

November 7, 2005

AnthroSource Steering Committee (ASSC) Report to the AAA Committee on Scientific Communication (CSC)

Introduction

This report highlights and assesses significant areas of work for the second year of the AnthroSource Steering Committee (ASSC) and outlines key issues for further work in 2006. The period of this report coincides with the first 10 months of AnthroSource operation.

Summaries of ASSC accomplishments have been reported in the AnthroSource Programmatic and Financial Report 2004 to the Mellon Foundation (Feb. 2005) and in the Publications Dept. report to CSC prepared by Susan Skomal (April 2005). In addition CSC Chair as an Ex-Officio member of ASSC has been kept apprised of details of ASSC work via the listserv and with agendas, minutes of meetings and background documents.

During this year ASSC met 3 times face-to-face (including two 2-day meetings) and several times via telephone conference. A great deal of work was conducted between meetings. It is expected that ASSC 2005 in-kind contributions will reflect a level of overall effort similar to that of 2004.¹

2005 in Review

The scope of ASSC work ranged from conceptualizing the architecture of the portal going forward to advising regarding present-day implementation details.

The 2004 ASSC report to CSC outlined the following broad areas for work in 2005: (1) mapping out the larger portal concept for AnthroSource, (2) user testing, (3) sustainability, archiving, preservation, (4) outreach, (5) expanding content and (6) succession planning for new ASSC members. Progress in these areas is noted below.

A. Mapping out the larger portal concept for AnthroSource:

Developing an overview of the larger portal project as a context for the current UC Press product has been the most significant work this year. Progress in this area includes the following:

- Ratified a working model (definition) of AnthroSource which (1) identifies three major components of the portal [AAA website, UC Press site, discipline-based repository] and (2) outlines broad areas of system

¹ In 2004 the ASSC invested approximately 7,190 hours of their own time and that of their students toward the launch of AnthroSource. This was valued at \$206,759 worth of in-kind contributions to the AAA.

integration required to create a seamless research environment that would define the portal.

- Developed a conceptual model of AS (aka "*Beyond Boundaries: Anthropological Knowledge without Boundaries*") as a visual representation of a full-scale portal.
- Developed an extensive matrix and inventory of desirable portal features and functions (*AnthroSource Development Items*). Selected and recommended five priority features for implementation on the current (UC Press) site.
- Began discussions about developing a discipline-based repository for Anthropology to include post-prints.
 - Conducted exploratory discussions with California Digital Library.
 - Initiated review of AAA author's rights statement and advocated for a more author-friendly contract as a model and pre-requisite supporting the development of a repository containing post prints. AAA now ranks with the most author-friendly as rated by Sherpa, and distinguishes itself further by allowing authors to submit post-prints to discipline-based repositories as well as institutional repositories.

2006:

- Develop multi-year business plan for the portal project that integrates AAA website, repository and UC Press site.
- Articulate broad technical requirements for conceptual model.

B. User Testing/Assessment and Evaluation

ASSC is developing an assessment plan retrospectively as one was not designed with the initial plan for AS. The goal is to develop a systematic means of evaluating the current product and a process for setting user needs and assessment at the center of future developments.

Toward this end in 2005 ASSC has:

- Developed and ratified a model for assessing AnthroSource focusing on inputs (investment), outputs (products/services), and outcomes (short and long-term results). User testing has been incorporated into this plan.
- Identified data elements/categories required for above model and worked with AAA staff to conduct environmental scan to determine availability of data.
- Secured Atypon logs as source of usage data.
- Recruited new members with proven experience in the area of user evaluation and program assessment planning.

2006:

- Continue work on assessment plan.
- Develop protocols for user testing.

C. Archiving and Preservation

From its inception, the ASSC has determined that AnthroSource should model the best practices in digital archiving and preservation. The selection in 2005 of (Mellon-funded) Portico, as a preservation strategy for AAA digital publications is a major step in that direction and places AnthroSource in the forefront of digital preservation activities nationally. Specific activities include:

- Developed preservation recommendations covering AAA publications, outside publications and other materials.
- Recommended outsourcing preservation of AAA digital publications.
- Reviewed and approved Portico as preservation strategy for AAA digital publications.
- Determined that AnthroSource is LOCKSS compliant.

