

DRAFT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE RECORDS OF CONGRESS
MEETING 49
DECEMBER 14, 2015
ROOM 105
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m., Hon. Julie Adams [Secretary of the Senate] presiding.

Members of the Committee in attendance: Julie Adams, Chair (Secretary of the Senate); Karen Haas, Co-Chair (Clerk of the House); David Ferriero (Archivist of the United States); Betty Koed (Historian, U.S. Senate); Matthew Wasniewski (Historian, U.S. House of Representatives); John Lawrence (Visiting Professor, University California, Washington DC campus); Sharon Leon (Director of Public Projects, Center for History and New Media, George Mason University); Deborah Skaggs Speth (Archivist, McConnell – Chao Archives, University of Louisville, McConnell Center); Jeff Thomas (Archivist, Ohio Congressional Archives, The Ohio State University); Sheryl Vogt (Director, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies); Steven Zink (Vice Chancellor, Information Technology, Nevada System of Higher Education).

Also Present: Karen Paul, Archivist, U.S. Senate; Robin Reeder, Archivist, U.S. House of Representatives; Richard Hunt, Director, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives and Records Administration.

ADAMS: Good morning. This meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress will now come to order. A warm welcome to all the committee members. I know some travel arrangements were finalized late Friday due to the on-going budget negotiations and I'm pleased that everyone was able to join us in person today. A special thanks to Archivist David Ferriero for hosting our meeting today. It's always nice to visit the National Archives. And thank you to Richard Hunt and Sharon Fitzpatrick for the considerable work they do to prepare for each one of these meetings.

Since we last met, we've been working with Karen Haas and her staff, Richard Hunt, and John Hamilton to secure the necessary support for the renovation of the space at the Government Publishing Office. Those discussions and negotiations are continuing and

we remain optimistic that we will have a records storage solution that will serve Congress's needs for years to come.

At our last meeting, Deborah Skaggs Speth requested information about the Center's technology infrastructure for electronic records. And since I, too, am new to the advisory committee, I look forward to the Center's report at this meeting. Many have expressed interest in the work of John Caldwell, the National Digital Stewardship Residency Fellow, which he and Karen will discuss today, and I look forward to that report on this project to study the Senate electronic records work-flow.

And finally, I'm pleased to report that in September, the Senate celebrated Constitution Day by holding a lively discussion of constitutional challenges during the Civil War Senate before a standing-room-only crowd. I would like to thank Historian Betty Koed, Associate Historian Kate Scott, historical researcher Mary Baumann, and Historian Richard McCulley of the Center for Legislative Archives for their participation. The program was greatly enhanced by Richard's documentary-based presentation that highlighted a few treasured items from the Legislative Archives Collection. At this time, I would like recognize my coach here, Karen Haas.

HAAS: Thank you so much and I'd like to join in the welcome to all our committee members. It's nice to see everybody back here today. I'd like to tell the committee a little bit about what we've been doing in the Office of the Clerk since we last met. The most important development for us is in the change of the Speaker of the House. As you all know, Speaker Boehner retired from the House. And Congressman Paul Ryan of Wisconsin was elected on October 29, 2015. My office has been working very closely with the staffs of both offices during this transition time.

We continue our outreach efforts to the committees, including revamping and updating the classes on committee records management taught by the Office of Art and Archives. The classes feature expanded information on electronic records and a section on managing and preserving photographs. We also are increasing our meetings with

member offices who have announced they are retiring at the end of the Congress. Thus far, fourteen have announced they are retiring: twelve are running for the Senate, and two are running for other offices.

As the Secretary mentioned, we have been closely involved in the discussions on the records space needs for the Center for Legislative Archives, which we will hear about later in this meeting. To help with our immediate space needs, we have transferred some of our records to the Washington National Records Center in Suitland, Maryland for storage.

At this time, I would like to thank Julie for organizing the meeting. And David, thank you so much for your hospitality and this beautiful room we are able to meet in today.

ADAMS: Thank you Karen. At this time, I would like to recognize David Ferriero for his comments.

FERRIERO: Good morning and welcome to my house. It's nice to have you here. One of the things that I'm very proud of are the tours that our staff provides for Members of Congress and their staffs and families. Since our last meeting, we have given 76 tours with an average tour consisting of about 10 to 15 people. So, we've entertained a lot of folks. And these tours are tailored to who is visiting. The staff really knocks themselves out to find records that are from states that are being represented on the tours. I'd like to publicly acknowledge the work the staff does on both the congressional affairs side and the legislative archives side. Richard Hunt, Sharon Fitzpatrick, and Charlie Flanagan really knocked themselves out, so thank you very much for the work that you do.

If you listened to NPR this morning, you may have heard that tomorrow is "Bill of Rights Day" and that we are commemorating it with a naturalization ceremony in the Rotunda where the President will be speaking. So, there has been a lot of preparation and a lot of security for the last couple of weeks. We're very pleased about this event.

By popular demand, I have been asked to talk about the country's Open Government Plan. This is the third-annual plan, the first one was developed in 2011. And it is part of the International Open Government Partnership, which was launched in 2011. Sixty-nine countries are now participating in this endeavor, and the focus and commitment made by these countries is to domestically and internationally promote transparency, empower citizens, and to transform the way the federal government serves and engages the public.

The third U.S. National Action Plan contains forty commitments on the part of the United States Government. And six of them have NARA written all over them. They advocate to improve management of government records.

The first commitment mentioning NARA reinforces the Capstone approach that we have created at the National Archives for managing electronic records.

The second deals with modernizing the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Staff in the Office of Government Information Services at the National Archives are working with the Department of Justice on a pilot program for release of FOIA-approved records. As soon as they are approved for release, they will go online. This is a major breakthrough in that they are immediately available to the public.

The third directive is to streamline the declassification process. I'm sure all of you know the concerns about the amount of declassification that's going on across the government. This spells out specific responsibilities for reviewing and streamlining that process.

The fourth is implementing the unclassified records information program since every agency has unclassified information that requires management, safeguarding, and dissemination control. Our Information Security Oversight Office has drafted implementation guidance which will standardize how that is handled across the government.

Fifth, our Federal Register is developing a machine-readable government organization chart. It's hard to believe that in 2015, the government doesn't have a machine-readable organization chart, but we will have one.

