

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 15 – 17, 2013
Chicago, Illinois**

**Review of Archives & Archivists List Terms of Participation
(Prepared by Nancy Beaumont)**

BACKGROUND

At its August 2009 meeting, the SAA Council considered the recommendations of its Task Force on A&A List Terms of Participation. Per the minutes of that meeting:

B. A&A List Terms of Participation Review and Revision

In fulfilling its charge to review and recommend revisions to the A&A List Terms of Participation, the Task Force on the A&A List Terms of Participation compiled background information on past SAA practice, examined terms of participation for similar professional lists, and developed an online survey to solicit comment from list subscribers.

According to the Task Force report, examination of the terms of participation of similar professional lists revealed no significant differences from SAA's existing Terms of Participation; in fact, SAA's existing Terms were more descriptive than those of many other lists. Survey results indicated a "fairly high rate of satisfaction" with the current terms. The "far greater concern" – expressed in messages to the Task Force email list and in informal conversations – was with the conduct of the list members. The most significant addition in the Task Force's revision of the Terms is a more explicit stating of the rules of "netiquette," with key rules summarized.

The SAA Council adopted the following motion regarding the A&A List Terms of Participation:

MOTION 1

THAT the following revision of the existing A&A List Terms of Participation be adopted [strikethrough = deletion, underline = insertion];

THAT the Terms be reviewed on a regular three-year cycle (i.e., in 2012, 2015, etc.); and

THAT the SAA office, working with the List administrators, implement more consistent use of off-list and occasional on-list warnings for violations of the Terms, including breaches of "netiquette."

The Terms were not reviewed in 2012 and are brought forward to the Council now for review. The staff has no specific recommendations for revision of the Terms except to make the minor editorial change in the reporting structure for the List Coordinator (see "List Ownership").

Archives & Archivists List Terms of Participation

(Revised August 10, 2009)

Background and Mission

The Archives and Archivists (A&A) List was established in 1989 by Donna Harlan and John Harlan as an open forum for all topics relating to archival theory and practice. Over the years, A&A has had various homes. In late 1993, the list was migrated to Miami University. In 1998, the Society of American Archivists (SAA) assumed sponsorship of the list as a service to the archives profession. It remained hosted at Miami University under the stewardship of Robert M. Schmidt until September 2006, at which time SAA assumed full ownership of the list and responsibility for its ongoing maintenance.

Audience

The principal audiences include archivists, archival educators, and students enrolled in graduate archival education courses and programs. The list is open to all individuals with an interest in the archives profession and in the preservation and promotion of archival materials. SAA membership is not required for participation in the list. Participants are required, however, to “register” with the Society of American Archivists. Please see “Responsibilities of Participants” below.

Scope of the List

Subjects that are appropriate to the list include all aspects of the theory and practice of the archives profession.

Messages that are unrelated to the archives profession are off topic and are prohibited. Other off-topic subjects include:

- Unsolicited commercial advertisements for goods and/or services (a.k.a. spam).* (Commercial vendors are not prohibited from posting *responses* to list messages, but such postings should contribute in a useful way to an existing discussion or line of inquiry.)
- Messages directed to specific individuals (please contact them directly).
- Flames (personal attacks).
- Political speech unrelated to archival issues, including but not limited to endorsing or attacking a particular political candidate or party, or the views of any candidate or party.
- Virus warnings (generally, such messages are hoaxes).
- General humor (*see below*).

* Excluding those nonprofit archives and allied associations listed online at <http://www.archivists.org/assoc-orgs>.

Regarding humor: The posting of humorous anecdotes (a.k.a. “Friday Funnies”), especially as they pertain to archives and/or a current thread, has a long tradition on the A&A List. General humor, however, is off topic. Participants are especially encouraged to label Friday Funnies for the benefit of colleagues who may wish to filter these messages and to be mindful of the professional nature of the A&A List at all times.

Netiquette

Participants are expected to follow the core rules of netiquette. See an excerpted version from the book *Netiquette* by Virginia Shea at <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>. Some key points are

summarized below [1]:

- Messages should trigger discussion through a question or observation, or should further a discussion by adding something new.
- Participants should remember that other readers receive messages in a different context from the author.
- Messages, especially responses, should be long enough to be understandable, including enough of the original message (by quoting or paraphrasing) to provide context. When replying to a message, avoid including the full text of long messages.
- Avoid inflammatory remarks of a personal nature. Similarly, when reading a message, be slow to take offense. In general, assume that an individual had good intentions when posting a message, but the rapidity of the medium, the lack of visual cues, and other factors may make an otherwise innocent message seem insulting. Countering with insults on the list is considered off topic.
- Participants should consider whether their reply is of interest to the list as a whole or only to the individual making the posting. Do not automatically use the reply key (which usually responds to the whole list). The best and most experienced participants will occasionally make this mistake, which is entirely forgivable.
- Avoid posting styled text (messages formatted with html code) to the list, as many email readers and the digest readers are unable to read these messages easily.

Blog Postings

Due to the high volume of list messages, participants are discouraged from advertising blog postings and other content that is frequently updated elsewhere on the Web. Blogs offer the option of subscription through RSS, which enables those who wish to follow the updates to do so. Similarly, participants should consider the medium when posting frequent updates or long expository messages to the list. A blog may be a more appropriate forum for such content.

