

**The Society for American Archaeology Program Chair's
Database Guide**
(a manual for the overwhelmed and understaffed)

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Introduction

Some thoughts on the job ahead

The SAA Program Chairperson has a big job. Ok, so it's not launch-a-space-shuttle-big, but one could probably say, without exaggeration, that some of the early battles of the American Revolutionary War required less coordination and logistical precision. If you try to think about all the parts at once, you are likely to get depressed. Barbara Mills and I sat down and tried to diagram the entire job one afternoon in late August of 2001. It took five hours, it definitely made me *very* depressed, and, in the end, we were wrong about a lot of stuff, anyway.

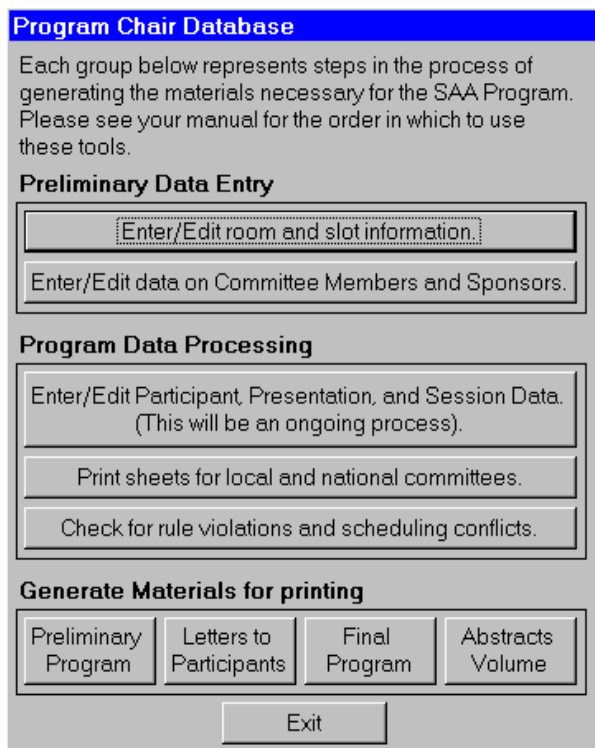
Because I have never actually been the Program Chair, only the Program Chair's graduate assistant, there are a good many bits to this job that I can't address. In fact, I'm sure that there are many bits I don't even know about. Some of the ones I've witnessed, but don't know how to do, include the formatting and coordinating the workshops bit, the putting together the roundtable luncheons bit, the answering endless streams of email bit, and the ever-popular staying up until four in the morning to edit the Preliminary Program for content because your graduate assistant is spending all of his hours doing database development bit. I'm afraid you'll have to talk a previous Program Chair to get the scoop on these and other tough tasks. But I can tell you that the last bit, the one about not being able to make your graduate student edit the program's content, is a thing of the past.

While this manual is by no means a comprehensive guide to the job of the SAA Program Chair, reading it should make your job easier. By reading this manual, you will not only become familiar with the SAA Program Chair Database, you will also come across many of the tasks and decisions you will have to execute in order to fulfill the Program Chair's job. How you deal with these situations is beyond my competence, but by being familiar with the database, I hope you will be able to make decisions that will let the database do as much work as the situation allows.

The SAA Program Chair Database is designed to make it easier for the Program Chair to do the following things: collect all the data necessary for the SAA annual meetings, use them to build a stimulating intellectual program, make sure that the data are of high quality, and, finally, generate the Preliminary Program, the acceptance letters, the Final Program, and the Abstracts volume. These four steps constitute the main subdivisions of this manual. As we go through them, I hope that the material contained below will give you insights not only into some of the things you will have to do put together a successful program, but also into the tasks that the computer is ready to do for you.

Rather than proceeding directly into these four tasks and how one uses the database to complete them, one digression into big picture thinking is necessary to look at the database as a whole, as well as the model it is built upon.