And the last one is to increase the impact of Open Government Innovation activities. This involves expanding our Citizen Archivist Program to include citizen scanning of documents, which has already been implemented and is now taking place in our Innovation Hub at the DC building. So, we have actually engaged the American public, and they are helping us in our digitization process. These are NARA's responsibilities in the Open Government Plan.

And my last item is to remind you that, if you have not visited our Spirited Republic exhibit, it closes on January 10. It's a wonderful exposé of the federal government's role in alcohol and it's an entertaining and disturbing exhibit. (laughter)

ADAMS: Thank you, David. It is now time to review the minutes of the last meeting. Is there any objection to dispensing the reading of the minutes? Carrying on. Are there any corrections to the minutes from the last meeting? None? I would enter a motion to approve.

FERRIERO: So, moved.

ADAMS: Seconds?

F: Second.

ADAMS: OK. All those in favor.

TOGETHER: Aye.

ADAMS: The minutes are approved. At this time, I would like to recognize Senate Archivist Karen Paul. Karen.

PAUL: Thank you. For preservation of the Senators' papers, we continue to work with the six offices that will be closing at the end of this Congress and are very pleased to announce that three of our longer-serving Senators have archivists or records managers on their staff to help with the process. As new Senate offices are settling in, they are introduced to the records management toolkit, and we spend some time discussing the tools that are most helpful for a new office to seriously consider. This approach has proven to be really popular and effective since its initial debut in 2010. We continue to expand these tools as new requests for guidance arise.

Senate offices that closed at the end of the last Congress expressed interest in receiving an updated member's records disposition schedule, last published in the Records Management Handbook for United State Senators and their archival repositories. We are working on revising and updating the schedule and have received some very good input from our archivists currently working in the members' offices.

For committee records preservation, we met with our committees over the summer, met individually to catch up with personnel changes, provide briefings to new staff, and to collect information for our National Digital Stewardship Resident Fellow -- John Caldwell's research project -- which you'll hear about more in a moment. We found many offices are dealing with the challenges of managing digital content on multiple devices. This underscores our continued need to strengthen relationships with our systems administrators. In fact, we are finding that the systems admins increasingly see the benefits of working with our office as the amount of information on their systems grow and the need to clear data server space becomes important. And, so, to this end, we have begun work with the Center for Legislative Archives to establish a certification process whereby committees can begin to clean up server space.

Record accessions continue to be heavy. Since our June meeting, we accessioned 725 cubic feet of textual records from 18 different committees and offices, and over 11 terabytes of electronic records totaling 216 accessions from 13 different committees. We could not even begin to handle this kind of volume without the participation and dedication of our committee archivists. Notable within this transfer is the entire Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations shared drive, documenting investigations of the subcommittee from 1995 to 2014. At 11 terabytes, it is the largest, single transfer of committee electronic records to date. The accession contains a wealth of documentation on Senate investigations during this time period, including notes on money laundering, Chevron offshore, tax havens, Wall Street and the financial crisis, and high-risk income loans to name a few.

The size challenged all archivists handling the description, those being Homeland Security Archivist Katie Delacenserie and the Center for Legislative Archives IT staff who sought to enhance their records description, ingest practices, and procedures. This was, indeed, a learning opportunity for all of us, which should benefit our future electronic records transfers.

We began work on a revision of the *Committee Records Management Handbook* with the goal of reissuing the publication in the coming year. Deputy Archivist Elisabeth Butler continues to work with six committees that do not have an archivist on capturing, describing, and transferring their e-collections, including staff accounts, emails, and shared drives. Of these committees, she has completed the processing backlogs of four of the committees. She also processed the legacy collection of shared drives and staff email accounts of the Joint Economic Committee. These records date from 1995-2014 and include 775 gigabytes of information. A special thanks is due to the Committee Chief Clerk, Colleen Healy, who, working with us, devoted countless hours and days over the past few years into processing both the textual and electronic records of the Joint Committee. The result of this effort is a rich archive that nicely supplements the committees published records, which date from its founding in the 80th Congress.

Deputy Archivist Allison White is currently working with the Center Archivist Jacqie Ferry on amending our accession form to gather new information such as file fixity and file-format identification information at the point records transfer to our office.

We continue to work closely with our IT community through collaboration with the Technology Assessment Group, otherwise known as TAG. Just after last June's meeting, Deputy Archivist White worked with Michael Kuhl, Manager of Enterprise Processes and Innovation, to initiate another round of demos for vendors of social media archives. With the second round of demos, we saw increased interest in Members' offices and are encouraging Members, particularly those who are frequent users of social media platforms, to be proactive in preservation of electronic files. This is an example of our ongoing advice of not waiting until an office is closing to address preservation of these kinds of dynamic records.

We have reviewed the results from our committee social media archiving and have concluded that the committees that used one of the approved vendor services, as opposed to downloading the data themselves, have produced archival files that are more robust and durable. We also are working with the TAG group on a document-management-system evaluation.

Our photo historian, Heather Moore, and Deputy Archivist White are participating on this working group to assess digital asset management software to manage Members' digital photos and videos.

Training has become absolutely essential for us to keep up with electronic records management. Besides our attendance at the Society of American Archivist's annual meeting in August, Deputy Archivist White and our NDSR Fellow, John Caldwell, received a wonderful, last-minute invitation from the Government Publishing Office to participate in the one-week, high-level training course on International Standards of Organization -- ISO standard 16363 -- for auditors and managers of digital repositories. While it is daunting to learn the amount of digital preservation planning and

documentation required to achieve the ISO 16363 goal of being a trusted digital repository, to say nothing of the implementation of policy, they were impressed with how far the GPO is in terms of achieving its goal of becoming a trusted digital repository. Most importantly, for our institution, we have a far greater understanding of what our expectations should be of the repository that is holding and preserving our digital records. We believe we are better equipped to ask questions and to be an active partner as we move further and deeper into the world of standard-based, digital preservation.

John Caldwell and Allison White attended the International Conference on Digital Preservation in Chapel Hill the first week of November. And John and Allison attended special workshops on the proposed metadata encoding and transmission standard, the preservation metadata international standard, and using open-source tools to fulfill digital preservation requirements. They attended sessions and interacted with professionals from the National Archives and libraries in Europe, Asia, New Zealand, and Australia and learned that many countries are facing similar challenges to what we are facing, and that the digital community is willing to share their successes and, also, their frustrations with one another in order to improve our processes.

