

SAA Standards Committee Meeting
2012 SAA Annual Meeting – San Diego, Calif.
August 7, 2012

Introductions

Chairs informed committee of the appointment a new member of the committee, Dan Santamaria, and thanks were extended to the outgoing co-chair of the committee, Marcy Flynn. The committee was advised that Cory Nimer's term of service as co-chair of the committee had been extended by one year, and that Lisa Miller had been appointed to take Marcy's role as co-chair. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves to the group, and included:

Cory Nimer (Standards Committee)
Marcy Flynn (Standards Committee)
Brian Doyle (SAA Staff)
Kathleen Feeney (Standards Committee)
Cristela Garcia-Spitz (Metadata and Digital Object Roundtable liaison)
Elizabeth Roke (Description Section liaison)
Anila Angjeli (Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Context—Corporate bodies, Persons, and Families)
Dennis Meissner (Council liaison)
Lisa Miller (Standards Committee)
Tom Sommer (College and University Archives Section liaison)
James Cross (Reference, Access, and Outreach Section liaison)
Heather Dean (Standards Committee)
Karin Bredenberg (Schema Development Team)
Mike Rush (Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Description)
Daniel Pitti (Representative to the International Council on Archives Committee on Best Practices and Standards)
Jackie Dooley (President, Society of American Archivists)
Gordon Daines (Technical Subcommittee on Describing Archives: A Content Standard)
Brian Tingle

Standards Committee annual report

The draft version of the annual report was distributed to the committee prior to the meeting for their review, and comments were requested. No changes were

suggested for the document, though the liaisons present asked that the draft document be sent to all liaisons for their review. It was noted that there had been some new representative appointments shortly before the annual meeting that should perhaps be included, and that information on the endorsement of Audit and Certification of Trustworthy Digital Repositories standard (ISO 16363) be updated in the document.

It was agreed that once these changes had been made the document should be circulated to the committee and liaisons for comments before submission to SAA.

SAA groups liaison program

In discussing the liaison program, those liaisons that were present provided some useful feedback about functioning of the program. They noted that communication within the group was at times lacking, with few messages and insufficient responses after comments were submitted. There were also some questions about how they should share information about the committee with the group that they represent.

It was suggested by the committee that the role of the liaisons was at the discretion of the component groups, and might vary between units, but that the ultimate goal of the program was to improve communications. To meet that goal various options were put forward, including greater use of the committee microsite for posting news items and documentation, distributing calls for comments (and responses) to liaisons, and exploring new distribution methods. Brian Doyle agreed to explore options for the committee.

There were also questions raised about maintaining the list of liaison appointments, which is currently done manually on the microsite, and whether this should remain the responsibility of the co-chairs or could be assigned to a committee member.

Council Liaison report

Dennis Meissner reported on the activities of Council, particularly during their meeting earlier in the week. Among the many items from his list, focusing on four points: ISO 16363 endorsement, governance manual updates, the member needs survey, and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

He reported that based on the recommendation of the Standards Committee that ISO 16363 had been endorsed by Council. This had been a long-term priority for the

Society, and part of the current SAA strategic plan. Now that this step has been taken, Council now asks that the committee consider what steps should be taken next, and to create a list of action items. Possible tasks include workshop development, developing checklists and tools, and promotion of the standard. Committee was requested to work with Education Committee to develop plan.

Council also approved revisions to section 11 of the SAA governance manual regarding representatives to external organizations. They are still working out the exact language to be included, but expect to work from the ground up with an initial limited set of representatives focused on SAA core activities. There is a concern on Council that if there are too many representatives the organization may lose a sense of what is important, as well as the potential financial impact (though support is only provided to the SAA representative to the International Council on Archives).

Dennis also reported on some of the results of the membership satisfaction survey. The full results are available on the leadership blog, though he pointed out that the results suggest a need for greater engagement with students and new archives professionals.

Lastly, he described the work being done at the NHPRC by Kathleen Williams and John Fleckner to develop a report for the President of the United States on the needs of the historical and documentary communities. Their intention with the report is to build a strong value proposition on the importance of the commission's work, and it is expected that this might create opportunities for SAA involvement.

