CAA/SAH Task Force on Guidelines for Digital Art and Architectural History
Teleconference Meeting
Wednesday, January 28, 2015

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, Blier, Downs, Fletcher, Esperdy, Hutcheson, McPherson, Goodyear, Jaskot, Rumsey, Saliga, Whiteside. Sarah Zabrodski, CAA staff, took minutes.

Absent: Fisher

I. Introduction
    - DeWitt and Ken welcome everyone
    - Introductions of all members in attendance
    - Reminder of next meeting: Friday, February 13, 11:00 a.m., Concourse H, CAA Annual Conference (teleconference will be available for those unable to attend in person)

II. Discussion of wiki activity including:
        i. Review of definitions for evaluating terms for guidelines
        ii. Review of list of universities and individuals who should be interviewed
        iii. Discussion of draft of AHA guidelines and notes from AHA meeting
    - DeWitt: There is no deadline for adding to the wiki yet. At some point one will be established.
    - Ann: In order to be inclusive, the terms should always cite art and architectural history, not just art history.
    - Abby: How did the list of terms on the wiki get populated?
    - Linda: The Task Force members populated the list. By clicking on "view history" and "view source," it's possible to see who wrote what.
    - Abby: Found some of the definitions contradictory. Particularly concerned with the distinction between basic and applied research.
    - Paul: These terms are used in cultural geography department, which is very specific context.
    - Abby: Some people in digital humanities might confuse basic vs. applied and assume one has more prestige.
    - Paul: Cultural geographers value applied and basic research equally. There could be a third term called "digital research." The distinctions between the kinds of research are important.

- Gabrielle: We should think of the terms and how they may be distinctive for art and architectural history.
- Most people use digital tools in research, what confuses people is the difference between research and presentation tools.
- DeWitt: The National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics of the National Science Foundation use categories that include basic research, applied research, and experimental development. The NSF is interested in how these terms could be applied to the humanities. [DeWitt supplies NSF definitions to Paul Jaskot.]
- Suzanne: The first two categories conform to how the terms are used in anthropology.
- [Overall agreement that people like the three-tiered approach for research terms.]
- Is there a way to parse definitions from specific disciplines at this early stage? Is it useful to bear in mind the different emphases these terms have in different contexts?
- DeWitt: These terms that are very much part of the sciences, but there should be some consistency (as tenure committees are made up of people from various disciplines).
- Gabrielle: Are terms that come up in promotion and tenure different when digital research involved? Would the term "outcome" be more nuanced in this context? It picks up from AHA guidelines that talk about research that is "never finished."
- "Publications" should also be a term/definition.
- DeWitt: The term in faculty handbooks will be "publications" rather than "outcomes." It creates framework they can understand (even if the outcomes are publications).
- We default to "publication," even though people have outdated idea of what it is. Publications should be explained in the word list.
- Paul: "Peer reviewed" should be fleshed out more and should include examples. For instance, when are databases reviewed?
- DeWitt: Can a new algorithm or special tool to explore databases for art history be called "scholarship"? (idea from AHA guidelines)
- Abby: We could use an analogy with science and engineering: building knowledge as opposed to engineering. Contributions to SAHARA build knowledge.
- Suzanne: The creation of the means to create knowledge can have a variety of technical elements to it. One of trickier things is the issue of content. We're expecting narrative content in the humanities, but many digital projects involve narrative of a different form or no narrative at all. How do we evaluate the invention of these new kinds of technologies?
- Pamela: The idea of interpretation is what connects these things. There may not be narrative, but acts of interpretation.
- Pamela: Should tools be valued as humanities scholarship? How? Do we value it because it's a contribution to knowledge or because it is an act of interpretation itself?
- When we put together basic and applied research, we get to the heart of this field of evaluation.