This year we have expanded our international contacts. Katie Delacenserie, the Archivist of Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, attended a meeting at the International Council on Archives' Section on Parliaments and Political Papers in Berlin in October. Fifty archivists attended and represented the Archives of Parliament, political parties, research foundations, and national libraries from 25 different countries. Over the course of three days, attendees discussed web and social-media archiving, including appraisal, collecting, and acquisition policy, technical efforts, researcher perspectives, copyright, and privacy issues. Katie's talk examined the appraisal and preservation of social media in the Senate, including the testing of various tools to ensure the capture of different platforms, different types of content, and her own experiences in preserving the social media sites of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. She indeed has opened new channels of communication for our staff.

And finally, I wanted to mention a new project of the Congressional Papers Roundtable of the Society of American Archivists. Our collaboration with this group began in 1984 when our office participated in its founding. This group continues to be a vital force in the preservation of Members' records. And indeed, several of our members of this committee are members of the Roundtable Group.

In October, the CPR's Electronic Records Committee launched a new website devoted to improving the acquisition, preservation, and eventual use of members' electronic records for research and educational purposes. The site features blog posts, case studies, sample repository documents, such as workflows, policy documents, processing documentation, and access procedures. I commend the work of this very active and substantial Electronic Records Committee as a whole and give special thanks to Adriane Hansen of the University of Georgia's Russell Library and a thank you to Sheryl vogt -- Sheryl is her boss -- as well as to Anu Kasarabada who is the Archivist of the Senate Judiciary Committee Democratic staff. I commend their excellent work in creating this new site that is helping to build a knowledge base among members of our Congressional archival community -- those who collect the records of Members.

Many of you have expressed interest in our National Digital Stewardship Residency Fellow's (NDSR) project, and I now invite John Caldwell to bring us up-to-date as to what he's been doing for the past six months.

CALDWELL: Good morning, everyone. I want to begin by thanking Karen and the Secretary for inviting me to speak at the meeting and I will give you a brief overview of the project and the work that has been completed, and where I see this project moving in the remaining six months. As Karen mentioned at the June meeting of the Advisory Committee, the focus of my year-long project is to document the current digital records management and archival practices in Senate committees. That includes tools and procedures to improve electronic records preservation and to make recommendations for long-term implementation of digital preservation practices in the Senate. The end goal is

to apply a more consistent methodology for the handling of Senate digital assets while still in our physical custody, as well as to ally our work with the Center to minimize the risk to the Senate's unique and highly-valuable electronic records material.

I am doing a similar study for the Members' offices and am working to identify best practices and possible tools that can assist archivists and systems administrators in a personal office to better manage digital assets maintained for an extended period before they're transferred to a SharePoint and other content management systems. These digital assets include email, social media, and web archiving. I am also looking at the use of mobile devices in committees, and the technical, administrative, and descriptive metadata being collected while records are still in the committee, and records management training.

The survey was designed for committee archivists, system administrators, and chief clerks -- the three staff positions on committees most likely to perform archival functions for the committee. As a complement to the survey, I also created an evaluation tool called *US Senate Levels of Digital Preservation* -- with which a Senate office can self-rate or can be rated on different aspects of digital preservation, including storage, file fixity, and metadata file formats in the storage media. The survey is based on a National Digital Stewardship Alliance tool and has been adapted for Senate use.

Over the summer and in the early fall, I met with 18 Senate committees, as well as the staff of the Senate Historical Office, and the Center for Legislative Archives. These interviews yielded a lot of excellent information, and I have a few highlights that I'd like to share with you.

Of the eighteen committees, eight of them are currently maintaining a SharePoint instance. Two of those committees are even using their SharePoint to collect and preserve email messages related to committee business. Eleven of the eighteen committees are currently using the Sergeant-At-Arms virtual machine infrastructure for their storage solution, instead of maintaining their own servers locally. Eleven of the

committees archived their social media at the end of the 113th Congress, five of which were using one of the approved vendors. And an additional three committees are currently looking at the three approved vendors in the Senate to enhance the collection for future Congresses.

Mobile devices, currently, are being used primarily for email access. But a lot of committees are beginning to expand that use, particularly with tablets, and replacing devices with laptops for increased remote access. Tablets are being used more frequently in both committee hearings and meetings to take and capture notes. And one committee is even interested in using iPhone's Microsoft app, once the security features and the security agreement can be reached, which would lead to a new use of mobile devices for generating committee content.

The meetings with the Center staff focused primarily on electronic records ingest processes and the development of transfer documentation. And we also discussed some of the mid-range planning for preserving electronic records within the Congressional Records Instance of the Electronic Records Archive (CRI-ERA).

During the interviews with committee archivists, I asked them to describe the actions that they take and the methods that they use to archive their electronic records, and I created an individualized work-flow for each of those archivists, which was 10 total, and also mapped out the accession process within the Senate Historical Office. These work-flows have given me a better understanding of how archival processing is being done in the Senate and provided a format to easily identify areas for improvement where new tools or procedures can be introduced into existing processes.

In October, I began researching the criteria used in the IT communities who evaluate software solutions, and through my interviews, meetings, and research, I have identified several specific, digital-preservation needs within the Senate. They are establishing file fixity, identifying accurate file formats, assistance with processing email accounts, personal identifiable information identification and removal, identification of duplicate

records, packaging and transferring records, as well as accession profiling, including file lists and determining volume of an accession. Key criteria for any software tools include ease of use, support, compatibility, affordability, metadata generation, and the versatility of these various applications.

In consultation with my mentors, over a dozen solutions have been selected for testing, each of which meet at least one of the aforementioned criteria. To date, I have worked with seven of these utilities: Droid, NARA File Analyzer, Karen's Directory Printer, File Analyzer ++, TreeSize Free, RobyCopy, and RichCopy. Each of these meet either fixity, format identification profiling, or the transferring needs for Senate records.

On the Members' personal office front, to date I have met with two closing offices, two active offices, and two new-member offices to learn about their electronic records management and digital preservation practices and needs. And in August, I arranged a meeting between the Senate Historical Office archivists and the Library of Congress's Manuscript division staff to discuss their work on Senator Lieberman's electronic records. This was an excellent meeting as it highlighted the needs of repositories that collect Members' papers, and it established a new partner for the Historical Office moving forward.