Ongoing projects

Standards Portal

Progress toward the development of the Standards Portal was discussed and reviewed, including the creation of submission procedures and work to coordinate the populating of the Portal with component group liaisons. As a result of the liaison work the Portal now includes not only the official SAA standards, but three standards submitted by the Intellectual Property Working Group, forty-six from the Metadata and Digital Object Roundtable (fifteen technical standards, fifteen taxonomies, and sixteen other standards). Submissions were also received from the Science, Technology, & Health Care Roundtable.

The actual work of creating Standards Portal nodes is done by SAA staff. While this has slowed the entry of these standards, Brian Doyle hoped to have all standards

submitted by the committee for inclusion available in the next two weeks. Once the standard node has been created in Drupal it is associated with a maintaining component group, and can then be edited by that group. Most of these nodes are currently associated with the Standards Committee, but can be linked to other groups (e.g., the *College and University Archives Guidelines* are linked to the College and University Archives Section page).

In addition to populating the Portal, a subgroup of the Standards Committee worked over the past year to develop procedures for adding new content. This included the creation of a submission form, and the preparation of procedures for reviewing submissions. These procedures were reviewed by the committee members present, and were approved for use.

Some discussion ensued regarding the fields required on the form, and whether more information might be useful to users in contextualizing the entry. The current form requires a short description of the standard, which is used in the standard node “long description” field. This was done to simplify the submission process, but does limit the contextualization in the Portal display. After some discussion, the form was also approved in its current form.

Additional suggestions for improving the Portal included providing means for linking standards together, expanding the taxonomy, adding an implementation scenarios category to related resources, and looking for new ways to maintain the Portal contents. It was also suggested that SAA explore the use of Web analytics software to provide more information on how the Standards Portal is being used.

Brian will continue to look at ways to improve and streamline the use of the Portal, but pointed out that the procedures for managing the site are left to the committee to work out. Various options for developing the site content were discussed, including using the liaisons to do quality control. This might be accomplished by assigning standards to SAA component groups to administer.

The question was also raised of the difference between endorsement and simple inclusion in the Portal. Dennis and Brian suggested that the group explore the options, and that recommendations for endorsement (including group recommendations) might be submitted by the committee.

The committee co-chairs will be holding an open forum to discuss the Portal later in the week at the conference, and will gather additional feedback that might improve the usage of the site.

SAA representatives position review

Cory introduced the review of SAA representative positions undertaken by SAA Council, to which the committee chairs contributed comments. While Council recognizes that the representatives associated with the Standards Committee are important, there is some interest within Council to move towards a more minimalist approach to external representation (in Dennis's view), or simply a more consistent approach (in Jackie Dooley's view). As the representative positions that are to be maintained are identified, for those associated with standards the committee will continue to be expected to make recommendations for appointments. It was suggested that this might also be handled by adding representative positions to the volunteer form sent out annually by SAA leadership.

In their meetings, Council adopted guidelines specifying the requirements to establish SAA representative positions for new organizations but has not yet determined how to manage existing ones. The committee will also need to justify existing relationships, applying the new criteria from Council. Important relationships, such as the Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA) or the MARC Advisory Committee, can be expected to remain.

However, there are some issues that will need to be addressed during this process, such as the inclusion of external representatives on the Standards Committee (e.g., liaison from the Canadian Committee on Archival Description (CCAD), or ICA CBPS). Other informal relationships exist with organizations such as the ALA Rare Book and Manuscript Section (RBMS), which might be reviewed and formalized. Daniel Pitti also suggested that there is interest within ICA to formalize their relationship with SAA through a memorandum of understanding.

Work on revising the Council Handbook sections related to representative appointments is to be completed in January. Through this process, and the following review, it is hoped that charges might be established for positions (including fixing terms and delineating responsibilities), recommendations might be gathered from the committee, and appointments will be made.

