

Group Assignment: Written Statement

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For the purposes of this assignment, this group has designed a questionnaire that can be used for research purposes within the archives community. Specifically, the questionnaire addresses the subject of Web 2.0 tools and technologies and how archives are using them to promote their collections. The questionnaire was designed using the group's knowledge of archival theory and practice, as gathered from their experience in the MARA program. More specifically, the group has pulled from their knowledge of research methodologies as described in Babbie (2010) and in MARA 285. This paper describes the process that was used to design the questionnaire.

To determine the variables for this study, we examined the work of Society of American Archivists Communications Task Force [SAA]. This Task Force was formed in August 2012 to advise the SAA regarding effective use of emerging technologies to enhance communication and interaction with target audiences. This work supports SAA Strategic Priority 1, Desired Outcome #3:

*SAA will make increasingly effective use of current and emerging technology to enhance communication with internal and external audiences and stimulate communication among its constituents (SAA, 2012).*

From the desired outcome statement, one can parse out the following phrases to determine variables: "use of current and emerging technologies," "communication with audiences," and "stimulate collaboration." It is from these three areas that the survey variables arise.

From the statement "use of current and emerging technologies" the possible variables included: *Web 2.0 technologies in use or not; Type of technologies in use or planned; Length of time technologies have been in use; and Hosted, in-house or contracted.* In order to measure these variables, questions must first ascertain whether a repository uses Web 2.0 technologies.

Unless the repository uses these technologies, then asking follow up questions would make no sense. If the technologies are in use, then it makes sense to follow up, gathering additional information regarding other variables.

From the statement “communication with audiences” the possible variables included: *Available only online, only in-house, or both; Changes in traffic: online, in-person, email, phone, etc.; Used as promotion or some other motivator; and Actively seek feedback from users for improvement of service.* In order to measure these variables, questions must ask the archival repository about the motivations behind the use of the Web 2.0 technologies. What do they want to achieve through the use? There are more possibilities for the reasons repositories would use these technologies, so the questions need to be more open-ended in order to measure these variables.

From the statement “stimulate collaboration” the possible variables included: *To engage in social media, e.g., tag, comment, or rate; and Draw upon crowdsourcing, e.g. transcribe, correct, etc.* In order to measure these variables, questions must address why the repository chose to use Web 2.0 technology, rather than a traditional Web presence. What does the repository seek to gain from providing a format for interaction with virtual visitors (whether physically present or geographically dispersed).

The design of this questionnaire has been guided by the principles and techniques of good survey construction (Babbie, 2010, pp. 255 -265). In order to facilitate a high participation rate, the survey questions and its format have been designed to be clear, easy to understand, and straightforward to complete. Eight questions have been created that are identified with an ordinal alphanumeric schema. Additionally, the eight questions are grouped

by concepts and are introduced by a heading, which signals what the content and purpose of each section is about.

The purpose of Question 1 is to filter the participants so that only competent respondents complete the entire survey. This is accomplished by providing a contingency question to determine which archival repositories are using Web 2.0 technologies by providing 'Yes' or 'No' checkboxes. Those responding 'No,' are given the opportunity to identify the barriers they are facing for Web 2.0 implementation before exiting, and in so doing rewards their time and still provides valuable research information. Only respondents who have selected the 'Yes' checkbox (either in implementation or predictive mode) will complete the entire survey by being invited to 'proceed to question 2a.'

Questions 2a-4a are designed as questions that can be answered by choosing from a list of responses with checkboxes. Listed responses are organized in alphabetical order, and numerical values from lowest to highest. Instructions identified in italic text, precede the answers and indicate whether more than one answer is acceptable or not. This format allows the respondents to quickly determine what they are expected to do and to ensure that the presentation is uncluttered and unambiguous. Whenever the list of answers is not exhaustive, the category 'other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_' is included as the last item, in order to cover other possibilities overlooked by the survey.

The survey includes two open-ended questions, 4b and 8, in order to gather answers that are unique to the participant's own knowledge and experiences. The preceding questions, 4a and the Yes/No checkbox for Question 8, prepare the respondents to answer the open-ended questions and helps to avoid the situation of double-barrel questions. A rectangular answer

section identifies that a more subjective and qualitative response is required, and is introduced by the words 'please elaborate.'

Questions 6 and 7 focus on the perceived value of Web 2.0 technologies in the archival community thus each presented as a matrix of closed-ended statements for evaluation.