So, it's been a very busy six months to say the least. In my remaining time, I will continue testing software tools, including email processing utilities and the BitCurator forensic suite. I will be crafting, testing, and refining new work-flows, which incorporate some of these tools, and partnering with committee archivists to test deployment. I will be creating tutorials and any user guidelines for the solutions that best fit the needs of the Senate, continue researching emerging trends and solutions in digital preservation, and draft a white paper summarizing all of my work. I will continue meeting with personal offices, especially the closing offices, to learn more about their needs and make recommendations of how they can better preserve and archive their electronic materials.

And I am hoping to partner with both a closing and active office to test possible solutions in those environments. My plan, moving forward, is also to reach out to more institutions that are collecting senators' material to discuss their experience with receiving and ingesting digital records and incorporate those insights into recommendations for personal offices.

I just want to conclude by thanking the Senate Historical Office for hosting my residency, the Secretary of the Senate for her support, and the Senate archivists who I have met with. Thank you very much.

ADAMS: Thank you so much, John. And thank you Karen, as well, for both of your updates. I would now like to recognize Robin Reeder for an update from the House Office of Art and Archives. Robin.

REEDER: Good morning. Thank you, Julie. To begin, here are some statistics since our last Advisory Committee meeting. We've had 11 consultations with Member offices, two with committees, cataloged 683 photographs, transferred 181,500 pages of textual records to the Center for Legislative Archives, and, also for electronic records, transferred 20.8 gigabytes of records to the Center for Legislative Archives. Loans to committees totaled 570,750 pages and 701 megabytes of electronic data.

I'd like to highlight some of the projects our staff have been working on. For our House Social Media and News Expo that was held a few months ago, our photo archivist, Michelle Strizever, created a project and wrote a blog about stereoviews, the early form of 3D photography. She highlighted the example that is in the House collection, scanned it, and made it into a anaglyph image that is a 3D image using red-blue glasses, and creates an interleave image when viewed with 3D glasses that comes to life. Everyone has a sample at your seat and you can see how it works. Thank you, Michelle.

Each year, the House hosts employee recognition awards and Alison Trulock on our staff was given a new award, created a couple years ago, titled the "Team Player Award,"

where one House office recognizes an employee from another House office. Alison was given this award in appreciation of the help she gave to the Chief Administrative Officers' Office with their records.

Over the last few months, Heather Bourk has been working with Brandon Hirsch at the Center for Legislative Archives and IT staff from the Clerk's office on recommendations for setting up a computer dedicated to processing electronic records. The work station is designed to provide access to electronic records in order to obtain descriptive information and to authenticate the records while limiting exposure of the records to data loss or manipulation. Set-up is complete and the work station is ready to use for processing incoming records.

In addition, the Office of Art and Archives gained a new curatorial staff member. In October, Stephanie Grimes joined the team as a Web Content Specialist and she will be working with our archives staff in the future on developing new content for the House History Art and Archives' website. Thank you.

ADAMS: Thank you, Robin. I now would like to recognize Brandon Hirsch, IT Specialist at the Center for Legislative Archives, who will provide us with an update on the Congressional Records Instance of the Electronic Records Archive. Brandon.

HIRSCH: Thank you, Julie. Good morning members of the Advisory Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide a brief update on the status of the Congressional Records Instance of ERA, as well as an update on electronic record services at the Center. As noted in our Annual Report, over the past 12 months the volume of the Center's electronic records holdings has increased by over 52 terabytes -- a growth rate of 98% in 12 months. Our e-records holdings now total approximately 110 terabytes. In keeping with previous analogies we've used at committee meetings, this is approximately equivalent to two million four-drawer file cabinets, fifty-five million 3.5-inch floppy disks, or fifty-three billion pages of standard printed text. This extraordinary increase in volume is due to three uniquely large transfers over the past year: the first, an over 10

terabyte transfer from a Senate committee; the second, 15 terabytes from the web harvest of the 113th Congress, as well as an ongoing project between the Center for Legislative Archives and NARA's Digital Preservation Lab to digitize audio visual records of the 9-11 Commission. To date, we've received 15 terabytes of digitized records with one batch of processing yet to be completed. As we reported in June, by 2019 we expect our total holdings to be over 500 terabytes or a half a petabyte. And it would appear that we are well on track to meet those projections, if, albeit, slightly ahead of where we predicted we would be this year.

To address this ever-growing storage volume, we've worked diligently over the last year and are pleased to announce that we have successfully completed the acquisition of an expanded storage platform for the CRI instance here at Archives I. This storage architecture is a modular architecture which will provide the Center with approximately 250 terabytes of gross storage capacity. This modular architecture will allow us greater flexibility to increase storage volume as future needs arise and we expect that they will. In addition to the expanded storage capabilities, we're also working through a tech-refresh of core Congressional Records-Instance processing equipment. As we continue to work closely with NARA's Information Services staff, we expect to have the new hardware online and operational in the coming months.

An additional focus of this past year for the Center has been to develop server and dedicated electronic-records processing space here at Archives I. Unfortunately, new security requirements from NARA's certifying agency and a successive explosion in costs derailed this effort last year to convert existing Center space at Archives I into a SCIF for classified electronic-records processing, as well as separate space for unclassified processing. We will continue working through this effort this year and hope to identify additional options that may provide a more cost-effective path forward.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions about this material or any material that was in the report at this time.

SKAGGS: I appreciate very much you responding to my request about the hardware storage. I do have other questions -- broader questions -- about the information management and I was so pleased to hear John Caldwell's report, which really does address some other questions I have. I would like to know, Karen and John, if there's an interim report that John has provided of the work that he's done so far. Did you do that, or are you just waiting until the end of the year? I'm particularly interested in what you gathered so far. Is that available to us?

PAUL: We can write an interim report.

SKAGGS: I think it would be very interesting working with the committees as well as with the Members' offices -- and would be very helpful, I think, for the committee to have a report. And, in particular, when you talked about the workflows, John, that's the kind of information I would really appreciate having, such as what type of information on media and file formats you are finding, and how that gets moved to the Legislative Archives. I noticed in the report there were DVDs and different types of media -- how is that handled when it gets to the Legislative Archives? Because, as we know, DVDs are not long-term preservation media. I notice that there was legacy media mentioned in the report, and how is that being handled at the Legislative Archives for long-term preservation needs? Also, I guess you're looking at the Legislative Archives, John, as far as what kind of long-term preservation strategy the Legislative Archives should have. That's the kind of information I'm really interested in. So, you're collecting that. If you could make that available to the Advisory Committee, I would appreciate that.

