TARO Project Meeting - December 9, 1999

Project Managers:
> Kris Kiesling, HRHRC
> Mark McFarland, UT Digital Library Services

Attendees:

> Aaron Choate-UT DLS
> Paul Orkiszewski-Rice University
> Stephanie Malmros-Center for American History (UT)
> Katherine Fox-Center for American History
> Jane Garner-Benson Latin American Collection (UT)
> Freedonia Paschall-Texas Tech
> Tai Kreidler-Texas Tech
> Beth Dodd-Alexander Architecture Archives (UT)
> Linda Peterson-Center for American History
> Carolyn Foster-Texas State Library and Archives
> Alison Beck-Center for American History
> Brenda Gunn-Center for American History
> David Chapman-Texas A&M
> Dilawar Grewal-Texas A&M
> Melissa Zaijicek-Texas A&M
> Mike Widener-Tarlton Law Library (UT)
> Shanon Lawson-HRHRC
> Chelsea Dinsmore-HRHRC
> Stephen Mielke-HRHRC
> Drew Racine-UT General Libraries
> Diane Cox-UT General Libraries

Kris opened the meeting with introductory comments, during which HRC Director Dr. Tom Staley made a welcoming statement. Everyone introduced themselves.

Project Goals
Project goals were reviewed, based on the proposal submitted by the Texas Digital Library Alliance and approved by the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board (TIFB). The goals agreed upon included:

- conversion of legacy finding aids;
- selection of software and hardware for each institution (it was suggested that uniformity in this area would make tech support simpler);
- establish a searchable database on a central server;
- develop a user-friendly search interface;
- begin considering digital content for either this phase of the project or the next.

Budget and Accounting
Drew Racine and Diane Cox provided budget and accounting information, pointing out that since UT is acting as the project manager for the TDLA everybody would need to comply with UT grant rules as well as TIF grant rules. A handout with general procedures was provided (to be placed on the web site-see below) and it was agreed that having most of the forms for reimbursement and expense reporting in a web-based format would make the process simpler. The need to turn in ALL expense-related receipts was emphasized. Questions can be directed to [Diane Cox](#) or call at 512-495-4381.

Project Website
Mark McFarland discussed the project website http://taro.lib.utexas.edu/ and discussion about what should be included on the site followed. Agreement was reached that the following information should be included:

- the text of the TIF proposal;
- updates on project events and timelines (especially for behind-the-scenes activities);
- accounting forms;
- meeting calendar (as soon as available);
- a list of project participants and contact information.

Participants should let Mark or Kris know what other information should be included in the website. The TARO mailing list (taro@lib.utexas.edu) will also serve as a forum for discussion, questions, and comments. ***Contact Kris if additional members from your repository should be added to the mailing list. It is not possible to self-subscribe.***

Training
Kris led the discussion on the EAD training session. The SAA EAD workshop will be held January 18-19 at the Thompson Conference Center on the UT Austin campus. Due to limited space, each participating institution may send two people. Additional spots may be available at a later date. The training session will utilize XMetaL software instead of Author/Editor, which has been used in the previous workshops. Each participant will receive a copy of the EAD Tag Library and EAD Application Guidelines. Additional copies of these works will be available.

Anybody wishing to look at XMetaL before the workshop may download a free 30-day trial version at http://www.softquad.com/products/xmetal/xm1_eval_signup.html

Repositories need to let Kris know by January 4 the names of individuals from their institution who will attend the training session.

On January 20 a followup meeting will be held at HRHRC or PCL to discuss consortial mark-up issues and standards for the project. Individuals attending the two-day workshop should also attend this meeting, but repositories are encouraged to send additional staff if desirable.

Committees
The formation of a Steering Committee and a Guidelines Committee, as suggested in the proposal, was discussed. The purposes of the Steering Committee include:

- project tracking and oversight (are we meeting the goals of the project?);
- develop guidelines for introducing new institutions to the project (in Phases II and III);
- finding funding sources and drafting proposals for the next phases of the project;
- collection development and centralization issues for future phases of the project.

Goals for the Guidelines Committee include:

- development of a best practices document for consortial mark-up, including encoding guidelines and standardization of finding aids;
- input for search interface design;
- tracking the time factor for various parts of the project in order to develop descriptive guidelines for new participants;
- and compile technical information.

Committee membership will be finalized by the January 20 meeting. Ideally each institution would have a representative on each committee. ***Contact Kris asap with names of individuals who will serve on the two committees.***

Technical Environment

Mark McFarland discussed the technical environment of the project, which includes a Sun 4500 Enterprise Series server and the Inquiry search engine. The server should be installed by the beginning of spring semester, and will house all the digital projects that UT Austin is currently involved with.

Quality control of the project content will be primarily accomplished at the institutional level, however, UT will be able to assist some of the smaller repositories who lack the staff or resources. The Guidelines Committee will provide a generic quality control document from which institutions can work.

Standardization Issues

Discussion around the issue of standardizing finding aids and consortial markup issues was supplemented by a handout which provided background readings.

Legacy finding aids will be converted by Apex Data Services and clean paper copies of the finding aids need to be gathered together by each repository early in the project. Apex will return only electronic copies (so do not send your only hard copy) and institutions will do QC and additional mark-up to the returned files. Apex will monitor production to prevent cost overruns.

A sample batch of finding aids should to be gathered and sent to Apex by the end of January. Kris will check with Apex to see if they can handle handwritten finding aids. Paper copies will be reimbursed at $.05 per page and page counts should be reported on the TARO webform for reimbursement.

The Guidelines Committee will establish the specification for Apex encoding (to be based on the RLG application guidelines distributed at the meeting and available at the URL on the Resources page). Specs for additional encoding to be applied by each institution will also be created. A generic stylesheet will probably be developed which individual institutions can customize. Encoding guidelines will be the first priority for the Committee.

The project name was discussed, but no alternatives immediately came to mind.

Final questions which were raised included:

Will EAD replace MARC?

> Not in the forseeable future, but you can cross link between the two to facilitate access. There are very good reasons to continue to create records for archival materials in library OPACs, but the ability to link to the full finding aid may change how much information we put into those catalog records.

Are MARC fields connected to EAD tags?

> Yes, the encodinganalog attribute in many EAD elements can be used for this purpose.

Who pays Apex?

> UT will pay Apex directly.

Will somebody provide a template and/or stylesheet for marking up new finding aids?

> That can probably be arranged and would certainly facilitate quality control.