Constituent group reports

Technical Subcommittee on Describing Archives: A Content Standard (TS-DACS)

Gordon Daines reported on work by TS-DACS undertaken during the past year. This has included major revisions to the DACS draft, such as the deprecation of Part III, some appendices, and crosswalks. The draft also reduces the examples provided in DACS, which are expected to be included with a best practice guide in the Portal. Another major change is the rearrangement of Part II, which moved creators into Part I while focusing Part II on the rules for authority control. Some of the changes included are also aimed at increasing compatibility between archival and bibliographic descriptive standards (i.e., *Resource Description and Access (RDA)*), such as changing the terminology for titles from “supplied” to “devised”. They also hope to ensure compatibility with EAC-CPF.

The subcommittee currently has a copy of the draft on the SAA website, with a public call for comments by September 15. They want to complete their draft by December and have DACS ready for next year. A workshop on the revised standard is already scheduled for June. Thus far there has been positive feedback and comments on the draft. Should there be a separate standard for authority records (question TS discussing). (Daniel: relationship between this standard and ICA standards) (Anila: authority bridges library and archives communities)

Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Context—Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families (TS-EAC-CPF)

Anila Angjeli reported on work undertaken by the technical subcommittee. Although the tag library and schema were released in draft 2010, they have now been thoroughly revised and are ready to be encoded and published to the site. During 2011 they met with TS-EAD, and now documentation needs to be made more usable and integrated into production tools (XML). There is a continuing need for joint work with TS-EAD, including formalizing the model for managing both communication standards through the Schema Development Team. This was identified as an issue during the French translation, and steps have been taken to facilitate updating the documentation. The translation into French is now complete; translations in German, Italian, Greek, Spanish, and Portuguese are forthcoming.

During the coming year they hope to continue their reconciliation efforts between EAC-CPF and EAD. Internationally, two draft XML encoding standards have been developed, one for functions and one for holdings institution maintenance. However, at the ICA level there is a need for some review and conceptual modeling before further steps are taken. This includes a review of the ISDIAH standard, in order to resolve whether this represents a unique entity or whether it is just an

aspect of an ISAAR(CPF)-described entity. It is hoped that the creation of an ontology for archival description may resolve these issues.

Representative to the International Council on Archives Committee on Best Practices and Standards (ICA-CBPS)

Daniel Pitti reported briefly on ICA-CPBS. He has been only recently appointed to serve as SAA representative to this group, and will be attending the ICA Congress. While he was aware of plans to develop a conceptual model by 2016, he referred the committee to the report by Claire Sibille-de Grimoüard.

Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Description (TS-EAD)

Mike Rush reported on work undertaken by TS-EAD during the past year. This included the publication of documents on the Standards Portal, such as their Points of Emphasis that demonstrates points of decision and lays out principles. The subcommittee held a working meeting in March at Yale University. During this meeting they worked through received comments (about 100), reviewed additional proposals from committee, and sought to resolve issues. Based on that work the draft schema is currently in the process of being revised, and all work that can be done to date has been done.

Their goal is to complete the revision process by July 1, 2013 so that it can be printed for the annual meeting. Intermediate milestones include an Alpha version schema release by early fall, and a follow-up meeting of the Schema Development Team at the University of Virginia in October. They then plan to take comments through the winter, with a final deadline for the polished schema beta by January 15, 2013, followed by a one month comment period. In March or April there will be an editorial team meeting, finalizing decisions and giving the schema to the Schema Development Team to complete for a July 1 release. Among the current issues under discussion is reconciliation with EAC-CPF. Further information about the revision process will be available at the EAD Roundtable meetings.

Other groups

Other groups submitted written reports about their activities, which were reviewed by the committee and included in the annual report. Other appointments, such as

Rosemary Pleva Flynn's new role as chair of the SAA Glossary Working Group, were recent and had not yet needed to report on their work.

Goals and projects

The committee discussed some possible goals for the committee to address in the coming year. These included:

- Increased transparency in operations
- Improved communications (e.g., expanded listserv, use of committee microsite)
- Responding to Council request for ISO 16363 promotion
- Representative position reviews
- Expanding Standards Portal content
- Reviewing management of the Portal
- Responding to calls for comment on external standards
- Completing review of EAD and DACS revisions