HUNT: Brandon, do you want to say anything about our legacy media preservation strategies?

HIRSH: Yes, I think that would be helpful and it has been some time since we've discussed some of those approaches. As we noted in the report, we do process a significant volume of DVDs and, when I say "we", I mean my colleague Shannon is really the one who's processing through these thousands of DVDs. It is a very labor-

intensive process. It's a manual process and it's time intensive, but we're -- Shannon -- is still able to get through a huge, huge volume of this media, both DVDs as well as optical media that's included in the records. And we don't have a magic bullet to processing optical media. We process it through your standard optical disc drives.

As far as legacy media, mostly what we see are 5.25-inch and 3.5-inch floppy disks and - - the 3.5-inch floppy disks are a little bit easier from a hardware standpoint because you can buy USB-capable 3.5-inch floppy disk drives and they connect to standard computers. But, again, it's very, very time intensive. In one specific set of committee records we processed, I believe we processed about 185 3.5-inch floppy disks that yielded 10 megabytes of records. But it's also worth noting that the 10 megabytes -- were important historical records, and they'll be closed, obviously, for a number of years -- but they are very historically significant. So even though the overall data volume was very small, it is still well, well worth the time we put into these records because they're very, very valuable.

SKAGGS: Well, I appreciate that information and I apologize to the committee if this is something that you've covered because I'm new and asking questions that everybody's going, "Well, yeah, we all know this." (laughter) But I do appreciate your indulgence with me by asking questions that might be something that everybody already understands. But I really am looking forward to your report, John, because I think this will put some perspective on this task and will provide some good discussion for us later. So, thank you.

CALDWELL: Thank you.

VOGT: I would like to commend the Senate Historical Office for securing John's residency. This has put us light-years ahead of where we would have been in understanding some of the issues with electronic records. And it's certainly something that the Senate Historical staff could not have undertaken along with their everyday

work. So, it's wonderful to have this new experience, and John, we really do thank you for your work.

KOED: Thank you. And I will add to that, as the Senate Historian. This may answer your question too, Deborah -- we've been having interim reports of our own from John as he's gone through this process. It has been a tremendous learning process for all of us, and the work that Alison and John have been doing together, with Alison working as his office mentor, has just been really valuable. So we'll definitely do the interim report, and we look forward to getting more from John because it has just been a tremendous experience for us.

ADAMS: Thank you.

PAUL: I have a question for Brandon about the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission records. I don't know if you're the appropriate person, but I'm interested to know if you will be opening these records in a couple of months. And I'm interested to know how researchers will access the records?

HUNT: I'm actually going to talk about that in my update.

PAUL: Oh, OK. Good.

HUNT: When I'm done, would you ask that question again? (laughter)

HIRSCH: Yes. That certainly is another area that a lot of our focus has been on this year.

PAUL: OK. And I wanted to compliment you on the web harvest. For some of our Members' offices that close and transfer large collections to repositories in the states, the first question we are asked is: "You know, we've gotten 3,000 boxes of something, but we can't find the speeches in these 3,000 boxes." We send them right to that website and

usually there they are. So, you're helping people to get up and running in the states as well.

HIRSCH: Wonderful.

PAUL: So, I'm glad you're continuing that into the next Congress and beyond.

HIRSCH: Great. Great.

ADAMS: Thank you, Brandon. I would now like to recognize Richard Hunt so he can give us the annual report on the Center for Legislative Archives. Richard.

HUNT: Thank you, Julie. I'd like to start by acknowledging the great work of Sharon Fitzpatrick to make sure that all of our committee members could attend today's meeting. And I wanted David to know that the people in the budget office were terrific and worked late into Friday to make this travel happen.

ADAMS: Well, that's good to hear because I only heard the other side. (laughter)

HUNT: Yes. You see all the complaints. But they were just super and really supportive.

It's always instructive and striking when we tally up our activities and accomplishments for the year and see all that we've done to assist the House and the Senate, support our researchers, use social media to reach a broader public, and engage teachers and students in studying the history of Congress. I'm blessed to have such a diversely talented staff at the Center who are unafraid to take on new challenges and responsibilities. We see those qualities in every staff member here and in every area of our activity. But they're especially notable this year in Christine Blackerby's extraordinary collaboration with the National Archives Exhibit staff in the curation of the upcoming exhibit *Amending America*. That exhibit is a central part of the agency's first national-outreach initiative under the leadership of our executive, Jim Gardner. *Amending America* will open in

March of 2016 in the Lawrence O'Brien Gallery at the National Archives, and I'm hoping we can host some House and Senate receptions for that. It will be well-stocked with House and Senate records, of course.

That same spirit of rising to meet new challenges is also notable in the pioneering work we're doing in the processing, preparation, and description of the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission records scheduled for opening in February of 2016. This significant quantity of very recent and very important records, the vast majority of them in electronic form, presents a number of new challenges for the Center.

It is only through the combined talents of our seasoned access specialists, experienced description specialists, and our IT specialists that we can open and access the information preserved in a variety of formats and files, then, prepare records descriptions for the catalog as well as a 1,400-page finding aid to provide access when they're open. This labor-intensive and time-consuming process requires examination and review of the contents of every file.

So, to answer your question, apart from my prepared remarks, the process, as I understand it, is first we identify the records within the universe of Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission that are unique and reflect the work product of the commission itself, as opposed to records from other agencies that are supplied to the commission. It's the same model we used for the 9-11 Commission records so that researchers can FOIA the original agency records from the originating agency.

But what is unique to our collection is the work of the commission. So, we look at the staff files and the Commission members' files and identify the series and collections within those. The finding aid is generated from an electronic inventory of the files that were kept in the electronic records content management system. It gets down to a very specific electronic-file level. The description of the records at the series level and the individual, folder-level information will be provided to researchers. In the meantime, our access specialists are looking at the series that they think will have the most research

interest and value, and they are reviewing and doing redactions so that records will be prepared on opening day. The records are scheduled to be open in February, 2016. We do the best we can in preparation, and then research demand drives us into further description and further review to make those records available. Does that get to the heart of your question?

