

Intentions and Impact  
of  
Encoded Archival Context  
  
An  
Emerging International Standard

3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference  
on  
EAD, EAC and METS

Berlin  
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# Overview

- Brief History
- Archival description and EAC
- Current EAC Activities

# Brief History

- Yale meeting – 1999
  - Funding: Digital Library Federation
  - Preliminary discussions
- Toronto meeting – 2001
  - Funding: Delmas Foundation
  - Basic specifications for schema
  - Based on ISAAR (1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>)

# Brief History

- Charlottesville meeting – 2001
  - Funding: Delmas Foundation
  - Specifications to schema development
  - Alpha version of DTD released in 2001
- Stockholm meeting – 2003
  - Funding: Delmas Foundation
  - Alpha to Beta
  - DTD, Relax NG, W3C Schema
  - Tag Library
  - Beta release 2004

# Implementations

- Projects and experimentation
- Linking and Exploring Authority Files (LEAF)
  - European Union
  - Experimental project (that is, not a program)
  - Successful
- Other experimental projects
  - National archives
  - Research archives and libraries

# Evaluation

- Good news: EAC works
- Bad news: But ... “it is too complicated”
- More on this later
- Now: What is EAC?

# Archival Description and EAC

- Components of archival description
  - Record description (ISAD/EAD)
  - Context description (ISAAR/EAC)
  - Function description (ISAF/???)
- Interrelated
- Relations qualified by place and date
- Together, complete archival description

# EAC: Context (Creator) Description

- Overview
  - Authority control
  - Characteristics
  - Relations

# Authority Control

- Identifying creator entities
- Recording name or names used by and for them
- Rule-based heading or entry formation and control
- Librarians interested in this
- Archivists interested in this, and more ...

# Characteristics and Events

- Person
  - Life dates, sex, education, address, competencies, activities, affiliations, awards ...
  - Biography
- Corporate body
  - Dates of existence, type, mandate, location, legal status, assets, structure...
  - Administrative history
- Family
  - Assets and structure, activities, location, legal status...
  - Family history

# Relations

- Creators
- Records
- Functions and activities
- Again: each relation qualified by place and date
- Records evidence of people acting in particular places and times

# Current Activities

- Society of American Archivists
- Encoded Archival Context Working Group
- Established 2006
- Funding: application pending with Delmas Foundation
- Goal: transform Beta into official release

# SAA EAC Working Group

- Anila Angjeli (Bibliothèque Nationale du France)
- Wendy Duff (University of Toronto)
- Hans-Joerg Lieder (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin)
- Dennis Meissner (Minnesota Historical Society)
- Per-Gunner Ottosson (Riksarkivet)
- Victoria Peters (University of Glasgow)
- Daniel Pitti (University of Virginia)
- Merrilee Proffitt (OCLC/RLG Programs)
- Chris Prom (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)
- Bill Stocking (National Archives (UK))
- Stephano Vitali (L'Archivio di Stato di Firenze )
- Kathy Wisser (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

# Next Steps

- Survey of existing EAC projects
- Call for input (through the EAD list)
- In particular want to hear from repositories that have evaluated EAC
- In what ways is it “too complicated”
- EACWG will gather input and revise EAC

# Revision Objectives

- Speaking for myself (and not the EADWG)
- Using EAC Beta as a starting point
  - Remake it “from the ground up”
  - Simplify structure to eliminate unnecessary alternatives
  - No reason to have two or more ways of doing the same thing
- Provide standard as foundation for building both national and international “databases”
- Provide foundation to support “social computing” interface: Wiki-Archival Context

# Comments and Constructive Criticism

- Are essential
- Are most welcome
- Please pass along your ideas and observations

# Final Thought

What you do in the privacy of your own repository is your business.

But when you go out into the world, dress up in a standard!