2006:

- Develop structure to provide ongoing advice about archiving and preservation.
- Monitor progress of Portico and continue to advise.
- Re-visit archiving plan for AAA website.
- Re-visit archiving plan for repository.

D. Outreach

- Developed and implemented Essay contest to: (1) generate interest in AS and (2) solicit feedback from users.
- Planned events in conjunction with AAA meetings (AnthroSource Forum and program titled: Transforming Anthropological Scholarship)
- Developed "road show" used by various members to present at various library, publishing and anthropology meetings.

2006:

- Develop informational materials for AAA members about author's rights.

E. Expanding content beyond AAA journals

ASSC recommendations for new content have been driven by the need to move AnthroSource as quickly and cost effectively as possible from a "boutique" database of AAA content to a more robust database (*indispensable research resource*) of *high impact* anthropology publications covering socio-cultural anthropology more broadly and inclusive of archaeology and biological anthropology scholarship. To that end we have:

- Identified high priority content for inclusion in AnthroSource/UC Press site, and recommended that publishers with high impact e-journals in anthropology (e.g. Blackwell, Wiley, Sage, Taylor & Francis) be solicited

immediately for metadata and remote linking. AS would be well served if the full text of the anthropology journals offered by these publishers were to be available for searching. ASSC places highest priority on this material as it is key to developing a more seamless search environment and critical to ensuring AnthroSource's competitiveness with other aggregated content sites.

- Identified top ten (non-AAA) titles to recruit for AnthroSource.
- Drafted an application form for journals wishing to be included in AS and a procedure and timelines for review.

2006:

- Work with UC Press to implement recommendation regarding high impact journals.
- Begin discussions about infrastructure needed for content review in the larger portal environment.

F. ASSC Membership Succession

Twenty-eight highly qualified AAA members applied for 2 positions on the ASSC, a sign that the committee is a highly regarded and very competitive AAA placement. In 2005 the ASSC:

- Developed criteria and process for replacing members.
- Requested extension of terms for 2 current members scheduled to rotate off.
- Conducted search for new members and filled all positions.
- Requested (and was granted) addition of one more ASSC seat.

2006:

- Recruit new members to replace four members who will rotate off in 2006
- Develop procedures for replacing chairperson; select new chair.

G. Other:

- Advised regarding IT Director position.
- Tracked e-Science project at the University of Kent to monitor progress toward the development of a thesaurus for Anthropology (using AAA JSTOR text and RAI JSTOR text). Too early to evaluate progress.

Issues Going Forward:

With the end of the Mellon funded project to digitize AAA journals approaching, it is time to develop a multi-year business plan for the larger portal project envisioned by AWG and ASSC encompassing the UC Press site, AAA website and a discipline based repository.

Transitions and re-organizing work:

Over the past two years, ASSC has developed a momentum that has been aided by relations developed over time with AAA staff and continuity of ASSC membership.

With staff changes at AAA it will be important to consider lines of communication and the way in which ASSC is connected to AAA planning and decision making bodies. To date ASSC has relied on the Publications Director for information about AnthroSource progress and potential developments as well as AAA issues consequential in the development of AnthroSource. The close working relation established between ASSC and the Director for Publications allowed for a less formalized and less bureaucratic process for implementing some recommendations. For the near term, ASSC will need more active participation of CSC as a connection to the Executive Board so that the work of the committee is aligned with AAA planning.

Internally ASSC will be re-organizing to incorporate new members and those who volunteered service.

Finally, ASSC welcomes new members and looks forward to a year of work that moves us closer to the realization of a portal with services that support current AAA members and attract other anthropologists to join.