Basically, what we learn from this exercise, we will apply to open House and Senate electronic records in the lessons learned category. It's frightening that they're open so soon, but it's a good experience for us and will help us down the line. I'm assuming once we're open in February that at the June meeting and subsequent meetings, we should pay some attention to this subject. We can explain our experiences and what we've learned as we've moved ahead in providing electronic records to the public.

PAUL: Will the electronic records be accessed from here or from the National Archives too?

HUNT: That remains to be seen. The electronic records are here in our custody. How we're going to provide them to the research public is still an open question and a point of discussion for us. There's the traditional means where we burn things to disks. If there's enough research demand in a particular set of records, you'd probably want to make them available online. Again, the experience of interacting with researchers is going to tell us where we can put our limited resources to the most effective use.

FERRIERO: For me, it's also an issue of ensuring that the system is robust enough to accommodate the demand when it is open. Because we're going to have a lot of curiosity at the very beginning. It's exactly what we go to every time we release a census. And I've been through the release of the 1940 census where the thing crashed on us as I was on the stage about to demonstrate. So, I can guarantee we're going to have that situation (laughter) with this.

KOED: And Richard, could I ask -- are you already getting researcher requests for this information and, if so or if not, how do you play into advertising availability of the materials to potential researchers?

HUNT: Kris? Are you here?

WILHELM: Unfortunately, yes I am. (laughter) Thank you for bringing this up. (laughter) We have gotten some requests. Because the records are closed under a letter that came to us from the FCIC commissioners, what we tell those researchers is we really can't respond to you until February of 2016. We can't make the finding aid available yet. The records are closed in every sense until that date arrives. So, most of the people have been fine with that. The FCIC did a wonderful job with making records available on their website. And the website is maintained. So, people are meeting some of their needs there. But we will just wait until February and then see if we get one enormous request, or 5,000 requests, or no requests. It's completely unknown.

HUNT: Kris would prefer if we do not promote or advertise. (laughter) Naturally enough - - given the number of staff I have, I understand that.

I'm especially pleased to be able to report continued progress on what was once a critical issue for this committee, and that is our efforts to provide enhanced descriptions for all open House and Senate records in our care. As you can see from the report, we're closing in on the completion of our original project objectives and hope to have it completed by the end of 2016. My staff makes me say, "If we maintain current levels of staffing." (laughter) And I'll get to that at the close of my report.

Our description team and the House and Senate archivists who have assisted us deserve recognition and applause for all that has been accomplished on this front. One sign of success is that our reference archivists see a significant increase in the research traffic that comes to us citing descriptions in the Catalog. Clearly, that was the primary

objective of our work and the single cause that motivated old friend Don Ritchie to encourage us to improve our descriptive practices in the beginning of this project.

So at the project's close, does that mean we're done with description? No, it means that we're caught up and simply move onto the records of the 97th Congress and more recent Congresses that are not open for research or will be open soon with the passage of time. And more and more, as we move ahead, those records will include electronic records as well, which presents new challenges on the descriptive front.

This year, we have been engaged in important work on many fronts, including the handling of an increase in the number and volume of accessions and loans, providing more records to a broad array of researchers interested in a wide variety of topics, hosting notable scholars for public talks who have researched in House and Senate records to reveal fascinating new dimensions of our history, producing popular and enlightening exhibits and gallery talks at the Capitol Visitor's Center, creating new document-based blogs on a variety of Congressional topics, and creating new educational materials and instructional workshops to meet the needs of students and teachers. In sum, we have a creative, hard-working staff that has enjoyed success in many endeavors this year.

And let me conclude by mentioning what the year ahead brings for us. Out of a staff of twenty-one at the Center, five senior staff members will retire this year. As many of you know, Assistant Director Matt Fulgham left the agency in November, and he is sorely missed by all of us. That's why I have to say, "Given, maintaining current levels of staff." So, I need to build upon the foundation of our talented professionals on-hand and recruit new talent to come onboard to help us meet present responsibilities and future challenges. I will keep this committee informed of our progress on the staffing front as we move ahead. Thank you.

FERRIERO: So, are there people here who will not be at the next meeting that you want to acknowledge? Staff members who are leaving?

HUNT: I think everybody has declared that they are retiring. Is that true?

(laughter) Richard McCulley, the original Historian at the Center, will leave us some time in 2016 and Rod Ross, our Archives Reference Specialist -- he's leaving us after a -- how long of a career?

ROSS: Now close to 40 years.

HUNT: Bill Davis, his colleague on the reference staff, will be leaving us. Janet Davis, who is administrator extraordinaire and supports us on the loan process and many other things, will be leaving us as well.

FERRIERO: Of all the things that I worry about -- and this is just a microcosm of the agency at large -- is this intellectual capital that is leaving us with their knowledge and how do we compensate for the fact that we're losing them?

ADAMS: Thank you, Richard. And, at this time, I'd like to open it up to any new business.

VOGT: I just want to make one comment. It was really good to see that reference has bumped up to the same level as taking records back and forth to Senate and House, which had been the pedestal that was the tallest. And now, to see reference coming right up with that means a lot has been accomplished.

HUNT: You know, we've almost doubled the volume of records that we're serving to researchers. So, again, it shows that all that descriptive effort is paying off and access to House and Senate records has increased dramatically.

VOGT: Which we anticipated. It's wonderful to see.

SKAGGS: Of course we all know how important description is. That's a pretty obvious statement for this committee, but just to point out that over 50% of our inquiries continue to focus on modern Congresses and that is where the focus of description efforts is -- all

this description work is really paying off with the researchers. And looking at the list of prominent researchers at the Center -- wow -- it looks fantastic.

HUNT: Well, thank you very much. It is very impressive. And the modern Congresses are just so voluminous that each Congress itself becomes a major descriptive project.

PAUL: Richard, I have another question about electronic records. In the ongoing challenges section of the report, Brandon really addressed the processing and server space issue and that that is on its way to being improved and resolved. But the other two items, the committee hearings backlogs, and the legacy media, what do you see in terms of addressing those two issues? In other words, is it a question of equipment or staff hours? It is of slight concern, those two issues, to us.

