Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
January 23 – 26, 2014
Chicago, Illinois

Staff Report: Technology
(Prepared by Matt Black)

ANNUAL MEETING

Two of the most important technology initiatives of 2013 are related to the Annual Meeting:

Dedicated Annual Meeting Website: A dedicated website for the 2013 Joint Annual Meeting launched in July 2013. It took its design from the design of the meeting, rather than SAA's website. Separating the design from SAA's main website allows for better navigation and usability, better reflects the partnerships for joint annual meetings, and provides freedom to experiment year to year. The entire design was mobile-friendly and well integrated with social media. A similar approach is underway for the 2014 Joint Annual Meeting and is set to launch by February 2013.

Online Schedule and Mobile App: The online schedule and mobile app was built using Sched.org, one of the most cost-effective options on the market. The app was launched in conjunction with the dedicated Annual Meeting website. Overall feedback from participants was very positive: more than 70% used the app, and more than 80% of those who used it rated it positively. We plan to use Sched.org again for the 2014 Joint Annual Meeting with some adjustments. One of the top suggestions for improvement was to offer a native app (Sched.org by default is a web-based app). Sched.org does offer a native app for iOS and Android, and we plan to purchase this option in 2014.

DAS ADMINISTRATION

The Education Department has long been in need of better tools to manage its booming course and certificate offerings. Our current association management software (AMS) system, MemberMax, cannot keep up with the needs of our programming in this area. We built a custom interface this fall to address some major gaps: providing meaningful real-time reporting on enrollment in the DAS program and providing a means to generate transcripts for individual students.

AMS SYSTEM

We migrated MemberMax to a new server in December 2013, which has already demonstrated significant performance gains and reduced staff time on several fronts.

LISTSERVS

We updated our listserv and email marketing platform (Lyris) in September 2013. This helped resolve some delivery issues that plagued us through the summer. We also found a fix to suppress "out of office" auto-responder messages that have notoriously flooded users when they send to large lists.

MICROSITES

We're working to make component group microsites more useful and more discoverable on the SAA website. The web presence of component groups relies heavily on both Drupal and MemberMax. We are currently in the process of adding a new "nav bar" menu to all microsites to link to standard resource pages such as rosters and group descriptions. This essentially brings some of the features provided by MemberMax onto the Drupal pages, which will allow us to streamline navigation to the microsites, reduce clicks, and provide a uniform interface for basic group information.

SURVEYS

Staff has expanded its use of SurveyMonkey. The 2013 Joint Annual Meeting Evaluation survey saw record participation and provides some of the best insight into the Annual Meeting we have had to date. Happily many of the conclusions from this evaluation support the experience of the staff, suggesting we have a good understanding of members' needs and the recurring issues we face at each Annual Meeting.

SurveyMonkey was again used to great effect to conduct the component group elections online, held mostly in June 2013. The drawback of this process is that it requires a significant investment of staff time.

In Fall 2013 we began using SurveyMonkey for workshop and course evaluations. This has helped streamline our process, improve accuracy, improve reporting, and enhance staff efficiency.

MAIN WEBSITE REDESIGN

The first phase of the main website redesign is underway. Staff is reviewing the structure and existing menus of the site navigation, as well as analyzing analytics to determine the most visited content.

The redesign is, of course, a large undertaking and has been long in coming. Among our top requirements are responsive design (mobile-friendly), social media integration, improved usability and navigation, content aggregation, a more aesthetic look, and single sign-on with our AMS (resolving the current dual-login issue).