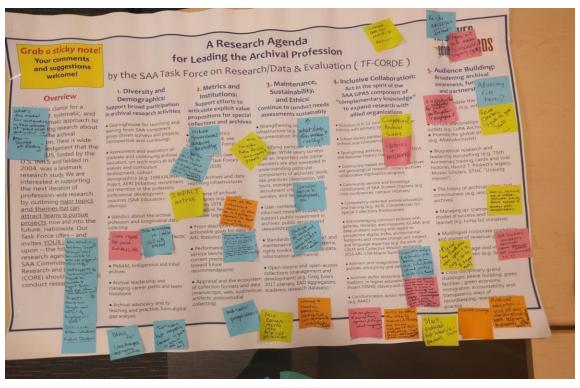


Figure 1. SAA 2018 attendee comments on the TF-CORDE Research Agenda. Available at https://drive.google.com/open?id=1kfZ9Bx2IBttvrMeqVD55V6pRBxC9KkTL

The comments received from attendees at SAA 2018 on the TF-CORDE's research agenda provide important feedback on each of its five major categories. Below, Sarah Buchanan summarizes comments beside the category most relevant to the attendee's concern.

- **Diversity and Demographics**: Institutional types. Mid-career progressions & entries (consider ageism). How many lone arrangers work without professional staff? Supporting small organizations (shifting statistics) per CLIR Hidden Collections; include government archives explicitly.
- Metrics and Institutions: Best teaching practices (for lone arrangers). "I'd like the ability / standard / benchmark to assess impact in a
 way that is also used by peers." Impact metrics. Look at imbalances in approaching different domains of the archival profession.
 Clarify from measurement to action; what do our current descriptive standards miss and how does that affect our analysis? Redo

A*CENSUS, "sustainable" data about archives and archivists. Consider Data Rescue inventories and grants.

- Maintenance, Sustainability, and Ethics: The committee's model (volunteer or paid staff? Source of funding). Data repositories for
 past surveys. Climate change.
- Inclusive Collaboration: Job descriptions and skill sets needed. Study archival users of traditional and digital data. Core competencies of accrediting agencies, distinguishing the archival uniqueness. Address the views of museum & library workers (and stop separating); use shared language and acknowledge shared goals. Build interdisciplinary work relating to the diversity, in which we are the experts. Comparative analysis of US, Canadian, UK, African, Slavic, Latinx archival practice (de-silo US theory). Computational archival science. Opportunities for public participation and engagement.
- Audience Building: Start archival high school & vocational technical programs. Advocacy. Record creators' donations. For colleges & universities: think beyond the humanities. Publication trends, textual analysis of society's public communications.