HIRSCH: And we share that concern as well. It's certainly staff resources because as you know, Shannon and I are the primary electronic records processors, and there is an ongoing transfer of the committee hearing recordings, which we continue to work through. One advantage, at least, with the legacy media is that that is a finite universe. So, as we continue to process through legacy media that set of challenges continues to decrease. And, as I mentioned briefly as well, it is very, very time consuming to process legacy media with the resources that we have. I think we're fairly well equipped in terms of the actual computer hardware that we need to process them, but it's really just time constraints that it takes to slug through some of the legacy media.

HUNT: And the committee hearings?

HIRSCH: With committee hearings, we continue to make progress on the DVD recordings that are transferred. I don't have any estimates as to when we'll get through those, because we received so many large transfers this year as we typically do at the end of each Congress. We see in the report in the area of data preparation that column grow in the years following the end of a Congress. As the year progresses, and as we get into years with less-frequent transfers, we're able to make through and diminish that

backlog. I would expect, by the next meeting in June, we'll be able to see that column decrease, certainly for House and Senate records as well as the other columns as well.

PAUL: So, they'll be a seasonal adjustment that will allow you to do some catching up?
(laughter)

HIRSCH: That's true. Yes. Seasonal adjustment.

HUNT: The exponential growth in volume of records is not really matched by an exponential growth in staff.

PAUL: Well, that was my thought, that there seemed to be such a huge jump in the past two years and we're well aware that your backlog is growing in that regard -- in the processing of digital records. And, so, that is of concern to us.

HIRSCH: Yes. We're able to keep up fairly well with transfers that are coming in now -- the current transfers and records that come in cyclically. The challenge that we have is in keeping pace with those transfers and processing legacy media. It's getting back into the stacks to work on the media that's there and find the time to pull those boxes and go through that media, pull it out of the boxes, bring it to the processing place. That is a real challenge of our time.

LEON: I wonder if I might ask a question about the description of the electronic records - - the ones that are open. And honestly, I can't remember whether we've had this conversation before or not. But have you considered, as a group, using natural language processing to do some early access description? To do named-entity extraction or those sorts of things before you get to actually crafting the description on an archival level?

HIRSCH: I think I'd say we dare to dream. (laughter)

LEON: OK. All right.

HIRSCH: I think we have looked closely at records that are approaching the period in which they're eligible for researcher requests. What we've seen of that current universe in the very immediate future of congressional, open, electronic records, are typically digitized records of textual materials that were transferred to us electronically, but not necessarily born digital records.

LEON: Ah, OK.

HIRSCH: So, there certainly could be tools that we could take advantage of in that world. I think CRI is still evolving to the point where we can integrate those tools in the architecture and we hope, as we continue to evolve CRI, our primary focus is expanding storage this year to meet this continuing, growing need. We have had architecture discussions with NARA's Information Services staff, and we continue to discuss avenues where we can integrate other processing tools in including advance-search technologies as they exist and working with the other offices in NARA in the Federal Electronic Records section. We work closely with our colleagues in Presidential Materials to keep an eye on what tools they're using as well. So, we'd love to add those tools and capabilities. I don't think we're there yet.

LEON:OK.

HIRSCH: There are some really exciting technologies out there.

LEON: I'll wait and keep asking. (laughter)

HIRSCH: And in addition, PII searching is something we're keeping a very, very close look at because we know that there's lots of sensitive and personally identifiable information in the records.

LEON: Yes. Definitely. Good.

SKAGGS: One more question. Do you know how old the oldest legacy media is?

HIRSCH: Not off the top of my head I don't. I know just generally speaking, as I said, we have not, thankfully for those of us who are processing it, found a large, large volume of the old 5.25-inch floppies. But we do have some old data reels. And we certainly have older audio-visual materials, as well. We were fortunate to be able to work closely with the audio-visual, digital-preservation lab at NARA to work on the digitization of those materials. We've also worked closely on the smaller-focus projects with NARA's Federal Digital Electronics Records team who has older legacy computer media -- so we have older backup takes going back to DAT tapes and material like that. So, we do have some of those interspersed throughout the records, but again, thankfully that volume is low. Looking just briefly in small instances, I think it seems that much of that material is duplicated in the textual records.

SKAGGS: That was my next question.

HIRSCH: And we assume -- they said, "Well, here's the actual records, but, you know, we've got this thing that's been sitting in the closet. So, why don't you have this too."

SKAGGS: Which would be wonderful.

HIRSCH: Yes.

ZINK: I had one question. It was just in passing. This may not be the appropriate place to ask this. Somebody mentioned something about GPO as a certified, digital repository. Is this a change in -- and I realize they're going through somewhat of an evolution -- but is this a change in their charter?

FERRIERO: Well, they've changed their name. It's now the Government Publishing Office.

ZINK: They're a digital repository.

FERRIERO: But they've always had a fair amount of digital content, as soon as they got into the digital business.

ZINK: I thought the Archives was actually maintaining their original products, at least, in the micro-form that they were transferred.

PAUL: I think GPO is striving to become a certified digital repository.

FERRIERO: They are.

PAUL: So, it would be in partnership with --

FERRIERO: With our content.

PAUL: Yes.

ZINK: OK.

LAWRENCE: I have a question -- like Steven's -- I'm not sure it's even the appropriate place to raise this question. But a lot of the focus, understandably, here has to do with the formal institutions. We have the Members' offices, the committees. I think Karen mentioned that in the House, they have gone through a historically very significant transition. My concern is whether or not it's the responsibility of -- I don't know -- Karen, or Robin, or the Historian's Office -- how we go about capturing the history that didn't occur in formal institutions. And the reason I'm concerned about this is that if we wait -- and maybe there's no alternative to this -- to capture the historic record from the personal histories or the personal records of the offices that were involved with the Speaker's office in that whole transition -- particularly within the Republican Conference and within the Freedom Caucus and within individual Members' papers. I'm just worried

that, down the road, we're going to miss opportunities to acquire accuracy in the records. And there are many cases where there's nothing that even remotely resembles an official record because of the personal nature of it.

I deal with this in my research where I'm going back now asking people about 40 years ago, and you get some very interesting accounts, some of which are actually accurate. (laughter) And it seems to me the further we get from these events, which are historically very significant events, it's not so much that they fade, but they may adapt to subsequent circumstances that make them more significant or less significant. And I don't know where that responsibility lies or where that capability lies, but I worry about the ephemeral nature of this record and the necessity both for institutional and for research purposes in acquiring that information because it will not exist at any place other than the kinds of meetings I used to be in. And I know that there are very few opportunities to record that information at a contemporary moment.

