

# SNAC April 2020 Newsletter

The Operations Committee hopes everyone is well and doing all you can to keep yourselves, your families, your neighbors safe and well in these most assuredly trying, difficult, and uncertain times.

## News from the Operations Committee

### Announcements

-The Mellon Foundation Board approved the SNAC proposal on March 5, 2020. The project will begin April 1, 2020, and will end March 31, 2022. At this time, please do not make any public announcements before the University of Virginia, with the Foundation's consent, makes a formal public announcement.

The following are the major objectives during the grant:

- Develop tools to enable repositories to transition existing archival description (largely MARC21 and EAD-encoded finding aids) into SNAC-compliant corporate bodies, persons, and families (CPF entities) descriptions and summary resource descriptions
- Integrate SNAC work into local processing workflows through development of a SNAC plugin to ArchivesSpace
- Substantially improve the editing platform, adding functions identified by editors such as automatic citation generation, and improving efficiency of existing editing functions such as enabling editing of alternative name entries as sortable lists
- Substantially improve data quality, particularly of the controlled vocabularies used in the description of CPF entities (occupations, functions, subjects, and demographic terms), place names, and holding repository descriptions
- Provide simplified form-based methods for entering CPF and resource description data for small and under-resourced repositories
- Substantially increase awareness of SNAC as a research resource in the research community and the cultural heritage professionals that serve them, and provide instruction in the use of SNAC for research
- Based on progress in achieving the objectives above, in particular objectives 1 and 2, begin in year two to require membership fees of existing and new members

-On March 24th, SNAC hosted a workshop that was open to all staff from member institutions on how to create instructional videos. Led by Josh Thorud and Bethany Mickel, Multimedia

Teaching & Learning Librarians at the University of Virginia Library, the workshop included two parts: an online tutorial followed by a live videoconference for Q&A. Both parts can be accessed here: <http://bit.ly/SNACuvalib>.

-The [Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center at New England Historic Genealogical Society](#) is now a new holding repository in SNAC. The holdings of the Jewish Heritage Center were incorporated into SNAC during R&D in a batch of finding aids from the Center for Jewish History. Within this batch were four groups, one of which was the American Jewish Historical Society, and within it, the holdings of what is now the Jewish Heritage Center, which is now independent. This is an unusual circumstance in that it is rare for a new repository to emerge from an existing repository and thereby presented us with an unusual editing use case: changing the repository, revising the URL to the new finding aid(s), and revising the title. In collaboration with the Jewish Heritage Center, we were able to make these changes efficiently. The basic problem pattern may also apply where holdings in SNAC are listed under a higher administrative unit when in fact they should be listed under two or more sub-units. Thus it was a good learning experience. Plus the archivists at the Jewish Heritage Center are thrilled!

-The [Archives Portal Europe](#) (APE), by way of Kerstin Arnold, has sent SNAC a batch of data to explore the feasibility of adding the vast descriptive data on European holdings in APE to SNAC. There are a lot of challenges therein, including IP issues, as all of the descriptive data in APE is owned by the contributors of the data. But if this proves to be feasible both technically and politically, it would vastly expand the Resource Descriptions in SNAC. Among the set of data sent are EAG-encoded descriptions of the European repositories that agreed to participate in this exploration.

-Kong Xiangsheng, a Chinese archival studies graduate student, contacted SNAC expressing an interest in including SNAC as a case study in his master's thesis. Daniel has shared information on SNAC with him. In return, he is sharing information on the state of descriptive standards in China.

-Daniel presented on SNAC at the Music Library Association annual conference in Norfolk on February 27, 2020. The [presentation](#) was extremely well received. Among other topics, the organizers had expressed an interest in ethical description of people, and so there are several slides on this topic, with quotations of the ethos statement and the demographic description policy.

## SNAC Stats

As of reporting time (March 27, 2020), there were 3,737,290 constellations and 2,089,038 resource descriptions in SNAC. There were 888 edits in the last week of March, and our most active editor currently is Jerry Simmons, NARA SNAC Liaisons Team, who was editing and merging more than usual to prepare for the upcoming SNACSchool events.

Last month SNAC had over 50,000 users and referred over 3,400 visitors to holding institutions sites.

## Working Group Updates

### Communications:

The Communications Working Group is currently working on adding past SNAC Cooperative newsletters to the SNAC website for anyone to access. The group will also be sending out a short survey to the Cooperative listserv within the next couple of weeks to gather feedback about the monthly newsletter and its content in an effort to gauge if and how it can be improved. Please be on the lookout for an email. We'd love to have as many folks as possible participate.