- Suzanne: It would be helpful to provide examples for these terms. The examples may help create the definition. For example, image software that allows someone to upload manuscript leaves and allows material to be conjoined or annotated; or Paul Jaskot's use of GIS technology in Holocaust Geographies. By including examples and basic projects, we will allow people to think about these more closely.
- Gabrielle: We also need to define things that this group wouldn't consider digital scholarship, but others might (e.g. publishing an article digitally). Make it clear that there is a form of digital scholarship that more closely mirrors traditional scholarship. As the AHA guidelines mention: "A historian whose expressive and methodological practices differ very little from print-era scholars should carry no special burden for explaining why his or her work appears in digital form."
- Scrap scientific categories and come up with new categories that are more appropriate for art and architectural history.
- "Outcomes" can be fleshed out with examples and maybe can have subcategories (including "publications").
- Anne G.: When generating the terms, are there standard sources to which we are turning? Is there a way to describe the sources we are using?
- PJ: Murtha Baca at the Getty is developing a dictionary of art history terms. But for our purposes we need definitions for a working document.
- Anne G.: We could describe terms and resources in an explicit fashion and capture what already exists and what needs filling (even if it only for the group's eyes).
  - o Project narrative
  - o Describe foundations and breakthroughs
  - o Even if kept casually, it may be useful for us or for future generations (point of origin)
- This is an activist agenda, so in that regard a project narrative could be helpful.
- DeWitt: There are similarities with this project and the ways in which artistic process had to be integrated into academy.
- There are also similarities to struggles related to public scholarship vs. academic scholarship.
- In the surveys, ask how new forms have been incorporated into the academic promotion process in the past.
- Abby: One of things I liked about AHA guideline is how it starts with a premise of the fundamental value of scholarship (digital and non digital). They frame digital scholarship as continuation of centuries of practice.
  - o "Substantial and peer-recognized contribution to ongoing conversation"
  - o Rather than "conversation," the scientific word would be "impact"
- Useful concept for something like architectural modeling, which is hard for people to grasp.

- Suzanne: The term "conversation" means something that is deep and profound, regardless of number of people involved. "Impact" is harder in this context, because it usually needs to be quantifiable. It is more likely to be popularity contest rather than measure richness or depth.
- One of greater challenges is that digital projects appear self-published, with no peer-review or curation.
- A lot of recent graduates think their primary output is through their blogs.
- Some publications have also radically rejected old standards and claim that their review process is equal to the traditional one.
- The guidelines need to have enough plasticity so that these various projects can come into play.
- Important to consider museum scholarship, become some of the most interesting digital projects are coming out of that milieu.
- Suzanne: There's a certain bleeding between the lines of art and architectural history and design or studio practice, with people on both sides moving beyond standard divisions, so it would be interesting to bring in that side too.
- Ann W.: Design research would be a good dimension to add.
- DeWitt: In regards to the definitions of terms:
    o "Research" and "outcomes" need to have sets of subheadings
    o "Peer review" needs to indicate that there are ways in which scholarship and digital projects can happen outside the traditional peer review process
    o Do we need a "service" term? Yes, it needs to be reframed and redefined. Could use term "practice" instead. The idea of scholarly practice could be useful for people who see creative process in this way.
    o "Archive" as a term to define.
    o "Blog"
- Concepts from UCLA: Review and focus on the work in its original form. Idea of approximating equivalencies and keeping the scholarship alive. The specific form of scholarship is part of what makes it unique and relevant. What forms do publications take in the digital realm?
- Ken: We're missing terms for some kinds of projects, but we don't know what to call them or how to define them yet. (Example of scholar building a blog website for the past several years. This type of scholarship needs to be recognized.)
- Abby: Departments have an obligation to access the work on its own terms, and scholars must make explicit what the contribution to scholarship is.
- Don't identify what a blog is, but identify how to recognize when a blog is doing something scholarly.
- Ramifications are broader than just tenure. Extend to all levels including promotion, raises, etc.

- The contextualization of your own work is almost like an artist statement. You can't expect a universal set of categories or your work will not be understood.
    o Obligation to make the scholarly development or contribution clear.
    o Similar to a tenure statement.
- Anne G.: Small quibble with peer review being by "a relevant expert" given interdisciplinary nature of peer review. Is it worth acknowledging that traditional forms of peer review may not be adequate? Committees may need to be open to multiple different experts.
- The time factor is important, as peer review may occur on several occasions over time.
- For the next meeting:
    o Task Force will have refined terms and can finalize them
    o Look at rough draft of interview questions
- Betty Leigh will circulate different types of resources. Alice Lynn has also done a lot of research and will probably have list of resources to circulate.
    o How would group go about constructing a project narrative?
- Maybe like a lab notebook with a diaristic element. Include what sources and individuals are being consulted to create a real time record of where information is coming from.
- Paul: AHA has active bloggers, so TF could have a public blog.
- Blog shouldn't occur until after project complete.
- Is it possible to maintain a separate page or tab on the wiki with notes that people enter as appropriate (e.g. where things are coming from or general reflections)?
    o "Discussion" tab on wiki could serve this purpose
- DeWitt: Things to do:
    o Continue working on terms
    o Contribute more subjects for interviews (pull widely from scholars, practitioners, etc.)
    o Contribute more interview sites
    o Look at interview questions
    o Put minutes on website; use discussion tabs for journaling; project narrative
- Is there an optimal number of interviews?
- There will be 15 institutions with a minimum of two interviews per institution.
    o The researcher, Alice Lynn McMichael, suggested asking graduate students questions by email and interviewing staff in person.
- Linda: The AHA guideline meeting stressed the importance of going up the chain.
- Abby: We should nominate people who are not ostensibly digital scholars, because those are the target audience for this project.