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

July 2017

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 2016-July 2017.

The major focus of the committee over the past year has been leading a group of archival description experts in a revision process for the DACS Principles of Archival Description (hereafter referred to as the Principles). At the annual meeting last year, the group convened for an [initial assessment of the current principles](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CyTwnq2ahz_Ct4YQZ5M49_KeWynom8dAsbtZ3mINpFg/edit?usp=sharing). Each principle was [analyzed](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B6OllzWqP_-nc3ZLLU13VnhTZEU?usp=sharing) in terms of its clarity, relevance, and teachability. It was determined that a full rewrite of the principles was warranted. Members of TS-DACS drafted a funding request to SAA, which was initially rejected. We submitted a [subsequent proposal](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1wFk-lv6asvx7JWgMHssIxkmsdKy_fOgA_oX0SjcPI8o) with a change in venue that was accepted. The committee then went on to organize and arrange a five-day work retreat for eighteen participants held at the Lewis Walpole Library of Yale University in Farmington, Connecticut. A [full report](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1aOV7IgH5WqVl-tXUswCJkZAML_A8SKjTZOB4_wGz35w) of the work meeting was submitted to SAA leadership and Council.

The work retreat successfully produced what we considered a [minimum viable product](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ylCCzWh5yWNuIvakme3kKTJzFaWwjA1XMKLFRQvNhtk) (MVP) that was ready to be tested and commented on by the community at large. The idea of an MVP is to test and to test often, as taken from the software development community, in order to continually hone your product before you get too far down a potentially misguided path. We put out a request for public comment on the revised principles in April, announcing the revision process through listservs, Twitter, and direct emails. The draft was sent to fifteen first reviewers, consisting of expert practitioners and seasoned theorists. We created a [structured form](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1m2cnwRLnFNBeD37PDMBVXdcllxqY6drfcBUxPOTcOFg) on Google for gathering the data that could be parsed and analyzed in a single place. Since July 1, the deadline for public comment, we’ve been [analyzing the feedback](https://drive.google.com/open?id=14aH5V1S9oOIOrwQviQIWOABup1iFxA7BupsZAdWKxGA) through a combination of careful reading and a series of worksheets. We’ve asked our analyzers to suggest a possible resolution to the comments we received, whether that is through more revision, direct education, enhancing the DACS workshop, or with introductory remarks to the revised principles.

TS-DACS continued to polish our work on the DACS workshop revision. The [webinars and quizzes](https://www.pathlms.com/saa/courses/4933) were mounted on SAA’s website. The workshop was taught two times and received positive feedback on the revised format. Our intention for the coming year is to make a final push in refining and packaging the workshop content and delving into how to best educate around Part II of DACS.

One revision was made to DACS through the use of Github and our community comment mechanisms. It consisted of an [update to the crosswalks to account for EAD3](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FehVneexN4EPcMele_tFoPnN8h-3d1hk8o9znrHIghI/edit?usp=sharing).

TS-DACS created a [communication strategy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sWe4-woggktDUNItjX8vwh4629iHEuCATuk37jM7IcM/edit?usp=sharing) that will serve in the coming year as a basis for which to educate and advertise the standard and the work of TS-DACS. The committee also produced [documentation](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1J4yC9KisPMCIFokdhbRtY4lXUYUfl4mRhjjK3JRIvk4) for the SAA Vice President / President-Elect and the Nominating and Standards Committees when selecting new members for TS-DACS. The documentation outlines both requirements and expectations to help those who want to join the committee and also those doing the selecting. Lastly, the committee successfully lobbied for [changes in our charge](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Yg9jkNR8HWD2dCmP3BiMyhxx-rLBmHxUekCi0PB8lEc/edit?usp=sharing) to include an additional member, allow for co-chairs, and to advocate for membership to be archival description experts.

Lastly, we commented publicly on two documents, the [Records in Contexts](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1XoQmrT-kdj5fCKNcg0umghsWFORrKRf7rMsB4OsnY5o) draft revision to the suite of ISAD standards and the [OCLC report on metadata for web archives](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1x5BuGYdtdjfVvbnXfbTDt7VL2ETfFwI5IfH-GUrs57U/edit?usp=sharing).