Copyright and License Agreement

Participants retain copyright to their individual postings (“the Work”). By posting a message to the list, participants grant to the Society of American Archivists and its agents a nonexclusive, royalty-free, irrevocable, perpetual, worldwide, and fully sub-licensable license to use, reproduce, modify, adapt, publish, translate, create derivative works from, incorporate into other works, distribute, publicly perform, publicly display, and otherwise exploit such content, in whole or in part, in any form, media, or technology now known or later developed for the benefit of the archives profession. Nothing in this license is intended to reduce, limit, or restrict any rights arising from fair use, first sale, or other limitations on the exclusive rights of the copyright owner under copyright law or other applicable laws.

Posted messages are retained in the list archives and are publically accessible. SAA will delete messages from the list archives in cases of copyright infringement. Otherwise, SAA’s general practice is to decline requests to remove messages from the list archives.

Copyright Infringements

As a professional association concerned with protecting intellectual property rights of authors whose works are held in archival repositories, SAA expects participants to set a high standard of respect for copyright. Copyrighted material beyond brief quotations should not be posted to the A&A List without appropriate permissions. Participants wishing to direct others to copyrighted text are encouraged to post a link to the copyrighted materials on the Web as long as: a) such links do not circumvent any fees charged by the site and b) the URL is not to a site that is itself in violation of copyright.

PARTICIPANTS ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL MATERIALS THEY POST TO THE ARCHIVES & ARCHIVISTS LIST.

It is SAA's policy to respond to notices of alleged copyright infringement that comply with the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA). The agent designated to respond to reports alleging copyright infringements, in accordance with the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, is the SAA Executive Director.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act specifies that all infringement claims must be in writing (either electronic mail or paper letter) and must include the following elements:

1. A physical or electronic signature,
2. Identification of the infringed work,
3. Identification of the infringed material,
4. Contact information for the complainant, e.g., address, telephone number, electronic mail address,
5. A statement that the complaining party has a good-faith belief that use of the material in the manner complained of is not authorized by the copyright owner or the law, and
6. A statement that the information contained in the notification is accurate, and under penalty of perjury, that the complaining party is authorized to act on behalf of the copyright owner.

DMCA Agent Contact Information:

Nancy Beaumont, Executive Director
Society of American Archivists
17 North State Street, Suite 1425
Chicago, IL 60602
Email: nbeaumont@archivists.org
Phone: 312-606-0722
Fax: 312-606-0728

On receipt of a conformant complaint of copyright infringement, SAA's response may include removing or disabling access to material claimed to be the subject of infringing activity and/or terminating the participation of the infringer. If material is removed or access is disabled in response to a DMCA notice, SAA will make a good-faith attempt to contact the participant who posted the content so that he/she will be able to make a counter notification pursuant to sections 512(g)(2) and (3) of that Act. It is our policy to document all notices of alleged infringement on which we act.

Responsibility of Participants

Participants agree to restrict their messages to the scope of the list; to follow generally accepted principles of netiquette; to respect the interests and rights of other participants and of the Society of American Archivists; and to respect the law. The A&A List is an un-moderated forum. Participants are solely responsible for their postings.

Due to certain technical requirements, subscriber information for all SAA-hosted discussion forums must be stored in SAA's central database of member and nonmember contacts. Therefore, by subscribing to the A&A List, participants also grant SAA permission to record essential contact information (e.g., name and email address) in its central database. Personal contact information will be administered in strict accordance with SAA's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy (<http://www.archivists.org/privacy.asp>).

The Archives & Archivists List is a professional forum. SAA reserves the right to ban participants if off-topic or abusive messages threaten to disrupt the functioning of the list. SAA may also block or remove

participants for violating the copyright of others or for any other actions that do not conform to these Terms of Participation. Punitive action is rare and generally follows wanton and/or persistent disregard for these Terms of Participation. In order to ensure due process, punitive action shall take place only after formal notification of an infraction and initiation of a 90-day probation period. Upon additional misconduct within the 90 days, an individual may be banned by approval of the Council. Misconduct after the 90 days will result in a one-year probation. (Upon misconduct within this longer probationary period, an individual may also be banned by approval of the Council.) A banned subscriber may petition the Council for reinstatement after one year. Such appeals must be accompanied by a written and signed statement agreeing to comply with the Terms of Participation.

List Ownership

The Archives & Archivists List is owned by the Society of American Archivists. The SAA Council is charged with setting policy on the list. Two Council members are assigned the responsibility of monitoring the list and making recommendations for responses on behalf of the Council when issues arise. The A&A List Coordinator, reporting to SAA's Executive Director, ~~Director of Member and Technical Services~~ oversees the daily operations of the list, including assisting participants with their subscriptions.

A&A List Coordinator: Meghan Petersen (mpetersen@archivists.org)

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed on the Archives & Archivists List do not necessarily represent those of SAA and are not endorsed by the Society.

Revised and approved by the SAA Council, August 1, 2006. Updated August 10, 2009.

¹ Taken from the SAA Visual Materials Section list Terms of Participation.