Figure 1. The Intro. Screen



The SAA office in Washington, D.C. should provide you with seven files. Five files are letters for you to modify when it comes time to send letters to meeting participants. This manual is file six. The last file is called SAACChair.mdb. If you double click on the file using any Windows PC with Microsoft Access 2000 installed, you will see the window in Figure 1.

This window is the gateway to all the tasks you will need to complete. The first process, preliminary data entry, is fairly short. The second section should ideally be 80% complete when the Preliminary Program and letters go out in early fall. The final steps, generating output, revolve around deadlines that will be provided to you by the SAA office.

As you go through this manual, you will come across several rules and concepts that are critical to the operation of the program. These are always outlined in the SAA's call for papers, but I will recap the most important ones.

The whole point behind these meetings is to see and present papers and posters. These are organized into sessions of several varieties, to be addressed later. Participants can play five different roles within these sessions. Chairs and Organizers coordinate the sessions. Discussants either discuss papers in symposia, or provide commentary in forums. Moderators, likewise, can play roles in either symposia or forums. Finally, Presenters give papers or present posters.

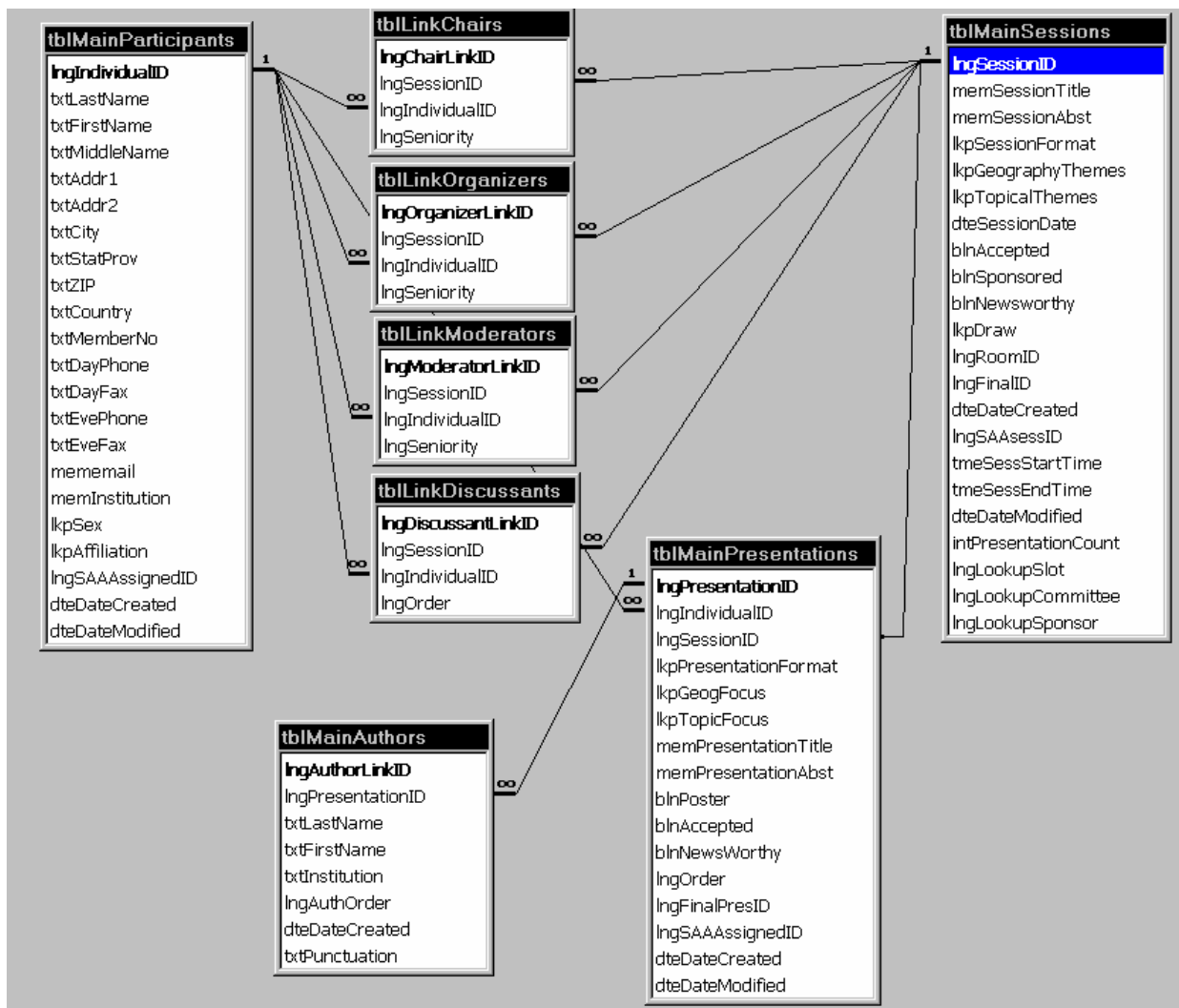
From this short discussion we can distill three types of entities, or things that are conceptually separate. There are Sessions of various kinds, there are Presentations, and there are Participants. Participants appear in sessions by playing roles. Notice that discussants and moderators are NOT presenters. That is to say, they do not give presentations, but participate in another way. Discussants do not submit abstracts (or if they do, the abstracts are discarded). Moreover, a participant can present a paper and be discussant during the same meeting - even during the same session in fact. Still, discussants do appear alongside presenters, and not other types of participants, in the Final Program. So, discussants are a special type of entity.

