



National Archival Accession Standard Working Group

Update - June 4, 2015

Informal discussions at the 2013 ACA Conference in Winnipeg identified the need for a national accession standard. This led to an interest group of archival institutions and a document identifying the need for a national accession standard. The document cited five contemporary archival challenges that could be addressed through a national accession standard: convergence of cultural heritage institutions; new dimensions of rights management; evolving governance models and related records management practices; the archival implications of electronic records; private records and the democratic role of public archives (ie the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Archives).

From this beginning a working group of six (Richard Dancy, SFU; Creighton Barrett, Dalhousie University; Hélène Charbonneau, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec; Suzanne Dubeau, York University; Jeremy Heil, Queen's University; and Raymond Frogner, Royal BC Museum [and Archives]) has developed the foundations of a national standard.

Accomplishments to date include:

1. A comprehensive list of Descriptive and XML Crosswalks identifying elements in related national and international standards;
2. A draft standard identifying 64 "Elements" and "sub-elements" organized into 6 "Areas";
3. A survey of Canadian archival institutions relating to the function of archival accession;
4. Two graphic models illustrating the archival accession function; the first, outlining the entities in the accession function; the second, identifying the activities relating accession entities and the resulting records which document the relationships;
5. A comprehensive list of national and international standards for describing, preserving and accessing archival material. This list identifies the elements in the standards and their potential relationship to the national accession standard. Standards considered include: ISAD-G, Dublin Core, PREMIS, DACS, MAD, METS, ISAAR (CPF), ISDF, ISDIAH, MODS, EAD, RAD, and SKOS;
6. A model outline for the final draft of the 64 elements and sub-elements;
7. 50 completed elements in final draft.

The working group presented its work at the Regina ACA at the Thursday June 11th lunch. Once the working group has a completed draft of the standard the group wishes to implement some case studies at Canadian archival institutions. The working group will also present its work at the Archival Institutions AtoM Users Group with the goal of generating resources to implement the standard as an accession module of AtoM, the open source descriptive software.

To date, this is the only known National Archival Accession Standard near completion or even in development. The group believes it addresses the above cited common needs of Canadian archival institutions of all scales and jurisdictions.