

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
November 8-10, 2015
Chicago, Illinois**

**Interim Report: SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force on
Development of Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures
for Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries
(Prepared by Emily R. Novak Gustainis, SAA Co-chair)**

BACKGROUND

The SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force on the Development of Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures for Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries (hereafter JTF-HCM) is responsible for the development of guidelines (hereafter Guidelines) that will provide metrics, definitions, and best practices for quantifying the holdings of archival repositories and special collections libraries. The Guidelines will consider and address both the wide range of types and formats of material typically held—including analog, digital, and audiovisual materials—and the different ways in which collection material is managed and described. The Guidelines might also accommodate a two-tiered approach involving basic/minimum metrics and advanced/optimum metrics and/or include recommendations for institutions that wish to engage in collections assessment.

Officers

- Martha O'Hara Conway, Co-Chair, ACRL/RBMS, University of Michigan
- Emily R. Novak Gustainis, Co-Chair, SAA, Harvard University

Members

- Alvan Bregman (ACRL/RBMS), Queen's University, Canada
- Adriana Cuervo (SAA), Rutgers University
- Rachel D'Agostino (ACRL/RBMS), Library Company of Philadelphia
- Lara Friedman-Shedlov (ACRL/RBMS), University of Minnesota
- Angela Fritz (SAA), University of Arkansas Libraries
- Lisa Miller (SAA), Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University
- Katy Rawdon (ACRL/RBMS), Temple University
- Cyndi Shein (SAA), University of Nevada, Las Vegas Libraries

SUMMARY OF MEETING ACTIVITIES

The Joint Task Force met, either in person or via conference call, seventeen times between 13 August 2014 and 1 October 2015. Meeting minutes are available on the Task Force's microsite.¹ Minutes include two joint SAA-RBMS meetings – at the Annual Meeting of the American Library Association in San Francisco on 28 June 2015 and at the Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists in Cleveland on 13 August 2015.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

The Joint Task Force is currently engaged in:

1. Determining the categories/types of collection material for which we will develop guidelines regarding metrics, definitions, and best practices for quantifying holdings. Please see *Appendix A* of this report for the current, annotated version of *Categories/Types of Collection Material: Working Definitions*.
2. Defining and scoping the categories/types of collection material to be counted. Please see *Appendix A* of this report for the current, annotated version of *Categories/Types of Collection Material: Working Definitions*.
3. Proposing metrics, best practices, and/or guidelines for getting at the following three counts/measures (a) bibliographic units (e.g. titles); (b) physical units (e.g. volumes, sheets, audiocassettes, film reels); and (c) physical and virtual space occupied (e.g. linear feet, cubic feet, gigabytes).

JTF-HCM has tentatively adopted a three-tiered approach to counting holdings, and would appreciate feedback from the Council on these prospective levels of reporting, as follows:

Level 1 Count ("Minimal")

At a minimum, repositories should be able to communicate:

- The number of printed works held and, in the broadest sense, the number of records (manuscripts, archives, other formats) intentionally maintained and managed by the repository as either single items or in groups (a "collection," an "archival series," a "photograph collection," a "codex," etc.).
- The number of physical units/containers held.
- The physical footprint of their collections.
- The digital footprint for their collections.

¹ <http://www2.archivists.org/groups/saa-acrlrbms-joint-task-force-on-holdings-metrics/jtf-hcm-meetings>

Please see *Appendix B* for a draft “wireframe” of this reporting level.

Level 2 Count (“Optimal”)

Level 2 counts should include all Level 1 counts, plus item counts for all categories of materials (those in Appendix A). Please use the “Reporting Categories Definitions” and “Level 2 Examples” to match the terminology employed by your repository to one of the designated reporting categories.

Level 3 Count (“Added Value”)

Level 3 counts should include Level 1 and 2 counts, and are intended to capture specific attributes of items in each reporting category. A repository may know that it has 15 collections containing 56 audio cassettes, but may *also* wish to count and express specific extents or attributes to satisfy an internal need, such as preparing for a grant or capturing additional information to cost a digitization initiative. For example, the recording hours of each cassette (30 minutes, 60 minutes, 90 minutes, 120 minutes).

4. Accounting for and addressing the need to distinguish: a) Material managed and described at the collection level from material managed and described at the item level and b) material that has been described and is available for use from material that has not been described/is not available for use.

The draft levels seek to address collection/item level management. However, the JTF-HCM has only recently started to discuss processed versus unprocessed holdings and if this is part of our mandate. The Level 1 count “wireframe” (Appendix B) currently requests that users indicate whether they are reporting on everything they have or just what is available to researchers/patrons.