All of the above entities are related to each other through a series of rules. The most basic rules are that any given presentation can only appear in one session and that each presentation can only to be presented by one participant. The SAA has added additional rules to ensure that as

many people as possible participate in the meetings. No participant may present more than one paper or poster during the meeting. Additionally, no participant may play more than three roles, total, during the meeting, unless they are participating the Fryxell, Opening, or Plenary Sessions. Beyond that, there is a lot of leeway, and people frequently chair more than one session - or discuss more than one.

In addition to the entities pertaining to the meetings themselves, there is a final entity that only pertains to the presentations. Someone has to have written them. Writers of presentations constitute the author entity. Authors are different from participants because SAA participant rules do not apply to authors. Theoretically, one person could co-author every paper in a given annual meeting!

Figure 2. The Entity Relationship Model for the SAA Program Chair Database



Through the information in the previous three paragraphs, I have managed to sneak in a

mercifully jargon free explanation of the relational database entity relationship model upon which this database is built. Figure 2 illustrates this model. It is a good thing to be familiar with the model, as it will help you think through the organization of general sessions and the weeding out of errors in the program.

Each box in the diagram represents a table. Each line represents a field (column) within the table. The tables are joined together in various types of relationships because the database has been told that the ID fields in the tables that share the same names have the same meanings. That means that the values for each ID can link the tables together. One value for lngSessionID in the sessions table will relate to many instances of the same value in the Presentations table. Through this relationship, the database knows that those presentations will be given as part of the session with the same lngSessionID value. The tables with the word link in them allow multiple participants to be related to multiple sessions through the various roles available. This is an extra level of flexibility and it is necessary to make the program function properly.

Well, so much for introductions. At this point we'll get into the nuts and bolts of the database. From here on, there will be no figures embedded in the text. If you are reading this manual without the database for the 2002 meetings, make sure that the SAA office has provided you with a copy of the database for the 2001 meetings. The file will be called SAACChair2k.mdb. You will need it to go through this manual. To continue, make sure Microsoft Office 2000 is installed, copy the file SAACChair.mdb or SAACChair2k.mdb onto your computer, and double click the file. You'll see the window in Figure 1, and you're ready!

Task 1: Collecting the Data.

The majority of this task is done for you by the SAA office. When the final database arrives, either with the hard copy data, or some time after it, the database will be fully populated with all the web submissions for papers and all the hard copy submissions for papers. However, some data fields will require filling in before the final output can be produced. Moreover, you will spend a tremendous amount of time ferreting out errors and editing data. Therefore, learning how to do straight data entry is not nearly as important as learning to navigate the database.