Respectfully submitted
Suzanne H. Calpestri, Chair

ASSC Members 2003-2004
Leslie K. W. Chan (2003-2005)
Patricia Kay Galloway (2003-2006)
Hugh Jarvis (2003-2005)
Wade Kotter (2003-2006)
Robert Leopold (2003-2006)
Edward Liebow (2003-2005)
Bonnie A. Nardi (2003-2005)
Deborah Heath (2004-2005) CSC Chair and liaison to ASSC
Ex Officio:
Rebecca Simon, UC Press
Sandy Berlin, AAA, Deputy Director and CFO
Alison Pryor, Publications Manager

Appendix I:

Feedback from Users

Without an assessment plan and user evaluation protocols in place at this time, feedback is not collected or analyzed systematically to provide a means for programmatic planning. The assessment plan mentioned above is a catch-up measure to close this gap. In the meantime the following issues have come to the attention of ASSC:

From Libraries:

AnthroSource received a very favorable review in CHOICE, a source directed to academic library selectors (see Appendix II). In addition librarians are impressed with the affordable price of AnthroSource, an important feature for a resource that is sold as a bundle only.

Concerns raised in the library community include (1) lack of consortial pricing and (2) protracted arrangements to initiate subscription. Libraries and individuals have complained about irregular and frequent downtime, especially scheduled in prime time. UC Press is working on these matters. In addition some have complained that the excessive embargo (10 years) on AN content.

The Association of College and Research Librarians (ACRL) Anthropology and Sociology Section (ANSS) has conveyed their views on AnthroSource in a letter to Bill Davis.

From AAA members:

Members respond very favorably to having online access to the full text of AAA journals.

Concerns include: (1) frustration over the process for establishing AAA member access, (2) lack of content in the area of biological anthropology and archaeology, (3) missing AN content and (4) images on AS that are viewed as “‘primitivizing’ and unrepresentative of much of current anthropology”. The later issue involves the broader issue of AAA policies regarding use of images in AAA publications and is a matter for CSC to consider.

Appendix II:

CHOICE, Current Reviews for Academic Libraries

AnthroSource, American Anthropological Association/California. American Anthropological Association/California, 2005 (c2004). Price varies by institution type, \$221.00-\$945.00/year; free for American Anthropological Association members. Internet Resource <http://www.anthrosource.net> <<http://www.anthrosource.net>> Reviewed in 2005sup CHOICE. [Visited May'05] Launched in November 2004, this Internet resource serves the professional needs of social scientists by providing access to the 31 American Anthropological Association (AAA) journals (11 peer-reviewed), newsletters, and bulletins. The user-friendly Web site loads quickly; the homepage leads to publications lists, search modes, user profile (personalization options), institutional subscriber information, and help features (FAQ's, tokens, search tips, conditions, Rightslink, license agreement, and privacy statement). AnthroSource is best viewed using Internet Explorer 6, Netscape 7, or Mozilla/Firefox; user instructions are clear and exemplary. Quick, simple, multiple, and advanced searches can be conducted and saved, and bibliographic information may be downloaded to a citation manager. Full-text articles appear in Adobe PDF:High Quality (default) or PDFPlus format and adhere to current HTML and CSS standards. Seventeen of 31 publications feature complete runs; five flagship publications prior to 1997 utilize JSTOR (free for AAA members; library subscriptions require separate JSTOR subscription), and all material is Google indexed (excepting JSTOR). Most journals are currently published quarterly. Minor problems do not detract from the content of this scholarly Internet archive: typographical errors in original articles remain uncorrected; some recently inserted or poorly scanned headings have typos; a few pages have undulating text (indicative of poor scanning quality control); and illustrations that were dark in the originals remain indistinct. In March 2005, AnthroSource included 40,661 articles and 230,000-plus pages. An expanding database will contain additional past, present, and future AAA periodicals, and access other text, sound, and video resources. This is scholarly access at its finest. Summing Up: Essential. All academic libraries. --- C. C. Kolb, National Endowment for the Humanities (c) American Library Association.

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