
Descriptive Notes

The Newsletter of the Description Section of the Society of American Archivists

Summer 2009

FROM THE CHAIR

James Roth

Greetings from the waterlogged Northeast! I hope you are planning to attend the 2009 annual meeting in Austin, and especially the Description Section meeting on Friday, August 14, from 1pm to 3pm. I, for one, am looking forward to some dry, warm weather.

We will hear official reports and announcements, including the results of the election for the next vice-chair/chair-elect and steering committee member, and benefit from Victoria Peters' presentation on the International Standard for Describing Functions (ISDF). The meeting agenda, as well as sessions that may be of particular interest to Description Section members, follow in this newsletter.

As in the past, I encourage all representatives and liaisons giving reports to submit them in advance so the reports can be available on the Description Section web site (<http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/descr/index.asp>). This allows membership the opportunity to read them beforehand, allowing us to keep close to our allotted meeting time.

As chair of the Description Section, it is my pleasure to have served as ex-officio on the C.F.W. Coker Award subcommittee and the Technical Subcommittee on Descriptive Standards (TSDS). My thanks to Chairs Mattie L. Sink and Michael Rush for their hard work over the course of the year, organizing conference calls, setting agendas, and moving the work of the subcommittees forward.

The Coker Award nominees were excellent this year and choosing the recipient was not an entirely easy process. Because the process was so technically challenging, the subcommittee sought the opinion and directive of the Awards Committee Co-Chairs and the Executive Director. The subcommittee will submit recommendations for rethinking/revising the guidelines for the Coker Award to SAA Council so they may address these challenges. I wish to thank all the nominees for submitting such innovative descriptive projects for consideration.

The TSDS has been working with the Standards Committee on revisions of the "Procedures for the Review and Approval of an SAA-Developed Standard" and procedures for endorsing external standards (non-SAA). The committee also has been working on re-missioning the Standards Committee, and, as part of the restructuring, the committee will be recommending that TSDS be dissolved. Work continues on a transition plan to make sure that the duties of TSDS do not go unfulfilled.

After serving as a Steering Committee member since 2003, Mary Lacy has decided to step down from her role. Mary has a long history of contributions to the Description Section, serving as vice-chair for 2000-2001, and as chair for the 2001-2002 term. During much of this time, she served as the SAA liaison to ALA's Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA) during the period in which the revision of AACR2 became RDA (Resource Description and Access). A major part of this activity was publicizing the contents of the RDA drafts within SAA and getting feedback from the Description Section steering committee as well as from TSDS. Mary also serves on SAA's DACS Working Group, 2007-2009. Mary, thank you for your hard work, dedication and service to the Description Section and to the profession.

While we will certainly miss Mary's many contributions to the Committee, this is a great opportunity to involve more people in the Section. Serving in any SAA Section or Roundtable provides an exceptional chance to meet and work with great colleagues and learn a multitude of interesting and useful things.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of you, the Section members and Section leadership: your hard work, dedication and commitment to descriptive practices have made this a vibrant and engaging Section. Special thanks to incoming Chair Erin Lawrimore, Sarah Keen, Janet Carleton, Donnelly Lancaster, Christine de Catanzaro, Mary Lacy, Jennifer Meehan, Jerry Simmons, Claudia Thompson, Mike Rush, past Chair Mark Matienzo, and Council Liaison Tom Hyry. Thank you for a wonderful year and I hope to see you in Austin.



FROM THE VICE CHAIR

Erin Lawrimore

SAA Description Expo 2009 Piecing Together the Archival Puzzle

We continue to gather submissions for this year's Description Expo, focused on innovation in conveying contextual information through archival description. How are we informing our researchers about the record's creation, use, and relationship to other materials? How are we assisting in piecing together the contextual pieces to build a greater archival puzzle? A brief (300 or so words) description of your project and a link (if applicable) is all you need to submit for participation in the Expo. By sharing ideas and innovations with your fellow archivists, you can encourage conversation and further developments in archival description and context building.