Articulation of these levels will potentially require the JTF-HCM to prepare the following reference documents to accompany the recommendations:

- Reporting Categories Definitions
- Reporting Categories Definitions – Level 1 Examples, with possible encoding/cataloging examples
- Reporting Categories Definitions – Level 2 Examples, with possible encoding/cataloging examples
- Reporting Categories Definitions – Level 3 Examples, with possible encoding/cataloging examples
- A chart of material types/record types commonly found in other surveys and controlled vocabularies grouped by JTF-HCM reporting categories
- List of obsolete electronic media storage capacities normalized to GB
- Adequate linear to cubic feet and cubic to linear feet conversion formula
- List of controlled terminology for containers, their dimensions, and capacity in both linear and cubic feet (a “master chart of container equivalencies”)

The above four tasks have been envisioned with the understanding that the JTF-HCM must account for:

- Different reasons why repositories count collections (for which the JTF-HCM initiated work on user stories)
- Different vocabularies and expressions of extent, specific to the variety of content standards in play across repositories (for which the JTF-HCM conducted initial landscape reviews of language employed by various controlled vocabularies and thesauri and cataloging examples)
- The impact of common collections management systems on counting and reporting (for which the group will consider the impact of ArchivesSpace and other management systems on formulating expressions of extent)

COMPLETED ACTIVITIES

To accomplish its objectives, the Joint Task Force has thus far:

- Developed microsite infrastructure and appointed Joint Task Force webmaster (Friedman-Shedlov) to post meeting agendas and minutes.
- Created a shared documentation hub using Google Drive, with the objective of appraising and transferring relevant documentation to the SAA microsite.
- Conducted a group conversation/Q&A with Jackie Dooley re: the OCLC *Taking Our Pulse* survey and report (10 December 2014).
- Posted calls for survey instruments, worksheets, methodologies, etc. (February 11-12 and March 9, 2015) that have been used to provide a number for collections [of archival and/or manuscript material], titles [bibliographic units], and/or physical units held, including those used to figure out how much physical space collections occupy, count any non-textual formats held (such as audio-visual materials), and determine extent for born-digital material. Calls for instruments were posted to the following listservs: AMIA; Archives & Archivists; ArchivesSpace List; ARL-ASSESS; ARSC; CIC Special Collections; CLIR Recipient List; MAC; New England Archivists; OCLC Primary Resources; RBMS Info; SAA Leadership; TCART; and WestArch. Surveys will be used to assess the scope of the reporting categories/definitions on which the group is currently working. An initial review of these survey instruments, worksheets, and methodologies received was conducted earlier this year.
- Drafted proposed categories/types of collection material and working definitions for aiding in data compilation. Draft definitions were circulated at the public forum for the SAA-RBMS joint task forces on Thursday, August 20, 2015. The group will be building on this work, with special consideration for born digital records. At this time, we have received no feedback from those in attendance at the forum.

- Drafted sample user stories/use cases to support the application of a tiered reporting strategy for holdings counts that is informed by the various levels of data collection needed by members of our community.
- Scheduled a full-day meeting at the Center for the History of Medicine, Countway Library, on Friday, 8 January 2016, to coincide with the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston.
- Engaged in the following outreach activities:
 - Task Force co-chair Martha O'Hara Conway presented at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Archives Conference, 7 May 2015, as part of the session *Assessment in Action: Using Results to Improve the Archival Experience part of the session*.
 - Held an SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Forces Public Forum on 20 August 2015 at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists.
 - Task Force member Katy E. Rawdon presented on the work of the JTF-HCM at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists (20 August: SAA 204: *Measure Up: Assessment Tools and Techniques from the Field*).
 - Task Force co-chair Martha O'Hara Conway presented on the work of the task force at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists (22 August: SAA 605: *Collecting, Analyzing, and Acting with Assessment Data: A Community Conversation*).

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- Finalize reporting categories/types of collection material.
- Consider the implications of reporting categories and determine/flesh out requirements for all categories of material by level.
- Determine minimum supporting documentation needed to create and distribute user-friendly best practices.
- Consider the implications of how specific systems (such as ArchivesSpace) will affect reporting categories and expressions of extent.
- Ramp up outreach/publicity related to the group's activities through regional outlets.

QUESTIONS/CONCERNS: We will be time lining our upcoming activities this winter, but at this time, it is expected that we will need the optional one-year extension.

APPENDIX A

SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force on the Development of Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures for Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries

Categories/Types of Collection Material: Working Definitions

Archives and Manuscripts (managed as collections)

Definition Materials created, assembled, or received by a person, family, or organization (including the holding institution itself), published or unpublished, in any format or formats, described and managed at the collection level as opposed to at the item level.

