

SAA Annual Meeting  
Description Section Meeting Minutes  
Georgetown East/West  
Friday, August 4, 12:15-2:15

## I. Section Reports

- Newsletter Editor: Michelle Light

Send submissions of 300 words or less for inclusion in *Descriptive Notes*. Michelle also seeks to develop longer (500 word) analytic pieces about how archivists engage with descriptive standards. Submissions will be accepted any time.

- Description Expo: Jane Rosario

There were 8 submissions this year; and the Expo is in Booth #318. The Expo will be up on the SAA web site shortly after the meeting. Members are encouraged to think of a more original name for the event.

- Chair Kathy Wisser acknowledged the steering committee members and encouraged interested parties to email her or Jane if interested in serving on the steering committee. Kathy acknowledged the work of Description Section intern Jesse Brown also.

## II. Reports from SAA Committees, Liaisons, and Related Groups

- SAA Council Representative: Ben Primer

Extended greetings from Council. There is a proposal to rethink sections and roundtable work being reviewed in Council. Leadership will be asked for feedback.

- Program Committee: Adriana Cuervo

Members are encouraged to submit creative proposals on any ideas, workshops and new experiences. The deadline is October 9, 2006 submitted via the web. If you experience problems, contact the Program Committee Co-Chairs. Sections and roundtables may endorse only two proposals.

- American Archivist* Editorial Board: Susan Hamburger

Any programs ideas proposed but not accepted are of interest to the *American Archivist* Editorial Board. They are interested in practice-based articles, not just theory. Editor Mary Jo Pugh is also interested in people who want to review manuscripts for publication.

- EAD Working Group: Kris Keisling

It has been a relatively quiet year. The Working Group is releasing a schema for broader testing. There may be changes to the DTD and another version of EAD (200X) is a possibility. The Working Group is meeting at 9am this Sunday in the Military Room and it is open. The official EAD website and help pages were updated very recently. In April, the third European EAD/EAC conference will be held in Berlin

(<http://www.bundesarchiv.de/instada/de/program.html?lang=de>).

- ALA Committee on Machine-Readable Bibliographic Information Committee (MARBI): Kris Keisling

This ALA committee meets twice a year and is responsible for approving all changes to MARC format. This year there has been nothing terribly pressing from the archives community. There is an interesting study conducted by Bill Moen at the University of North Texas that is analyzing

MARC content use (<http://www.mcd.unt.edu/>). The final report is expected to be ready by the end of August. In June, there was a proposal to create language for access restriction to digital materials, which came from the Digital Library Federation. There was a discussion paper to create 16 new subfields in the copyright field for digital materials, but it was not anticipated that the information would be maintained. It was felt that not providing info is better than providing it and not maintaining it. Further discussion will be held at ALA Mid-Winter, including the basic question of whether MARC is even the right place to put this information?

•DA:CS: Kris Keisling

*Describing Archives: A Content Standard* was approved March 29, 2005. Since then, twelve DA:CS workshops have been given. Interest in DA:CS is high. The workshop, MARC According to DA:CS, was given six times. Publishing an edition with an index is being discussed, as well as producing an online version. It was suggested from the floor that members let SAA know that these issues are important to the membership. There was a question as to when DA:CS will replace APPM on Cataloger's Desktop? Currently, it is postponed by licensing negotiations between SAA and Library of Congress.

•ALA Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA): Mary Lacy

It was a busy year. The revision of Resource Description and Access (RDA) (formerly AACR3) was released in December 2005 for constituency review. SAA's first preference was to remove basic practices and insert references to archival standards, which was not accepted, but pointers to archival standards were accepted for inclusion (DACS and ISAD(G)). The review process is now more open. A prototype is available at <http://www.rdaonline.org/>.

•ICA Section on Professional Standards and Best Practices: Michael Fox.

This committee is dissolved. Currently there are two working groups, one focusing on building terms for record creating functions and one for standards for institutions. (See <http://www.ica.org/body.php?pbodycode=CBPS&plangue=eng>) Currently no SAA members are involved; does any one want to be a corresponding member? Claire Sabille, ICA/CBPS Secretary/Secrétaire, spoke about the working group on Record Creators Functions.