If you have created an inventive method of conveying contextual information, I hope that you will share your ideas with the archival community and submit your project for the Description Expo. Submissions will be gathered on an on-going basis until August. Also, as a change from previous years, we will not have a table for display at the annual conference. Instead, projects will be highlighted on the Description Section website. If you have a project that you would like to share, or if you would like to nominate another project that you find to be particularly inventive, please send a brief project description to me at Erin_Lawrimore@ncsu.edu.



SAA Description Section Meeting Agenda

August 14, 2009, 1-3 p.m., Austin, TX

1. Welcome and Section Reports
 - A. Election Results
 - B. Newsletter Editor
 - C. Description Expo (Vice-Chair)

2. Reports from SAA Committees, Liaisons, and Related Groups
 - A. SAA Council Representative: Tom Hyry
 - B. DACS Working Group: Bill Landis
 - C. ALA Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA): Lisa Carter
 - D. ICA Section on Professional Standards and Best Practices: James Roth for Claire Sibille
 - E. Technical Subcommittee on Descriptive Standards (TSDS): Michael Rush
 - F. RBMS and OCLC/Research Libraries Group: Jen Schaffer
 - G. OCLC: Susan Westberg
 - H. DCRM-MSS: Diane Ducharme
 - I. Encoded Archival Context (EAC) Working Group: Kathy Wisser
 - J. EAD Working Group: Kris Kiesling

- K. ALA Committee: Machine-Readable Bibliographic Information Committee (MARBI): Kris Kiesling
- L. Archivists Toolkit: Brad Westbrook
- M. 2009 Program Committee: TBD

3. New Business

4. Program Presentation on International Standard for Describing Functions (ISDF): Victoria Peters



RELEVANT MEETINGS, SESSIONS, AND EVENTS AT THE UPCOMING SAA

Monday, August 10

- 9:00 AM-5:00 PM [Implement DACS in Integrated Content Management Systems: Using Archon #0106 \(Part 1\)](#)
[Style Sheets for EAD - Delivering Your Finding Aids on the Web #0107 \(Part 1\)](#)

Tuesday, August 11

- 9:00 AM-5:00 PM SAA Standards Committee Meeting
[Implement DACS in Integrated Content Management Systems: Using Archon #0106 \(Part 2\)](#)
[Style Sheets for EAD - Delivering Your Finding Aids on the Web #0107 \(Part 2\)](#)

Wednesday, August 12

- 8:00-11:00 AM SAA Standards Committee Meeting
- 1:00-3:00 PM [Archivists' Toolkit™ Roundtable](#)
- 3:15-5:15 PM [Encoded Archival Description Roundtable](#)
[Metadata and Digital Object Roundtable](#)
- 5:30-7:30 PM [RLG Programs Roundtable](#)
[Visual Materials Cataloging and Access Roundtable](#)

Thursday, August 13

- 8:30-10:00 AM [SESSION 104](#) - The Real Archives 2.0: Studies of Use, Views and Potential for Web 2.0
- 10:30 AM-12:00 PM [SESSION 201](#) - Videogame Archives: Collecting, Preserving, and Providing Sustained Access to Complex Digital Artifacts
[SESSION 204](#) - Keeping Up with the Deluge: Managing Digital Collections Responsibly with Limited Resources
- 3:30-4:00 PM [P4 PROFESSIONAL POSTER](#): Envisioning Sustainable Archival Description
- 5:30-7:30 PM [Graduate Student Poster Presentations](#)

Friday, August 14

- 8:30-9:30 AM [SESSION 306](#) - Omeka: Using Web 2.0 Technologies to Enhance Digital Content
- 11:30 AM-12:45 PM [Graduate Student Poster Presentations](#)
- 1:00-3:00 PM [Description Section meeting](#)
- 4:00-4:30 PM [P4 PROFESSIONAL POSTER](#): Envisioning Sustainable Archival Description

Saturday, August 15

- 8:00-9:00 AM [SESSION 501](#) - More Product, Less Process (MPLP) Revisited: Choosing the Right Processing Strategy for Your Repository and Collections
- [SESSION 504](#) - More Than Just Passing Acquaintances: DACS and Companion Standards
- 9:30-11:00 AM [SESSION 601](#) - Going With the Flow: Sustainable Models for Integrating Digitization
- [SESSION 602](#) - Focusing the Wide-Angle Lens: Minimal Processing of Visual Materials Collections
- 1:30-3:00 PM [SESSION 711](#) - "The Whole World Is Watching": Contextual Information in Descriptive Systems with EAC-CPF