Objects and Artifacts

Definition: Material things that can be seen and touched.

Scope: Natural objects, artifacts (objects intentionally made or produced for a certain purpose), and three-dimensional works of art.

Books and Other Printed Material

Definition: Materials produced for distribution, reproduced mechanically, and intended to be read.

Scope: Materials included in this category are frequently printed on paper but may be printed on other substances, such as vellum or cloth. Most materials in this category are textual, but the category also includes works that present non-textual content in book form.

Examples: Monographs, serials, music, pamphlets, broadsides, ephemera, graphic novels, artists' books, color-plate books, atlases, and materials embossed for the use of the visually impaired.

Cartographic Material

Definition: Two- and three-dimensional representations of the whole or part of the Earth or another celestial body.

Scope: Cartographic materials include maps (graphic or photogrammetric representations on a flat medium, such as paper) and globes (representations in the form of a [ball or sphere]).

Digital Material

Definition: Items created, managed, or stored in binary format requiring a computer or other electronic device to render it intelligible by a person.

Scope: Digital material can be counted in bytes. This category includes born-digital materials, digital derivatives, and digital surrogates.

Examples: Born-digital material may include documents, images, sound and video, data sets, web sites, and email created in electronic form and saved as digital data, having had no initial or interstitial state as an analog or physical product. Digital derivatives include reformatted, enhanced, or access copies of physical or digital material. Digital surrogates include digitized documents and/or transcripts of such documents created via OCR, whether the digital forms were produced by the record creator or for access by the holding institution.

MARTHA: From my notes from our meeting at ALA Annual in SF (June 2015): Can or should we distinguish “digital that lives in a managed environment (e.g. on a server)” from “digital that exists on removable media (optical discs, magnetic tapes, etc.) and storage devices (USB flash drives, external hard drives, etc.)?”

Comment [1]: Something to think about!

Comment [2]: EMILY: I think we need this. Here are some prospective scenarios:

- A gross survey of holdings, for example of physical and virtual space occupied would require just the cubic feet (for records) and linear feet (for books) and a GB count on a network and/or active peripheral and/or cloud storage devices (**a Level 1 holdings count**)
- A survey of holdings as part of planning for a new physical space and electronic storage environment would require a gross physical space survey, and an electronic storage survey, in which case you would need to account for current GB used and account for future space to facilitate the migration of electronic records from external media AND account for what is currently on network or cloud storage (and maybe a projected rate of use). In this case, you would need to do a count of your external media and create a prospective GB amount using a conversion formula (I have one we use at the Center). What is on the media doesn't count, only its prospective storage capacity – but knowing x number of floppy disks, x number of CDs, etc. are crucial to using this formula (**a Level 2 holding count**)
- A survey of all electronic formats for a specific kind of grant project may ask you, for example to count the number of oral histories you have. In this case they want to know how many audio recordings you have on audio cassette, how many on CD, how many on DVD, and how many of them are on digital audio. They also want to know if you have any filmed histories on VHS, Beta, and all the other digital formats so that you can price out the cost of conversion. In this case, the media AND the type content (which falls in to both sound recordings and moving image

Graphic/Visual Material

Definition: Materials that communicate primarily visually, rather than textually.

Scope: Includes originals or reproductions. Includes opaque and transparent material. Separate categories exist for counting moving images and objects.

Examples: Architectural materials, charts, drawings, ephemera, paintings, postcards, posters, prints, photographs/still images (positives or negatives), slides, transparencies, and filmstrips.

Manuscripts (managed as items)

This definition was agreed to on 24 March 2015: Unpublished textual material [handwritten, typed, or printed] described and managed as items [at the item level] as opposed to as collections [at the collection level]. Manuscripts include letters, diaries, ledgers, wills, minutes, speeches, theses, dissertations, creative works (both drafts and marked or corrected proofs), and legal and financial documents, and may take the form of codices, scrolls, or single or multiple sheets.

Microforms

Definition: Any medium, transparent or opaque, that holds highly reduced photographic reproductions (microreproductions).

Scope: Microforms include microfilm, microfiche, ultrafiche, aperture cards, and microcards.

Moving Image Material

Definition: Any sequence of visual images recorded or registered, by whatever means and on whatever medium, that create the illusion of movement when projected, broadcast, or played back, whether or not accompanied by sound.

Scope: It encompasses both live action and animation meant to be viewed as two or three dimensional works and includes all analog and digital formats.

