

CAA/SAH Task Force on Guidelines for Digital Art and Architectural History  
Teleconference Meeting  
Monday, December 01, 2014

Members: DeWitt Godfrey (CAA President), Ken Breisch (SAH President), Suzanne Preston Blier, Linda Downs (CAA Executive Director, ex officio), Pamela Fletcher, Gabrielle Esperdy, Betty Leigh Hutcheson (CAA staff, ex officio), Tara McPherson, Michelle Miller Fisher, Anne Collins Goodyear, Paul Jaskot, Abby Smith Rumsey, Pauline Saliga (SAH Executive Director, ex officio), Ann Whiteside

Present: Godfrey, Breisch, Downs, Fletcher, Esperdy, Hutcheson, McPherson, Fisher, Goodyear, Jaskot, Rumsey, Saliga, Whiteside. Sarah Zabrodski, CAA staff, took minutes

Absent: Blier, Goodyear

I. Introduction

- DeWitt and Ken welcome everyone
- Introductions of all members in attendance
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II. Project Goals and Schedule

- Linda provides overview of project and goals of the task force
  - o The Mellon Foundation has tasked CAA/SAH and the American Historical Association (AHA) with developing guidelines in their fields and have asked the organizations to coordinate and share information (AHA will begin drafting their guidelines in January)
  - o Goal to develop guidelines to evaluate digital research that will be useful to art and architecture history departments in the broadest way possible
  - o Two ways of gathering information: survey and research interviews
    - A researcher will be hired to contact fifteen department heads and provosts (identified by the task force) to ask questions about their existing guidelines
    - A statistician will also be hired to help develop a survey for the departments
  - o The task force needs to prepare:
    - A list of university departments that currently use guidelines to evaluate digital research and publications
    - Questions for the researcher to ask these departments
  - o The researcher will prepare a written report based on the interviews and surveys. The task force will then draft guidelines based on this information. Boards of both CAA and SAH will review the guidelines.

- Dissemination of the guidelines is equally important. The task force will help to circulate the guidelines and to encourage university departments to use them
- Question: Why is the task force limited to investigating R1 universities? Mellon is opening up grant proposals to wider range of entities, so the task force should be able to expand beyond this category
- Pauline: The research methodology of this task force is different than that of AHA. We are looking more thoroughly at this issue through surveys and interviews.
- Linda: Mellon requires at least two bids for any contracted position, so the researcher position has been posted.
- Betty Leigh: The deadline for proposals are currently December 4 (researcher) and December 12 (statistician). These will need to change.
  - The task force should pass along the RfP to anyone suitable for these roles
- Linda: The researcher should hold a PhD or have equivalent experience

### III. Researcher's and Statistician's Responsibilities

- Betty Leigh: The positions will work in tandem with one another and use the same questions
  - The schedule shows that questions should be developed by the end of January
  - The task force should guide development of questions for surveys and interviews
  - The interviews should be completed by April 15; surveys by March 15
  - The researcher will develop a report to present to task force and the task force will develop guidelines
- Paul: The interviews and surveys need to be able to question a range of people at different levels.
- Betty Leigh: The plan is to talk with people at all levels (from undergraduate students to provosts, and everyone in between)
- Need to recognize all forms of digital scholarship (unpublished papers, born digital publications, etc.)
  - There are multiple ways of disseminating digital scholarship so need to figure out what is appropriate
  - What kinds of publication are worthy of what kind of credit?
- Some digital publications challenge established processes like peer review. The task force should address this issue
- Tara: There are types of output that don't remotely resemble traditional scholarships (databases, coding, etc.). The project needs to have a capacious sense

of outcomes and recognize a broad range of scholarship as appropriate for recognition

- Some guidance to be found in MLA guidelines
- Need to provide guidance to young scholars to explain how unconventional forms can be worthy and impactful
- Metrics need to account for unconventional formats
- These guidelines will be useful for both young scholars presenting their digital scholarship and senior scholars assessing this scholarship
- Michele: With digital projects, we can track statistics and metrics of engagement in ways that one can't do with print publications
- DeWitt: Sciences have a well-developed model for assessing multi-author research and determining proportions of credit. There could be insights in these models.
- Gabrielle: Architectural practice is collaborative, but there's still a lack of understanding of different nodes of production as being scholarly. Geography departments could also be useful places to look
- Abbey: Looking at sciences could be difficult because the sub-sciences are so specific to their fields
  - Are we thinking of using traditional categories of service, scholarship, and teaching?
- Pauline: If we use those categories, we also need to look at the categories of production of art and architectural design
- Betty Leigh: The project is primarily concerned with scholarship
- Linda: Mellon was specific about limiting the guidelines to art and architectural history
- Paul: The guidelines should be expansive
- DeWitt reminds the task force of the parameters for the grant and the need for guidance for tenure committees
- Betty Leigh: There might be a session at ThatCamp with visual artists to discuss how their guidelines could be similar or dissimilar
- Abby: people will contest attempts to put these things in different buckets, so need to be prepared for it
  - Rather than make distinctions between service/teaching/scholarship, work on explaining and defining what the contribution to knowledge is
- Tara: Don't slot tool and software development into a service category. Research questions are manifested in software
- The report should acknowledge traditional categories, and explain why they are not adequate
- Abby:
  - Question of asking "what is the impact?"

- Create metric for quantifying impact on the field
- Ultimately we are looking for new metrics
- Michelle: New Media labs in graduate schools might be good place for researcher to look), as they might have existing frameworks for assessing digital work in different fields
- Question: What are other data driven practices (other than art and architectural history)
- DeWitt: The task force should consider self publishing (for example, a blog)
- Abby: The guidelines should include the impact of the publication and any post-publication review
  - Need to recognize where the quality review is occurring: Where/when does the review take place? What is the nature of it?
  - Tara: Fellowship reviews and blog discussions are examples of this.
- Review of scholarship is not just a question of pre-screening but of how people react after the work is made public (similar to visual art production)

#### IV. Task Force Members' Responsibilities

- Prepare list of questions for surveys
  - Questions should be framed to uncover how current practices work
- Decide upon definitions of words/terms/language
- Develop a list of departments that are already evaluating digital scholarship (very small number right now)
- Create a shared document so everyone can post questions (Google docs, wiki, or similar)
- Linda: The AHA is identifying people around the country that could serve as evaluators for departments that lack the knowledge or skills to evaluate digital projects
- Linda: CAA will set up a wiki for people to contribute ideas, and we'll see what we can glean from everyone by the first week of January
  - Questions
  - Definitions of terms
  - Places where there's interesting activity going on (people, institutions, media labs, etc.)
  - Possible researchers and statisticians
- Another conference call will be scheduled in the second week of January before the semester starts