Preliminary Data

The first thing to do is put some preliminary data related to the meetings into the database. In Figure 1, the first two buttons allow you to edit data on rooms, time slots, national committee members, and sponsors. Click the top button. A screen will appear that shows data on rooms. Populate this form, one record per room, with room names, room sizes, and room size categories. These categories may seem arbitrary, but they roughly conform to the size categories at most hotels. Further, data from past sessions have used these divisions. They can help you plan what session belongs in what room.

Now click the Slot Data tab. These are the standard time slots for the meetings. You can't edit the slots themselves. You can only add the dates. Close this form, then click the second button on the introduction window. The first tab tracks data on your national committee

members. Names are the only thing that are strictly necessary. Input your data into the fields shown. For the database's purposes, it would be best to enter each committee member's name fully - last name first.

At the bottom of the form, you should see a bar that shows a record number, several arrows, and the total number of records. The arrows will navigate through the records on each form. The arrow at the far right, with the asterisk, will add a new record. You will see this type of navigation throughout the database.

Now click the Sponsor tab. Just add sponsor data as you come across it while organizing the sessions. This may have been done for you by the SAA office. If it has, you will see the sponsor names. However, there will likely be more sponsors to add later. Close this window and we will move on to the meat of the database.

Program Data

When you click the third button on the Introduction Form, you will be entering the part of the database that will occupy more of your time than any other. The first thing you will see is a small switchboard with three buttons that take you to the three meeting-related entities in the database. Click Participants first.

Participants

You will see the first in a string of records in that were input by the SAA office. The total number of participants in the data set will be listed at the bottom, along with the aforementioned buttons that allow you to navigate through them. If the 2001 meetings are any indication, you shouldn't have to enter any data into these forms unless a participant gets skipped by the SAA office.

Every entity based form (Presentations, Sessions, and Participants) has a filter button, with appropriate filters included. These tools are principal means of navigating to the data you need to edit. Since most of your work will be editing, using these tools successfully is important. They operate by using your criteria to cull the thousands of records in the database down to the few entities which you may need to edit.

Click the Apply Filter button. To use a filter, you must first check the box to the left of the type of filter you want to use, then type the last name or institution you are looking for in the adjacent window. It is possible to use both filters at once. In the case of filters for the other entities, you may use them all at once as well, or combine any subset together to filter the data for that entity.

You can also expand your searches by using wildcards. For instance, if you are looking for someone who works at either the University of Arizona, or Arizona State University, you can type ■*Arizona*• into the Institutions column. The asterisks are wildcards and will return any record containing the word ■Arizona.• Close the filter form by clicking cancel. Another navigation tool that will help you is the subform listing presentation names at the bottom of the

Participants Form. Along with the presentation name, you should see a button that says **edit full entry**. Click on the button. If there is a title present, the Presentation Form opens. If not, an error message will appear telling you that this button only works when an associated record is present. If you get the message, navigate to a participant with an associated presentation, then click the button again.

Presentations

You can also open the Presentations Form by clicking the **Presentations** button on the Program Data switchboard. Looking at the Presentation Form you will see a variety of fields. When the final database arrives, most of these fields will be filled in, but not all of them. Table 1 lists the fields on the form. This table will explain which fields the SAA should fill in, which fields are left to you, and which fields are absolutely necessary for you to fill in. Some of the fields are only useful for researching presentation patterns. You don't need them all. Under the SAA Completed column, there will be four possible answers - **yes**, **no**, **online only**, and **symposia only**. Some of the fields filled out using the online submission system will not get filled for hard copy forms. You will need to complete these fields in this case. Where the answer is **symposia only**, the completeness of the form will depend on whether or not the presentation was submitted as part of an organized symposium, or independently. Independent presentations will need to be organized into general sessions before the session field can be completed. There will be more information on general session organization below. Fields that are not covered by Table 1 are system fields and should not be edited.