Examples: Includes moving images of all types, e.g., features, shorts, news footage, trailers, outtakes, screen tests, experimental or independent productions, study films or video, home movies, unedited materials, television broadcasts, commercials, spot announcements, ephemeral film (films produced for educational, industrial, training, or promotional purposes), cartographic images intended to be perceived as moving in two dimensions (such as satellite images of the Earth or other celestial bodies in motion), recorded performances of concerts, ballets, plays, etc., and cartridge/disk ("video") and interactive online games that are predominantly comprised of moving images.

Does not include: flipbooks (a book) or time-lapse photography (visual/graphic)

Sound Recordings

Definition: Materials onto which sound has been recorded via analog or digital methods.

Scope: Sound recordings encompass a wide range of formats, including phonograph records, magnetic tape, compact discs, and digital audio files. These contain spoken words, sound, and/or performed music.

Examples: Cylinders, 78 rpm discs, wire recordings, reel-to-reel tape recordings, cassette tapes, vinyl records, compact discs, mini discs, 8-tracks, Digital Audio Tapes, etc.

LEVEL 1 COUNT ("Minimal"): At a minimum, repositories should be able to communicate **1)** the number of printed works held and, in the broadest sense, the number of records (manuscripts, archives, other formats) intentionally maintained and managed by the repository as either single items or in groups (a "collection," an "archival series," a "photograph collection," a "codex," etc.); **2)** the number of physical units/containers held; **3)** the physical footprint of their collections; and **4)** the digital footprint for their collections.

(!) Before counting, please answer the following four questions:

1) What are you counting for intellectual units?	___ Everything held regardless of processing / discoverability / cataloging status	___ Only what is cataloged or processed (however I define cataloged or processed)		
2) What are you counting for physical units?	___ Every container or volume held regardless of the processing / discoverability / cataloging status	___ Only containers or volumes that I consider cataloged or processed (however I define cataloged or processed)		
3) What are you counting for physical space?	___ All storage locations regardless of the processing / discoverability / cataloging status of what is kept there	___ Only storage locations that house what I consider cataloged or processed (however I define cataloged or processed)		
4) What are you counting for digital space?	___ Born digital and digital surrogates	___ Just born digital	___ Just digital surrogates	

Reporting Category	Explanation						
Number of Intellectual Units Held	Counts should reflect the highest level of descriptive aggregation available. This may be a collection-level description, a series-level description, a book title [use NISO definition]; a group of things of one format that are described together, etc. Potential sources of data include: MARC and/or other catalog/database records, such as a collection level description in ArchivesSpace; finding aids; paper lists of collections held; accession records; and card catalog entries. Please see appendix [X] for example responses in this category.						
Type of Collection Material	Count (in numerals)		Notes				
Archives and Manuscripts (managed as collections)							
Titles for Books and Other Printed Material							
Digital Material							
Cartographic Material							
Manuscripts (managed as items)							
Graphic/Visual Material							
Microforms							
Moving Image Material							
Objects and Artifacts							
Sound Recordings							
Physical Units Held	Number of individual volumes and containers comprising all categories/types of collections. This includes each volume in multi-volume titles, number of archival boxes, number of records center containers, number of drawers containing collections, etc. If you have objects, film reels, papers, or other collection materials loose on a shelving unit, measure shelves occupied and report holding by shelf dimension, for example 2 shelves (36" x 12" x 15"). You may add additional reporting units to the worksheet provided below. Please see appendix [X] for example responses in this category.						
Type	Count (in numerals)	Type	Count (in numerals)	Type	Count (in numerals)	Type	Count (in numerals)
Volumes		Legal size document case		Shelf (L" x W" x H")		Another...	
Records Center Cartons (L" x W" x H")		Half size legal document case		Another...		Another...	
Letter size document case		Flat File Drawers (L" x W" x H")		Another...		Another...	
Half size document case		Rolled items		Another...		Another...	
Physical Space Occupied	Total footprint for all materials held. For volumes, measure shelf space occupied in linear or cubic feet, whichever is preferred, and use formula provided to enable reporting in both measurements . For materials in containers, drawers, etc., either measure in cubic feet or linear feet all shelving units occupied, or use Appendix X, "Containers to Cubic and Linear Feet" to use your physical unit counts to approximate physical space occupied. Please see appendix [X] for example responses in this category.						

Physical space for volumes	Cubic feet:	Linear feet:	Formula:
Physical space for all else	Cubic feet:	Linear feet:	
Digital Space Occupied	Total digital extent in gigabytes (GB) for files created, managed, or stored in binary format requiring a computer or other electronic device to render it intelligible by a person, in either. Examples include documents, images, sound and video, data sets, web sites, and email on local servers, in cloud storage, in preservation repositories, and/or on external media (if known). Count either disk images or extracted records for a collection, but do not count both. Please see appendix [X] for example responses in this category.		
Digital Space	(GB)		