•Technical Subcommittee on Descriptive Standards (TSDS): Chris Prom

TSDS submitted comments on RDA revisions. (Comments may be obtained from Chris, [prom@uiuc.edu](mailto:prom@uiuc.edu)) A draft charge to the EAC working group will be made. SAA Council recommended that TSDS take charge of revisions to DA:CS. Until SAA has web site and makes collaborative tools available, this cannot be undertaken. A process must be in place for commentary and review.

•Archivists Toolkit: Brad Westbrook.

The project received a no-cost extension from Mellon to extend it to December 31, 2006. Release version 1.0 may be out as early as November 17, 2006 or as late as December 15, 2006. Currently it is 90% built, including an import process for legacy EAD finding aids. A de-accessioning model must be built. The specifications are being revised as needed. An administrative meeting was held at NYU in June. The two Principal Investigators agreed to trademark and release application under GPL open source license. NYU and UCSD will support the application until 2010. This fall, the beta version will be released and tested thoroughly. (On Tuesday, functional testing of beta version with partners will begin.) In late summer, a proposal for second development phase will be drafted, with the goal of making the Toolkit "multi-threaded," refining its collection management functionality, supporting non-English languages, designing and building new functional areas (including appraisal, user registration and tracking),

and addressing digital repository applicability. Other goals include hiring a business consultant to come up with a more robust business plan to make the Toolkit more self-supporting, developing a robust user community and process, and developing a contributors' community. Eventually, the Toolkit will accommodate EAC as an output, and will be made available to users outside the US.

- Encoded Archival Context (EAC) Working Group: Daniel Pitti

An EAC working group is to be formed to bring EAC from beta to full-blown version. TSDS will be charging such a group, which Kathy Wisser will chair. The Working Group began negotiation with two major repositories in Europe with respect to their co-hosting EAC. The first order of business is to write a grant proposal for support of the working group efforts.

- Research Libraries Group: Merrilee Proffitt

On July 1, 2006, RLG became part of OCLC. There are two components to the "coming together". One is the services side. The RLG union catalog and Archive Grid are being migrated to the OCLC environment. OCLC has its own MARC records, so this will make it a much richer resource. It will be a better supported resource and is now available for subscription. The other component is that the RLG programs group of twelve people will join the Office of Research at OCLC, which has 30-35 people and a 25 year history. This is the new division of Programs & Research. OCLC members will be separate from RLG members. RLG members are now RLG Program Partners; things will continue to work as before. OCLC members will continue as in the past. Merrilee will speak on the future of finding aids -- usability studies on Archive Grid this Saturday morning, focusing on what aspects of description users find most valuable. We need to be more strongly behind EAC and bring together large EAC records here in the US. RLG is hoping to work on archive registries in US and link to Archives Grid. RLG has partnered with the Web Archive; most technological issues are fairly resolved, leaving a plethora of other issues to be solved. They will form a work plan to go forward. Next summer the focus will be creating efficiencies in digitizing special collections. In spring, RLG will sponsor a "future of discovery & delivery" symposium. RLG is also exploring issues around digital preservation; there is a huge range of activities having to do with research library & museums. RLG will publish & disseminate results.

## II. New Business

- Election: Mark A. Matienzo was elected Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect.

- Sessions Ideas Discussions:

The following ideas were discussed as possibilities for next year's Section Meeting: EAC, the changing nature of online catalog, given that there are extensive discussions about this in the library world; more product less process -- do some evaluations of user access; resubmission of sessions not accepted for this year's conference

- Announcements

Chris Prom announced Archon Project (<http://www.archon.org/>); it is similar to the Archivists' Toolkit. He is giving a demo immediately following the Section meeting.

Adrian Cunningham spoke regarding Australian descriptive standards. 2006 is the 40th anniversary of Peter J. Scott questioning the record group concept. ASA published *Describing Archives in Context*, which will appear at the ASA web site (<http://www.archivists.org.au/>). Peter Scott is working with ASA in compiling a collection of his writings, which is expected to be out in 2007.

Gerald Stone of the Library & Archives Canada gave a brief update on Rules for Archival Description (RAD) II. The Canadian Committee on Archival Description has had a change of membership and a new chair; the report on the Web site (<http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/archdes.html>). Stone reported that the comments were mixed, which makes next steps difficult.

Mark Matienzo: The American Institute of Physics compiles a survey of repositories holding history of physics collections every two years. August 15th is deadline to respond this year.

- III. Program: "Usability testing as a tool for Evaluation of Online Archival Access Tools", Elizabeth Yakel, Associate Professor, School of Information, University of Michigan