Question 6 uses a Likert item format where the answers will be coded as follows: *Strongly Agree* - 5, *Tend to Agree* - 4, *Neither* - 3, *Tend to Disagree* - 2, and *Disagree* - 1. Question 7 invites the respondents to rank a series of closed-ended statements where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest value. The answers from questions 6 and 7 will provide data for some quantitative analysis such central tendency distribution, and will allow for some coherency analysis to identify if respondents are just answering randomly.

In a properly designed survey, all elements should serve a purpose and be thought-out. The order of the questions in the survey is of particular importance, as a properly organized questionnaire can yield optimum results. This team paid special attention to the order of the questions in the design and have specific reasons for the order. Overall, the order of the questions implies that there is a progression to the questionnaire; the answer to the first question will lead to the next question, and so on.

The first question - regarding the overall use of Web 2.0 technologies - was necessary to include at the beginning because it will help to weed out users who do not have and do not intent to implement Web 2.0 technologies. The answer(s) to that question will also let the user know how to proceed with the survey and will allow the analysts to recognize the context of the answers to the subsequent questions. The second question - regarding the specific use of Web 2.0 technologies - makes logical sense to come next because it continues gathering demographic and contextual information about the user and the repository they represent. Additionally, the

question is relatively simple to answer, helping the user to ‘warm up’ to questions with more complicated answers. Questions 3-7 are more complicated, and essentially aim at addressing why repositories use Web 2.0 technologies and what the perceived benefits of these are. Since these questions address the main reason of this study, it makes sense that they are in the middle. The eighth question, an open-ended question regarding feedback from users, makes sense to include at the end. At that point, the users will have already completed most of the survey, and the open-ended nature of the question will allow them to add any additional comments or information they did not feel was addressed in the preceding questions.

The results of this assignment have been a collaborative effort between all team members. Although large geographic distances separate the group members, the group effectively used Web 2.0 technologies. We used the D2L group forum to initially get in touch. Using Doodle polling, we arranged to meet periodically via Collaborate. We used two separate shared Google Docs to compose the separate elements of the assigned task. We communicated by e-mail for the duration of this assignment.

All team members are equally responsible for the content and format of the final questionnaire. The group members began by each creating eight questions to fulfill the survey part of the assignment. At a virtual meeting, the group pooled the 24 questions together and collectively analyzed them to determine overlap and their suitability to address our selected variables. The group then decided on the final content and order of the eight questions and all group members have collectively worked on editing and formatting the questionnaire.

The other required elements of this assignment have also been equally distributed. To complete this design process statement, the elements were equally divided between the group members, playing to each member’s strengths. Ryan created the outline. Karla and Susan added

their content and then all three worked on editing and approving the document. Susan wrote the initial draft of the cover letter, and then both Ryan and Karla assisted editing and finalizing the letter (see Appendix A).

In conclusion, we feel that the questionnaire we have created more than fulfills the requirements of this assignment. The research topic is ‘how archival repositories are using Web 2.0 technologies to promote archival collections.’ The attached questionnaire (see Appendix B) has been designed in such a way that the results will be effective in addressing the research topic. This questionnaire, if successfully implemented, could definitely produce viable preliminary results that could assist the SAA Communications Task Force in developing a recommendation to present to the SAA Council.

References

Babbie, E. (2010). *The Practice of Social Research*. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, Belmont, CA.

Society of American Archivists [SAA] (2012). About the SAA communications task force.

Retrieved from <http://www2.archivists.org/groups/communications-task-force>

## Appendix A

Dear [name]

The SAA Communications Task Force is conducting research in support of SAA Strategic Priority 1 Desired Outcome #3:

*“SAA will make increasingly effective use of current and emerging technology to enhance communication with internal and external audiences and stimulate collaboration among its constituents” (SAA Communications Task Force).*

The purpose of this study is to compile guidelines on how to take advantage of the Web 2.0 technology in archival outreach efforts. By surveying a random sample of 50 archives from the U.S. Pacific Coastal region, this study will allow the task force to examine ***current and emerging technology to enhance communication with internal and external audiences***. We anticipate the results will provide an overview of how archival repositories are using communication technologies. Armed with this information the Task Force can develop effective and realistic models that might be incorporated into our final recommendations (SAA Communications Task Force).

The [survey is available online](#) and will be active for three weeks, and then it will be closed for data analysis. The results will be made available on the SAA website by <date>. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you may choose not to answer any questions. All information your organization provides will remain anonymous.

The task force thanks you in advance for participating in this important research. Your contribution will be valuable as we move forward in developing our recommendations to the SAA at the spring 2013 meeting.