We would also love to add more members to our group! If you're interested in joining, please email [faithc@princeton.edu](mailto:faithc@princeton.edu).

### Developer's Update:

We're very pleased to welcome Derik Cabrera to the SNAC Development team. Derik will be joining us part-time to work as a web developer on the new grant starting this month.

Split is being rolled out on SNAC-Dev. If you're interested in helping with testing, visit our [Beta Testing page](#) or join the #beta-testers channel on our SNAC Slack.

### SNACSchool:

The NARA SNAC Liaisons Team, in cooperation with SNAC partners at Getty Research Institute and the University of Miami Library, held three SNACSchool events in March 2020! March 11th's event welcomed new editors from the Univ. of Rochester, Kansas State Univ., Mercer Univ., and the Univ. of Pittsburgh. The March 26th event welcomed 22 editors (some new, some retraining editors) from a variety of institutions, with the most representation coming from the Getty Research Institute. A big **THANK YOU** to our Getty partner Kit Messick for serving as lead instructor, and to Univ. of Miami Library partner Glen Wiley for serving as the event producer.

A third SNACSchool happened on March 23rd when Dina Herbert and Jerry Simmons hosted 8 new editors, all staff of the National Archives and Records Administration, who are now integrating SNAC work as part of their new telework programs in response to COVID-19. Among this group was 4 editors from the newly formed Barack Obama Presidential Library. The NARA SNAC Liaisons Team has now been tasked with two more NARA-focused SNACSchool events as part of NARA's work to open up telework-ready projects to more staff.

The **Indigenous Peoples/Anthropology Editathon** has transitioned to an entirely remote format but is still scheduled for April 23, 24 and 25. This is due to NARA's and Harvard's response to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency. With all the new editors trained in January,

February and March, we are very excited to continue planning for this event. If you're interested in participating contact [Dina Herbert](#) at NARA.

Finally, the SNACSchool Team will host our next full training event on Tuesday, April 7th. Contact [Dina Herbert](#) if you or your colleagues would like to train. SNAC is perfect for all partners who now find themselves teleworking!

## Technology Infrastructure:

The Technology Infrastructure Working Group has been testing the ArchivesSpace Agents model redesign on their demo site: <http://aspace-anw-429.lyrtech.org/staff/> (username: admin; password: admin). Here are some of the issues discussed in TIWG's most recent call:

- Does it support EAC-CPF fully?
- What does an eaccpf xml import look like?
- What does an export look like?
- Does it align with SNAC data?
- Are the hover tips helpful?
- Is the expanded metadata support going to overwhelm editors? Are there ways to present the Agent module in the backend so that users can enter minimal (required) data with an option to see a fuller view?
- Can ASpace add an integration point for SNAC data? Still the ideal scenario!
- How does this help or hinder regular finding aid data entry? For instance, adding new Agents when inputting Resource data.

We are gathering comments in the following shared file:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/18TWdUWDm8NFIj8u79PYbdAAwk6vOL-hwA\\_eBL8\\_JtR0/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/18TWdUWDm8NFIj8u79PYbdAAwk6vOL-hwA_eBL8_JtR0/edit?usp=sharing)

As always, please feel free to join our Slack group at: <https://snac-coop.slack.com/>

## Editorial Standards:

The Editorial Standards Working Group (ESWG) held their monthly meeting on March 24, minutes can be found here:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Glr8yKS0Z26LGYZMHFtWqk-iyOclB\\_YKdwBqM1hKy-l/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Glr8yKS0Z26LGYZMHFtWqk-iyOclB_YKdwBqM1hKy-l/edit)

The group is continuing work on the Data Dictionary, the proposal to remove the Nationality element, and started discussing developing a standard to formulate enslaved person's names, led by Bernetiae Reed.

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*The SNAC Cooperative monthly newsletter provides news about SNAC activities and is sent to our Cooperative Members listserv, which is open to anyone interested in SNAC. Those interested in*

subscribing to the listserv can do so here: <http://lists.village.virginia.edu/mailman/listinfo/snac-coopmembers>.

To comment on or request more information about the SNAC newsletter please contact the Communications Working Group Chair, Faith Charlton, at [faithc@princeton.edu](mailto:faithc@princeton.edu) or fill out the contact form at <https://snaccooperative.org/contact>.



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