

# Who's Ready to Surf The Next Wave? A Study of Perceived Challenges to Implementing New and Revised Standards for Archival Description

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**Abstract:** Archivists in the United States will grapple soon with many changes to archival descriptive standards, including major revisions to Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) and Encoded Archival Description (EAD), widespread adoption of the Encoded Archival Context (EAC) standard, and harmonization of those standards with Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) and Resource Description and Access (RDA). This study aims to measure the degree to which archivists are prepared to cope with this evolution in descriptive practices. A representative national sample of archivists ( $n=345$ , 95% confidence, C.I. +/- 5%) recruited from the membership of the SAA was surveyed via Qualtrics using a fifty-question questionnaire aimed at: 1) identifying and analyzing their familiarity with these standards; and, 2) assessing perceptions of their readiness to adapt workflows and systems to changes in those standards. In particular, the survey targets perceptions of possible technical challenges and pressures on current resources that may impede adoption of new and revised descriptive standards. Through inferential statistical analysis the researchers tested a variety of hypotheses to determine if there were associations between variables that might be possible predictors of respondents' familiarity with archival standards and their perceived readiness to adapt to changes in those standards. Level of education and type of education possessed by respondents were tested particularly as predictors, using Chi-Square tests to determine p values for each hypothesis. Spearman's *rho* was used to test for relationships between ordinal variables. Overall, it was found that while level of education was not a good predictor of familiarity and confidence in one's ability to adapt to new and revised standards, type of education was a strong predictor of feeling prepared to deal with changes in the archival standards landscape. Additionally, having current knowledge of some standards were correlated positively with knowledge of additional standards at very significant levels ( $p=0.000$ ).

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