I'm just wondering because we deal here with the legislative archives, does that sort of lie outside of the purview of the folks in this room and, if so, I think I need sit down and have more of a talk with other people. But I'm just terribly worried that this really significant, historical and rich event, which has to do with the nature of the institution, and also the institution vis-à-vis other institutions of government, could get lost in the historical shuffle of the day-to-day events. So, I'm just sort of asking this question in general.

HAAS: I'll speak to that, if I could. I think it's a shared responsibility, and I think it piggybacks on comments you've made previously about leadership -- some of the unique records that occur in leadership and that they're not Speaker records or they're not Congressional records, but they're this in-between type of record, and I think we have some responsibility. I don't think we have a good solution at this point. Especially in some of the things that you're thinking about and the transition.

And John, as you know, in the House we didn't have a lot of transition prior to the last

15-20, years as the Senate has. We looked at some of what the Senate was doing to try to develop what a transition looks like. And I think we've gotten better as we've gone through these transition. So, we do play a role. We have been working with the new Speaker's office and the outgoing Speaker's office. Speaker Boehner is working through to decide what he's going to do, but I think, more specifically, you're talking about, actually, the functions that go on in the transition. And I'm not sure, at this point, we're doing an adequate job.

We work closely with the Historian, and he's doing a lot in that area. And unfortunately, Matt couldn't be here today for this meeting, but I think it's something we need to do some more work on, and it may be that we look to establish a group with folks like yourself that we could come up with some plans as we continue to go through this and, again, look to the Senate -- folks that had been involved directly. You ask the question and, then, you get volunteered, right? Are there specific things, though? I mean, I think the things that you're talking about are really behind-the-scenes, institutional things, correct?

LAWRENCE: Yeah. I guess I'm thinking in terms of the nature of conversations, the nature of discussions --who was meeting with, and what ideas were thrown around that are difficult to gather because people, I understand, are reluctant to talk on the record.

FERRIERO: And there are no minutes.

HAAS: Right.

LAWRENCE: There aren't formal minutes because it's not a committee meeting. It's not even a conference meeting. But there may be written records. And, again, the formal transfer of the institutional responsibilities, eventually, we can follow. But I think what's going to capture the interest of historians is trying to tease apart a lot of what is less formal, whether it's personal or it's factional, to figure out what's going on here and what the historical significance of it is five years down the road or ten years down the

road. And getting to people with whatever records they kept, so that we're not just going on the basis of recollection five years down the road where it gets reinterpreted or refashioned in people's mind.

It is a huge, huge challenge in part because there is a reluctance to make whatever records there are available. I don't know. Maybe that is a discussion with Matt on trying to do some very, very quick oral history here to capture in a very contemporary way what's happening. Because I do think it's ephemeral, but I think it's historically and institutionally very, very significant to understand. It's so rare that this event has occurred.

You can count on one hand the number of times we've gone through this and you look back at what occurred in 1910 with the Cannon Revolt. It's one of the most significant events in House history in terms of reorienting the factional and partisan relationships, and 100 years from now people may look back at this, particularly however this plays out over time with the redistribution of power within the conference, as being something we really want to understand and I'm not sure to what extent we will have the capability of doing that. Thanks for what you're doing. It's a challenge and I'm not sure I did volunteer. (laughter) But I'm happy to think about it because I, particularly from the research I do now, understand how vital that is and how difficult it is to capture.

HAAS: I think, John, you took a specific approach when you were in that role, which I think was historically very important. Maybe we need to make sure, when we're talking to the new Speaker's office -- when we're talking to them about setting up their office and how they're doing things, to point out some of those specifics that we may not have focused on. So, I think that's really helpful.

LAWRENCE: OK. Thank you very much.

KOED: And I would add to that, John, that one part of the solution to that problem is to have a really active oral history project. For instance, I'm currently in the process of

doing interviews with six people who were very active in the financial crisis between 2007 and 2008. A lot of the information that we hear from them is about things that happened behind the scenes. It's not something that's going to show up in a record or a memo. And on the Senate side, when we have really important moments like this, one of the first things we try to do is move in and identify people who are in decision-making positions and try to get that recorded. Those interviews may be closed for years and years because of the nature of the business, but we're at least recording the history. I think that it is important to have a really active oral history project.

HAAS: Betty is absolutely right. Matt and his team have been very active on the oral-history front.

ZINK: I have similar concerns. I think what you're talking about is a microcosm. I'm thinking back to my historian days when Phil La Follette was getting a telephone call from Washington, D.C. It's just a memo that he had a call and from a certain individual. We have no idea what was said and that is widening as we go forward. For a number of reasons, the records just do not exist. What is occurring is keeping fewer and fewer records on a formal basis and there's a backing off of using electronic mail and any sort of tangible record. There have been some studies at Florida, in particular, showing it's having a tremendous impact on the records of government.

LAWRENCE: You know, I think you're right. When I think back to the meetings I was in where you would have one set of discussions in private, and then you would agree what you were going to say in public, (laughter) which didn't necessarily reflect what you had just agreed to in private. And it's not until you go back and talk to those people and say, "Well, yeah. That was all just for the public. That was -- we really cut the deal back here and this is why we did it." And I think, to some extent, the availability of the electronic information gives an illusion that you have greater access to the genuine basis upon which decisions were formulated than may actually be true -- not because people are gaming, but because you just don't put certain things into writing, although you have the expectation that everything is written down.

SKAGGS: I sit down at the end of the year with Senator McConnell and do an oral history interview with him at his insistence. He's very interested in history and with his archives, he knows that that's an addition to the written record -- an oral history interview with him at the end of the year. We spend about an hour and a half going over the year -- highlights of the year and him talking about what happened during the year. And we have those oral histories going back. He started an oral history project talking about the beginning of his life all the way through last year. It's a wonderful oral history project with the senator.

ADAMS: Any other comments? Any business? OK. If there are no other comments, then, I would like to wish everyone a happy holiday and thank everyone for attending today's meeting. And I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

SKAGGS: Move to be adjourned.

ADAMS: Adjourned. Thank you all so much.