Karla Harriott,

Ryan Wadleigh

Susan Wolfe

*SAA Communications Task Force Members*

If you have questions, concerns, or comments about this survey, feel free to contact the task force at [Ben.Matlock@saa.org](mailto:Ben.Matlock@saa.org).

## Appendix B

**SURVEY DIRECTIONS**

This study seeks to examine how archives have adopted Web 2.0 tools to promote archival collections to the user community. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Please start with Part I, move on to Part II only when directed to by the survey.

The survey is divided into five sections addressing different aspects of implementation of Web 2.0 technologies in an archival repository. We ask that you add comments when appropriate to clarify your responses.

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

*If you have questions, concerns, or comments about this survey, feel free to contact the Task Force at [Ben.Matlock@saa.org](mailto:Ben.Matlock@saa.org).*

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**I. Implementation of Web 2.0 technologies**

*For the purpose of this survey, **Web 2.0 technologies** refer to dynamic Web pages that encourage user participation.*

**1a.** Taking the definition above into account, does your archival repository use any Web 2.0 technologies?

Yes - *If you answered 'Yes,' proceed to question 2a and complete the rest of this survey.*

No - *If you answered 'No,' continue to 1b.*

**1b.** Do you plan to implement any Web 2.0 technologies within the next year?

Yes - *If you answered 'Yes,' proceed to question 2a and complete this survey predicting how your implementation will affect your repository.*

No - *If you answered 'No,' continue to 1c.*

**1c.** Why have you not planned to implement Web 2.0 technologies?

Not a part of vision, mission, and goals

Budgetary limitations

Lack of technical skills

If your reasons are not listed above, or you have additional comments, please elaborate in the text box below.

*Thank you. You will be notified by email when the results become available online.*

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## II. Web 2.0 technology/technologies being used

2a. Which of the following Web 2.0 technologies do you currently use?

*Please **select all** technologies that your repository uses:*

Blogs

Facebook

Flickr

Pinterest

Podcasting (Audio)

Podcasting (Video)

RSS

Twitter

Videos (YouTube, Vimeo, Squidoo, etc.)

Wikis

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**2b.** How long has your repository been using Web 2.0 technologies?

*Please select **only one** answer.*

More than a year

Six months to one year

One to Six months

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### **III. Motivation for implementation of Web 2.0 Technologies**

**3.** What is your **primary** reason for using Web 2.0 technologies?

*Please select **only one** answer.*

Allowing patrons to contribute and participate

Hosting virtual exhibits

Increasing awareness of collections

Sharing upcoming events at your repository

Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**4a.** What materials appear online in your Web 2.0 implementation?

Please ***select all*** technologies that your repository uses, including both digitized and digital-born materials.

- Archival materials
- Audio content
- Databases
- Images (graphics, photos, illustrations, etc.)
- Plat drawings and maps
- Print sources
- Videos
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**4b.** How do you decide what content to post online in your Web 2.0 implementation?

*Please elaborate:*

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**IV. The Impact of Web 2.0 Technologies**

**5a.** How many in-person visitors have you averaged per week in the last six months?

*Please select **only one** answer.*

- 0 to 5
- 6 to 10
- 11 to 15
- 16 to 20
- 21 to 25
- 26 to 30
- 31 or more

**5b.** Has the number of in-person visits changed since implementation of your Web 2.0 technology?

*Please select **only one** answer.*

- Decreased
- No change
- Increased

## 6. How do you feel about Archives use of Web 2.0 technologies in general?

Please select **only one** answer for each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Web 2.0 technologies are becoming an expected aspect of Archival programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Web 2.0 technologies are a benefit to researchers.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Web 2.0 technologies economically provide added value to Archives.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
In order for Archives to be culturally relevant, they must use Web 2.0 technologies.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

7. Considering the cost of implementation of Web 2.0 technologies in relation to the value, how would you rate each of the elements below in regards to your Archives?

*Please select **only one** answer for each statement.*

	<b>Low Impact</b>		⇒		<b>High Impact</b>
<b>Ranking</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Interest generated within the hierarchy of your organization	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Interest expressed by outside professional organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Interest expressed by the surrounding community.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Regional recognition of your archival repository.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
International recognition of your archival repository.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

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## V. Gathering Feedback from Web 2.0 Users

8. Do you have a formal mechanism in place to gather feedback from users about your Web 2.0 implementation?

Yes

No

*If you answered Yes, please elaborate:*

*Thank you for your participation in this survey. You will be notified by email when the results become available online.*

If you have questions, concerns, or comments about this survey, feel free to contact the Task Force at [Ben.Matlock@saa.org](mailto:Ben.Matlock@saa.org).