Sunday, August 16

9:00 AM-12:00 PM Encoded Archival Description (EAD) Working Group Meeting



NOMINATIONS FOR DESCRIPTION SECTION LEADERSHIP

The Description Section will be holding elections will be held for the section's leadership. As in past years, we will be holding an election for a new vice chair/chair elect. This person will serve for one year as vice chair, heading up the Description Expo efforts and then proceed to serve as chair for the following year.

We also will be electing a Steering Committee member. Responsibilities for all Steering Committee members include reviewing session proposals for section endorsement and contributing to section leadership discussions.

Serving in a leadership position for a section or roundtable is a great way to learn about SAA and its governance, contribute to new directions for SAA, and work with other archivists on interesting projects. It is also a great way to serve the society!

If you wish to nominate someone for any of these positions, please submit the person's name, institutional affiliation and e-mail address to James Roth, chair (james.roth@nara.gov) and Erin Lawrimore, vice chair (erin_lawrimore@ncsu.edu). Self-nominations are highly encouraged and requested. If you are submitting a self nomination, please also include a brief statement to be shared with the section membership.

Nominations will be accepted until July 25, 2008. Shortly thereafter, an online ballot will be made available on the SAA Intranet.



2008-2009 LEADERSHIP LIST

James Roth, Chair
 Erin Lawrimore, Vice Chair/Chair Elect
 Mark Matienzo, Immediate Past Chair
 Donnelly Lancaster, Secretary
 Janet Carleton, Web Liaison
 Sarah Keen, Newsletter Editor

STEERING COMMITTEE

Christine de Catanzaro
 Mary Lacy
 Jennifer Meehan
 C. Jerry Simmons
 Claudia Thompson
 Michael Rush, Ex-Officio



NEWS & NOTES

Appalachian State University Historical Photographs Digitization Project Reaches Digitization Goal

Amy Shope, Appalachian State University Belk Library and Information Commons

In June 2009, the Appalachian State University Historical Photographs Digitization Project completed its goal of digitizing 7,120 photographs and providing unrestricted online access. It is the first digitization project at Appalachian State done under the control of the University Archives using existing archival standards for metadata, Dublin Core for the metadata schema and DACs for content. The project uses the CONTENTdm database.

Over the course of two years, the NC ECHO grant-funded project, under the guidance of project manager Pam Mitchem, digitized over seven thousand photographs and negatives from the University Archives' University photographer and News Bureau photograph collections. The database includes digitized copies of roughly twenty to twenty-five percent of the University Archives' photograph collections in JPEG format. Highlighted are photos pertaining to student events, campus buildings, faculty and staff, Homecoming, athletic teams, sporting events, parades, alumni, and some regional photographs of Boone, NC, and Blowing Rock, NC. The images have been restored and include historical and descriptive metadata, as well as detailed technical information on both the digital files and physical photographs and negatives. The site includes an interactive web site, with four historical timelines, photographer bios, lesson plans, and project information. Copies of the grant documents and a metadata guide are available for reference. Future developments include a layered interactive map that is in production, additional lesson plans, search guides for using the collection and the database, and metadata and digital project resources for other institutions and departments.

The Historical Photograph Collection is part of Documenting Appalachia, an Appalachian State program to digitize materials documenting the Southern Appalachian region and culture from the Department of Special Collections and University Archives and Records Management. The University Archives is housed within the Belk Library and Information Commons at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. With the Appalachian State University Historical Photographs Collection complete and online, it is the Archives' intent that this new digital collection will serve as the beginning of many more digitization projects for the University and will be of use for researchers and students. The Collection is accessible through the internet and the collection's web site: <http://contentdm.library.appstate.edu/docapp/digit/index.html>

National Archives and Records Administration Joins Flickr.com

Jerry Simmons, National Archives and Records Administration

In early July, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) launched a pilot project on Flickr.com, the popular photo-sharing service web site. NARA is the latest in a fast-growing group of archives, museums and special libraries to post its image holdings on the service. With the launch, NARA invites users to explore a sampling of the agency's vast image collections, and to share their knowledge, insights, and experience by attaching tags, notes, and comments to the images.

