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

September 2019

The Technical Subcommittee on *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (TS-DACS) has had an active and productive year in fulfillment of its charge to oversee the timely and ongoing intellectual and technical maintenance and development of *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS). This report covers the period August 2018-July 2019.

**2018 annual meeting**

TS-DACS convened to discuss various ongoing projects including the process by which change requests happen; versioning *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*; and review of a companion standard proposed by the Music Library Association. The sub-committee also discussed committee function and roles of members; documenting the work of the sub-committee; and a DACS part II workshop proposal to SAA Council.

**Change requests:**

* In May 2019, the Society of American Archivists Council approved the revised Principles for Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) as submitted by the Technical Subcommittee on DACS and recommended by the SAA Standards Committee.
* TS-DACS sent a change request implementing a new rights statement for archival description element to Standards in January and then on to SAA Council in May. Council rejected this change request. TS-DACS is revising supporting material for clarity and working with Standards on developing a plan for moving it forward with the expectation that the versioning project (discussed below) will help make the change more palatable.

**DACS Versioning Project**

Since 2013, DACS has been revised on a continuing basis, and changes to the standard have been documented on the TS-DACS [Github site](https://github.com/saa-ts-dacs/dacs) since 2016. Since the continuing revision process was implemented, members of the DACS user community have expressed concern that their repositories’ descriptive records might fall out of DACS compliance during the period after DACS is updated and repositories complete the necessary work to update their records to reflect a revision. To help alleviate this concern, TS-DACS decided to develop and implement a versioning system for DACS.

To implement the versioning system, TS-DACS hired a DACS Versioning Project Assistant, Sabrina Unrein. Sabrina is an MLIS student at Syracuse embarking on a new career in libraries and archives after previously working as a software developer. She is also interning at CNN's Video Archives. Supervised by a TS-DACS working group, Sabrina completed the project during July 2019.

Under the new versioning system, each version of DACS receives a unique identifying number and is documented as a release on Github, and each time a revision to DACS is made, a new version of the standard will be released with a new version number. A DACS user could therefore declare that their records are compliant with a previous version of DACS while updating their repository’s records to reflect a revision, after which their records would become compliant with the newly updated version of DACS.

**Education:**

* DACS Part II was approved by SAA and the first workshop took place in April at the Society of California Archivists meeting. The contents of the course are still in the process of being finalized by SAA.
* A new iteration of the Revised Principles Workshop was also presented at the Society of California Archivists Meeting in April.

**Extensive feedback on MLA**

The review of the Music Library Association’s companion standards took a significant amount of time by the sub-committee. This was the first time the sub-committee undertook the process of reviewing a companion standard. Following several rounds of feedback and revision, a DACS-specific portion of the document was spun off as an appendix and TS-DACS recommended that the Standards Committee endorse the appendix as a supplement to DACS. TS-DACS will use this experience to create documentation to guide the examination of future companion standards.

**TS-DACS Review of RiC-O**

The Experts Group on Archival Description (EGAD) produced a draft conceptual model and ontology for description, RiC-O (Records in Contexts Ontology). TS-DACS scheduled a conference call for August to discuss the Ontology and gather feedback to share with EGAD.

**Updated microsite**

The TS-DACS microsite has been updated to include current members, a link to the twitter account, and information about TS-DACS purpose and committee responsibilities.

**Renamed files in Github, developed procedures for serialization from Github repository**

**Started Twitter handle**

TS-DACS is now interacting with archivists on twitter @TS\_DACS

**2019 annual meeting**

In Austin, TS-DACS met to review progress during 2018-2019 (as outlined above) and discuss plans for the coming year. Identified priorities included completing a workflow with SAA staff for publishing regular updates to DACS, launching a publicity and outreach program around the new principles, continuing revision of the DACS Part I and II workshops, and submitting a reworked change proposal for the new rights statement for archival description element.