In the upper right center of the Presentations Form, there are two command buttons under the **Participant Data** heading. If you have a participant associated with the presentation, click the Edit button. If not click the Add button. You will see a small form for adding basic data on participants. Use the Add button if the SAA has left out a participant. The form will then allow you to add a new entry. Use the Edit button to see existing data on the presentation presenter, and to correct spelling error in his or her name, if necessary. Close this Participants Form.

On the Presentations Form, beside the session title, there is a button entitled **Full Entry**. This will navigate to the presentation's session, if the presentation has one associated with it. If there is an associated session present, press the **Full Entry** button after you have looked over Table 1. If there is not an associated session, then go to a paper with an associated session and then click the button.

Table 1. Fields in the Presentation Form and what to expect in terms of their completeness

Field Name	SAA Completed	Necessary?
Title	Yes	Yes
Session	Symposia only	Yes
Order in Session	Symposia only	Yes
Presenter	Yes	Yes
Format	Online Only	Yes
Geographic Focus	Online Only	No
Topic Focus	No	No
Could be poster?	Online Only	No
Accepted?	No	No
Newsworthy?	No	No
Authors' Last Name	Yes	Yes
Authors' First Name	Yes	Yes
Authors' Institution	Yes	Yes
Abstract	Yes	Yes

Sessions

The Sessions Form looks a lot like the Presentations Form. To begin, let's look at the second tab, labeled ■Presentation Info. This form is a foreshortened version of the presentations form. All of the entries on this form edit the same data as the Presentations Form does. one. Scroll through the presentations, using the navigation tools at the bottom, and you will notice that the presentations are sorted by the order in which they are scheduled to appear. (This is not strictly true of posters, but that will be covered later.) As you go through the paper records sessions, you will eventually come across some that have scheduled breaks. These breaks will not appear in the database. To have them automatically appear in the Final Program, please schedule breaks as presentations. This means you will have to create a new presentation using the presentations subform on the sessions form, type in ■Break as the presentation title, and give the break an order value. Once that is done you must then add one (1) to all the order values of the presentations that come after the break. Please be sure to do this as you schedule the sessions.

Go back to the Session Info. tab and we will look it over. The only data the SAA will provide for the main section of the Sessions Form are Titles, Session Abstracts, Formats, Geographic Themes, the check box concerning sponsorship, as well as the names of organizers, chairs, moderators, and discussants. You will have to provide the rest yourself. The two check boxes at the bottom of the form, below the ■Sponsored? checkbox are the only entries that are

unnecessary. You will need to complete all the other fields yourself.

The discussants do have an order value assigned to them in the session. If, for some reason, a discussant doesn't have an order value assigned, please assign the appropriate value. Be sure to include both discussants and breaks in the # of papers entry on this form. It will make scheduling go more smoothly.

If there are multiple chairs, organizers, or moderators, they will need to be ranked by seniority. Use the order in which they appear on the paper records to enter this data. In each of the participant windows, you will see an Edit button. This will jump to the participant's information on a separate form. To add a new participant, use the Add Participants button next to the Apply Filter button.

Before we dispense with the Sessions Form, look in the bottom left corner and you will see a humble little text box called Final #. When you are sure that the sessions are scheduled in the order you want them, you will have to go through and assign numbers to the sessions, based on the order in which the sessions appear. How this order develops is up to the you, but you might follow the 2001 approach, as follows: For each time slot, workshops were assigned the first numbers, poster sessions came next, and then sessions were assigned according to a room order that did not vary across time slots. In 2001 the room order was determined first by the floor on which the room was located, and then by start time, but you need not follow this exactly. It is wise, however, to assign numbers to workshops first, since some workshops usually occur before the opening session. As you proceed, you will find that much of the data that you have to enter (start and end times, rooms, etc.) will have to be entered incrementally as you get the meeting program organized.