The pilot set of images is presented in three groupings: first, is a small set of selected photographs from the U.S. Women's Bureau; a second, much larger set of images comes from the Environmental Protection Agency's DOCUMERICA project of the 1970s; and the third is a group of popular images known as "NARA Favorites." These "favorites" include well-known images like the December 21, 1970, photograph of a meeting between President Richard M. Nixon and "The King of Rock and Roll" Elvis Presley. Another is a photograph of American soldiers wading onto a beach at Normandy during the June 1944 D-Day Invasion. There are two goals for the project: first, to share NARA holdings with a wider audience of users on the Internet, and second, to learn more about how people use the agency's archival resources. Collecting public response to the Flickr.com pilot will help NARA better serve customers.

NARA will monitor the public's response to the Flickr.com pilot to plan for future contributions and involvement. The National Archives' participation follows the overwhelmingly positive pilot projects by the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, National Galleries of Scotland, National Library of New Zealand, and the Getty Research Institute. You can learn more about NARA's holdings on Flickr at <http://www.flickr.com>.

New Online Photography Archive Chronicles the Height of Suburban Living

Jennifer A. Watts, The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

The archive of noted architectural photographer Maynard L. Parker, who captured midcentury modern architecture on the West Coast and the nation, is now cataloged and accessible online through The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. The archive consists of some 58,000 photographs, negatives, and other materials documenting the modern home and garden in mid-20th-century America. The project was funded by a "We the People" grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Parker (1901-1976) was a Los Angeles-based photographer whose work captured a postwar era of suburban middle class homes that celebrated an indoor-outdoor lifestyle and burgeoning consumer culture. From the late 1930s to the early 1970s, his images were featured in many of the nation's top shelter magazines, including *House Beautiful*, *Architectural Digest*, *Better Homes & Gardens*, and *Sunset*.

To learn more about the collection, search the catalog, and order images, visit www.huntington.org and enter the key words "Maynard Parker." Users can also access a finding aid that provides a complete inventory of Parker's photographic assignments as well as in-depth information about the archive. About 6,000 of the photographer's images have been uploaded to the database thus far; additional images will be continually added.

University of Florida Awarded NHRPC Grant to Digitize Everglades Collections

John Nemmers, Special and Area Studies Collections, University of Florida

The University of Florida (UF) has been awarded \$72,650 from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHRPC) to digitize six archival collections related to the drainage, development, and conservation of the Everglades in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This three-year project, *America's Swamp: The Historic Everglades Project*, will use cost-effective methods to digitize approximately 100,000 pages documenting early plans to drain the Everglades in the 1880s and 1890s, the dredging of canals and subsequent development of the destroyed wetlands at the start of the 20th century, as well as early attempts by conservationists to preserve a portion of the Everglades.

The collections will be digitized in their entirety by the UF Digital Library Center, and will be available online via the UF Digital Collections (UFDC) (<http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/UFDC/>). Employing cost-effective digitization methods, no item-level descriptions will be created. The only newly-created metadata will consist of technical and structural data; all descriptive metadata will be repurposed from existing EAD finding aids. UF will contribute digital objects and metadata to the Everglades Digital Library (<http://everglades.fiu.edu/>), a collaborative effort of Florida International University and numerous other organizations.

Because this project does not include item-level metadata, it is ideal for experimentation involving user-contributed metadata. Users will enhance discoverability and comprehension by contributing descriptions for objects. UF plans to use a contribution system with a validation structure providing for contributions from authenticated and anonymous users. This allows established researchers to easily share their expertise, and all others to contribute descriptions with or without attribution. In particular, it is anticipated that these materials will be used in the classroom, and an obvious experiment would involve students contributing descriptions as part of their coursework.

