

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
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**Standards Committee: Extension of
DACs Working Group (Technical Subcommittee)
(Prepared by Margery Sly, Council Liaison to Standards Committee, and
Chatham Ewing, DACSWG Member)**

BACKGROUND

Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACs) was officially approved by the Society of American Archivists as an SAA standard in March 2005, following review by the Standards Committee, the Technical Subcommittee for Descriptive Standards, and the general archives community. In October 2006, the Council approved a five-year review cycle for the standard and established the DACs Working Group. The goals of the DACs Working Group were to:

- Initiate a Web-based mechanism for gathering comments and a process for reviewing and publicizing them on an ongoing basis between cyclical full reviews of DACs, the first of which would occur in 2009;¹ and
- Prepare a report for review and comment by the Standards Committee at its August 2007 meeting. The report should include recommendations for a formal process for the review of DACs; a draft timeline for a first formal review (and editorial work, if necessary) to be undertaken in 2009; and recommendations for appointing a small editorial group to revise DACs if this step is warranted based on the outcome of the review.

DISCUSSION

Although the DACs Working Group began work on a plan to review, obtain comment on, and revise DACs by the end of 2009, it did not complete its work. This was due both to time pressures on its members and their interest in seeing how DACs might interact with *Resource Description and Access (RDA)*. Per the RDA website:

Resource Description and Access (RDA) is the new standard for resource description and access designed for the digital world. Built on the foundations established by the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, 2d ed. (AACR2), RDA will provide a comprehensive set of guidelines and instructions on resource description and access covering all types of content and media. The Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA (JSC) is responsible for developing RDA. The

¹ Staff note: Five years from the time of adoption of the standard would require review in March 2010, but this date was overridden in favor of a full review in 2009.

JSC consists of representatives from six Anglo-American cataloguing communities: the American Library Association (ALA), the Australian Committee on Cataloguing (ACOC), the British Library (BL), the Canadian Committee on Cataloguing (CCC), the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), and the Library of Congress (LC). The JSC reports to the Committee of Principals (CoP) – the directors or their representatives from the Canadian, UK, and US professional library associations, the British Library, Library and Archives Canada, the Library of Congress, and the National Library of Australia.

According to the developers: “The new standard is being developed for use primarily in libraries, but consultations are being undertaken with other communities (archives, museums, publishers, educators, book dealers, ILS vendors, etc.) in an effort to attain effective levels of alignment between RDA and the metadata standards used in those communities.”

DACS Working Group members are interested in studying how the broad implementation of RDA may have an impact on the way DACS elements map to MARC records as vendors alter systems to accommodate RDA. Wide adoption of such new systems may alter how SAA reviews and revises DACS.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the SAA Council repopulate and extend the charge of the DACS Working Group (to be renamed the DACS Technical Subcommittee) through May 2010, with the responsibilities of 1) monitoring how *Resource Description and Access (RDA)* and DACS will interact, 2) pursuing further discussion related to the revision with the RDA implementation groups (The Library of Congress, the British Library, Library and Archives Canada, and the National Library of Australia), and 3) coordinating with interested professional groups and subgroups (possibly including, but not limited to, the American Library Association’s Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access [CC:DA], the ALA’s Committee on Machine-Readable Recording of Bibliographic Information [MARBI], and the International Council on Archives Committee on Descriptive Standards); and

THAT the DACS Technical Subcommittee work with the Standards Committee to draft recommendations, for Council consideration in May 2010, for a new technical subcommittee charge and timeline for review and maintenance of DACS.

Support Statement: Given the importance of DACS within the archives community, it is appropriate that the group charged with its review and maintenance be fully aware of other developing standards that may have an impact on DACS. The group best prepared to comment on the potential “interaction” of DACS and RDA is the current DACS Working Group (to be renamed DACS Technical Subcommittee if Standards Committee recommendations in Agenda Item 0210-III-J-StdsCommMission are adopted by the Council).

Fiscal Impact: Nominal; the DACSTS may hold one or more conference calls to coordinate work and/or to discuss report recommendations.