A note on Poster Sessions

You can put posters in order within poster sessions, but this order isn't much more than an id number. Moreover, posters are assigned letters, not numbers, in the Final Program. I'm afraid the database has no way of handling this situation. Once you export the Final Program to Word, one of the few formatting tasks you will have to do before emailing the file off to D.C. is delete the order numbers and replace them with the session number, a dash, a letter, beginning with a, and continuing in ascending order. If you assign final numbers to posters in such a way that they like posters, or posters in the same poster session are grouped together, it will make the reformatting of the poster IDs easier.

A note on General Sessions vs. Symposia

When you get the database from the SAA, it will only contain session data on symposia. You will have to add all the rest of the sessions by doing the data-entry. The best way to put together the General Sessions is up to you. Barbara Mills and I initially put together some great sessions, only to discover that the time slots left over after the symposia were scheduled required many of our neat general sessions to be split into smaller blocks. For this reason, it is best to use the paper records to build your general sessions. It makes keeping track much easier. Even though it is difficult, putting the General Sessions together is one of the most enjoyable parts of

this job.


The fastest way to enter a general session into the database, and populate it with presentations, is to first fill out the fields in the Session Info. tab, and then close the Sessions form. You should then open the presentations form, and use the filter to navigate to the presentations you want to associate with the session. When you type the first few characters of the session title into the session box on the presentation form, it will complete the entry for you.

At this point you should have the idea that ■Step 1: Collecting Data• is more like ■Ongoing Process 1.• You will be returning to the three forms covered above right up to the moment you export the Final Program Abstracts Volume and email them out of your hair (maybe even a little beyond that). But the note on General Sessions vs. Symposia gives an indication that we have moved on, at least in this manual, to Step 2.

Step 2: Building The Intellectual Program

Considering the fact that this step really constitutes the meat of your job, this section of the manual seems sort of inadequate. Before proceeding, you should close all the forms relating to Program Data. Close the little form that launches those three forms, and return to the main introductory window. Only one button on this form pertains to Step 2. This button says ■Print Sheets for local and national committees.• This apparent deficiency is connected to the fact that most of the hard work of putting together the program is still accomplished by taking all the slips of paper and packets of paper relating to the meetings and making sense of them by building stacks, rebuilding them, moving them around, and finally filing them in some way to make data entry go fast. (We found that the chronological order of the sessions made the most sense, once we actually had a handle on what that order was. Fancy a couple of archaeologists choosing such a scheme!)

Go ahead and click the ■Print Sheets for local and national committees. button. There are two groups of buttons. Click the button for National Committee Review Sheets. You will be given a dialog box for choosing National Committee members. As you are editing the session data, you should decide which of your committee members is best suited to review each session and pick them from the list on the sessions form. By doing so, you will allow yourself to pick a national committee member, and print review sheets for them based on these choices. Pick a member, then click ■Preview Report.• A new window will appear with a nice formatted page of info on a session that you want this member to review. Click the arrow pointing to the right (the one without the bar), and you will see the first presentation associated with this session. Depending on what you think best, you can either print this report using the menu bar, or export it to Word by using this button:

Go ahead and click this  button. When you do, you'll notice that it is exporting the report to a file named rptNationalCommitteeReview.rtf. This file will be in the same directory as the database. *Be sure to rename this file to an appropriate name BEFORE you export another report for the next reviewer. Access will **always** use the same*

name and will overwrite your previous export if you don't rename it.

Close the report. Close the print preview form, then click the button labeled **Local Organization Committee Worksheets** form. These are half-sheet forms you can print, then cut in two and use to make your stacks when you decide how the meeting should be ordered. There are spaces for relevant scheduling information, which you can fill in and expedite data entry. Close this report.

Now click on any of the last three buttons. This is a scheduling form Barbara Mills designed to keep track of what session was where and when. The idea is to write the SAA assigned ID, or an abbreviated title, in the spaces that occupy the session's time slot. If you schedule a break between sessions, write **break** in one of the fifteen minute blocks. This proved to be a valuable tool for understanding the whole schedule. Hopefully, you can fill it out at the same time you make your stacks. However, be sure to use pencil. It's certain that your first attempt at scheduling will result in a conflicted schedule for some participant, meaning you will have to make revisions. Speaking of revisions, that brings us, too quickly perhaps, to Step 3.