In addition, link paths and social tagging can be used to improve navigation of the project pages. UF also plans to make use of anonymous server usage statistics to identify high-demand materials in the collections. User search patterns can point to areas where high demand justifies the creation of authoritative item-level descriptions. Likewise, staff can identify materials with high research value that are under-utilized and develop methods to improve their visibility.

As materials are digitized over the next three years, they will be made available at <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/ufdc/?c=swamp>. For more information about the project, contact John Nemmers at jnemmers@ufl.edu or 352-273-2766.

Future Directions for Metadata Remediation for Metadata Aggregators (February 2009)

<http://www.diglib.org/pubs/dlf110.pdf>

Greta de Groat

Commissioned by DLF Aquifer and supported by a grant from The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, this report was written for metadata specialists, programmers, project planners, and systems architects, and librarians to help them make decisions about how to allocate resources for metadata creation, enhancement, and remediation by examining the feasibility of developing tools into production services for automating the cleanup and enhancement of metadata records. It is a thoughtful review of commercially and freely available state-of-the-art tools for remediation and enhancement solutions.

The EAD Report Card Is Back!

Merrilee Proffitt, OCLC Research

This Web application is the first automated program for checking the quality of your EAD encoding. Created by popular demand, the tool supplements RLG's award-winning [RLG Best Practice Guidelines for Encoded Archival Description](#) (pdf). Simply upload one of your finding aids for a quick checkup. The program will flag any discrepancies and cite the relevant guideline, so you can fix what you have wrong on the spot.

The EAD Report Card is available in three ways:

- An [online version](#).
- Two standalone versions (running the application locally allows for faster testing, and the open-source code can be modified to reflect local best practices)

Who can benefit? Archivists and anyone who is creating EAD finding aids, by ensuring conformance with community-wide guidelines.

When does it come in handy? Whether or not you've already been working with the Best Practice Guidelines, this tool will help quality control and productivity. It accepts XML files encoded in EAD DTD version 2002.

Use it with:

- finding aids you're currently encoding to the guidelines, to see how they stack up.
- finding aids encoded prior to the publication of the guidelines.
- documents converted for you by a vendor.
- finding aids produced using a database or other tools.
- work done by student assistants.

<http://www.oclc.org/programs/ourwork/past/ead/reportcard.htm>

New Report: "Networking Names"

Karen Smith-Yoshimura, OCLC Research

This report identifies the necessary components of a "Cooperative Identities Hub" that would address the problem space in the research community and have the most impact across different target audiences.

The fifteen members of the RLG Partnership Networking Names Advisory Group developed fourteen use case scenarios around academic libraries and scholars, archivists and archival users, and institutional repositories that provide the context in which different communities would benefit from aggregating information about persons and organizations, corporate and government bodies, and families, and making it available on a network level.

The report summarizes the group's recommendations on the functions and attributes needed to support the use case scenarios.

More information:

Networking Names report (.pdf: 135K/25 pp.)

www.oclc.org/programs/publications/reports/2009-05.pdf

Prototype a Cooperative Identities Hub project

www.oclc.org/programs/ourwork/renovating/leveragevocab/idresource.htm

Networking Names Advisory Group

www.oclc.org/programs/ourwork/renovating/leveragevocab/netgroup.htm

New Report: "The Metadata is the Interface: Better Description for Better Discovery of Archives and Special Collections"

Jennifer Schaffner, OCLC Research

This report synthesizes evidence from archival user studies and specifies what descriptive information is needed for research.

It also includes recommendations for improving discovery of archives and special collections.

More information:

The Metadata is the Interface: Better Description for Better Discovery of Archives and Special Collections (.pdf: 190K/17pp.)

www.oclc.org/programs/publications/reports/2009-06.pdf

Archives and Special Collections Program

www.oclc.org/programs/ourwork/collectivecoll/archives/default.htm

Call for Papers....

Cataloging & Classification Quarterly

CCQ welcomes the submission of research, theory, and practice papers relevant to the broad field of bibliographic organization.

This journal, published now 8 times a year by Taylor & Francis, LLC, is respected as an international forum that emphasizes research and review articles, description of new programs and technologies relevant to cataloging

and classification, and considered speculative articles on improved methods of bibliographic control for the future.