Step 3: Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance (QA) is essential to a meeting that is stimulating to the attendees and convenient to the participants. The QA process includes a lot of thinking not covered here. An example from 2001 involves scheduling sessions pertaining to Mesoamerica. For the duration of the meetings, there were always five Mesoamerican sessions running concurrently. While attempting to avoid scheduling conflicts by not scheduling sessions from the same geographic area was a successful strategy for most regions, it didn't work very well for Mesoamerica. In the future, subdividing regions with large numbers of sessions according to topic or theoretical focus might cut down on some of the dilemmas in which archaeologists interested in Mesoamerica found themselves during the 2001 conference.

Even though the database can't handle an issue like this directly, it can help by providing tools for filtering sessions by topical and geographic interest. Moreover, there are a great many areas the database covers. To review these areas, close out any open reports and return to the Introduction window. The fifth button on the form says **Check for rule violations and scheduling conflicts**. This form should look familiar. In addition to the three normal entity divisions, there is an additional **Rule Violation** category.

Each of these buttons will launch a form that provides another series of buttons. Each of those buttons will in turn launch a form that shows data relevant for the correction of a given type of error or potential error. All these forms work exactly the same way, though they may have different layouts. You can either view the form on-screen, or press the adjacent print button for the print preview of the same data. In some cases, you will get a form that doesn't display any data. This means that there are no errors of this kind in the database. In general, this blank output is what you are trying to accomplish. However, that's not always true. In some cases, the data only show potential errors. The data may be correct, but still conform to a condition that the database considers a potential error.

The materials below explain the type of error or potential error each form displays. For the forms that display actual errors, you will need to edit the data on the form in order to correct all displayed entries until you have a blank form. For potential errors, you will simply have to check the data against hard copies and then use your judgement. The information below also tells you *when* the errors must be fixed (i.e., what output will be affected by the errors).

Participants

No Institution

These participants have blank institution entries. This is not always an error, but you should double-check against the paper records to be sure it wasn't left off..

Name Check Last

These are people whose names contain spaces or hyphens. This may not be a mistake, but many participants have names with spaces or hyphens. Depending on their ethnicity or preference, it can be difficult to tell if the data entry has been done correctly. In the abstracts volume, where the last name is first, and the first name follows, separated by a comma, this can be problematic. Check the ones that look suspicious against available hard copies so that the meeting program does a good job of expressing the diversity of the SAA membership by handling their names appropriately.

Name Check First

This is the first name-based check of the procedure directly above.

Presentations

No Order

These are presentations that don't have an order value assigned. This is an error that must be fixed before the Preliminary Program is finished.

No Session

These are presentations without an associated session. These errors must be fixed before the Preliminary Program is finished

No Presentation Type

These are presentations that haven't been given a presentation type. This error must be fixed before the acceptance letters go out.

No Author Order

These are presentations in which authors do not have seniority rankings. This error must be fixed before the Preliminary Program goes out.

Sessions

Empty Slot

These are sessions that don't have a time slot assigned to them. This error should be

corrected before the Preliminary Program goes out. Furthermore, moving a session from one slot to another after the Preliminary Program has been sent to the printer should be avoided at all costs.

Empty Room

These are sessions that haven't been assigned to a room. This error must be fixed before the Final Program is finished, but it probably would be best if all the room assignments were done, at least preliminarily, before the Preliminary Program goes out.

Empty Time

These are sessions that haven't been assigned to a room. This error must be fixed before the Final Program is finished, but it probably would be best if all the room assignments were done, at least preliminarily, before the Preliminary Program goes out.

Order Rankings

The missing order rankings for discussants must be corrected before the Preliminary Program goes out. If you want to avoid nasty emails from irate participants, it is strongly recommended that you add these seniority rankings before the Preliminary Program..