Articles are particularly welcome in areas dealing with research-based cataloging practice, including user behavior, user needs and benefits.

Authors are encouraged to submit manuscripts via email with attached word document to the Editor, Sandra K. Roe, Bibliographic Services Librarian, Illinois State University (email: skroe@ilstu.edu).

Special Issues

Colleagues interested in guest editing a special issue or expanded double issue are invited to contact the Editor with a general proposal, tentative schedule, and CVs. Previous special issues have included:

**Metadata and Open Access Repositories* (Michael Babinec and Holly Mercer, Guest Editors)

**Bibliographic Database Quality* (Jeffrey Beall and Stephen Hearn, Guest Editors)

**The Intellectual and Professional World of Cataloging* (Qiang Jin, Guest Editor)

**Knitting the Semantic Web* (Jane Greenberg and Eva Méndez, Guest Editor)

**Cataloger, Editor and Scholar: Essays in Honor of Ruth C. Carter* (Robert Holley, Guest Editor)

Annual Best Paper Award

Taylor & Francis sponsors an annual prize for *CCQ* with a small financial stipend for the Best Paper of the Year.

Free Print Sample

A free print specimen copy may be obtained by sending an email to [<Marisa.starr@taylorandfrancis.com>](mailto:Marisa.starr@taylorandfrancis.com)

For More Details

Further details may be found at the *CCQ* home page: <http://catalogingandclassificationquarterly.com/>



FEATURE ARTICLE

Automated Metadata Harvesting and Matching in the Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Collection

Courtney Chartier, Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University Center

Since 2007, the Archives and Special Collections Department of the Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University Center has been processing and digitizing the papers of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The papers are owned by Morehouse College, one of the member institutions of the Atlanta University Center and Dr. King's alma mater.

To date, over 60 feet of material has been arranged and described on the item level (the finding aid is available at <http://www.auctr.edu/mlkcollection>). All manuscript items are physically processed, intellectually listed in the EAD encoded finding aid, then scanned and matched to concurrent metadata harvested from the EAD. Although the finding aid is available online, the digitized collection can only be accessed in the reading room of the Archives and Special Collections.

In order to complete the description, digitization and release of digital images in a timely manner, the archivists have developed an automated process for matching scans and metadata. This process was developed in

partnership with the Digital Library of Georgia, specifically with scripts provided and modified by DLG Director, Dr. P. Toby Graham.

The first step in the process is to encode each series level finding aid in EAD using XMetal. Once a series has been processed and encoded, it is scanned. Each item is assigned a sequential number in the finding aid, which is then used to name the scan file. The purpose of the matching numbers is to create a point of reference linking the scan to the metadata.

The Archives and Special Collections department uses CONTENTdm as a content management system. CONTENTdm can ingest tab delimited files, so the next step in the process is to create tab delimited files from the EAD finding aids. The EAD elements are mapped to Dublin Core metadata elements in the tab delimited file, which are then matched to fields in CONTENTdm.

Using an XSLT stylesheet and MSXSL commands, the EAD is processed into a text file. The stylesheet is modified depending on what level of description is being harvested, and at what level in the EAD file the description resides. For instance, in some series, the descriptive information is at the c02 level, in others, or in subseries within the same series, it may be at the c03 or even lower. The results of the text file are then imported as XML data into Excel and saved as a text (tab-delimited) file. When the scanned images are imported into CONTENTdm as compound objects, so is the tab delimited file, which matches metadata with scans based on the previously described numbers.

Despite this automation, there is a lengthy quality control process for metadata. Each scan is checked for quality before import into CONTENTdm and rechecked against the metadata after the import. Seeing the scan side-by-side with the metadata is also an opportune time to revise item descriptions for mistakes or opacity.

It is only recently that the Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Collection processing team has taken responsibility for all steps in this process. Previously, assistance in converting EAD to Dublin Core metadata was provided by the DLG. All work in EAD and CONTENTdm has always been performed by MCMLK staff. The MCMLK staff is eternally grateful to Toby Graham and the DLG for their assistance and patience, and for teaching us new skills via this collaboration.