Room Conflicts

As long as the number of sessions for a time slot is equal to the number of rooms available for that time slot, this problem does not have to be fixed by the time you send out the Preliminary Program. Room info. won't appear until the Final Program.

Dup. Order

These are session in which some presentations have the same order value assigned. You will have to make sure all the presentations have a unique order number before the Final Program is finished.

Rule Violations

This form contains some tools designed to make your life easier. A series of hidden subroutines crawl through the database, analyzing scheduling and participant data. If you had to seek these out by hand, it would have cost you a lot of time and you might have missed one or two instances. The subroutines, however, work in about five minutes and will not miss anything. However, using them is not as simple as the other routines. Editing the data in the rule violations forms will not have any effect on the main datasets. Moreover, once you do account for these violations, you will have to click the update button at the top of the rule violation form to see the errors eliminated from the rule violation lists.

People exceeding role limits

This form lists people who are participating in more than three roles during the meeting. How you handle this situation is up to you. In 2001, we didn't figure out who was breaking the rules until a few days before the Preliminary Program went out. The best way to handle these folks would be to know how many roles they are playing and what those roles are about a month before the Preliminary Program is due to at SAA office. By leaving yourself a month, you have

time to contact participants who are violating the rules and work out solutions.

First, you have to be sure that all duplicate entries have been eliminated and that all participants are in the database and linked to their appropriate roles. The SAA is supposed to eliminate all duplicate entries for participants before sending you the database. However, you should double check to see that this has been done, by scrolling the participants form and looking for duplicate names. Participants are displayed in alphabetical order, so this should be easy. Once you are sure that participant and role data is accurate, simply click the update button and then navigate to the on-screen and printable output.

People Presenting more than once

This form lists people who are presenting more than once. You should also figure out who these folks are in time to address the situation - about a month or so in advance. Print this data out. You can see what presentations they are presenting by finding them in the participants form, and using the subform at the bottom. When you contact these folks, remember that any secondary authors not presenting another paper could be the presenter in these situations. Of course, if the presenter *is* a secondary author, this may not work.

Conflicting Schedules

These are people who have been scheduled to do something in more than one session during the same time slot. In the case of general sessions, you can probably swap papers to fix the conflict. If there are poster sessions, symposia, discussants, chairs, organizers, or moderators involved, you will have to swap entire sessions. These errors should be corrected before the Preliminary Program is completed.

People in the same role and time

These are folks scheduled to do the same thing at the same time. This is EXTREMELY unlikely (of course, it still happened in 2001). Except for presenters who are breaking the rules, you will have to deal with these the same way you deal with scheduling conflicts, i.e. swap sessions. These errors should also be ferreted out before the Preliminary Program is finished.

Once all these errors have been addressed, and you've updated the error routines and are getting a bunch of blank forms, you should have a pretty high-quality data set, at least in terms of what the database wants. However, that still leaves the content Quality Assurance. In addition to all the checks above, you will have to check participant names, participant institutions, presentations titles, session titles, and all the abstracts for grammar and spelling.

By now, you have probably realized by the time you finish the Preliminary Program, there won't be much left to do to prepare the Final Program. In fact, the only steps that can wait until after the Preliminary Program is finished are the editing of the abstracts, the editing and standardization of institutional names, and the assignment of rooms. Before assigning rooms, be sure and get feedback from your National Committee reviewers. Their judgements on the number of people a session is likely to attract will make room assignment easier. When all these tasks are *finally* finished, you can move on to Step 4.

Step 4: Output

Return to the introduction Window. At the bottom, you will see the buttons for generating output, in order from left to right, in terms of which must be done first.

Preliminary Program

Click the Preliminary Program button. This will open the main Preliminary Program, and the section pertaining to the Forums and Workshops. One of the earlier Program Chairs or the SAA Office will have to fill you in on what the Workshops require. To submit these reports to the SAA, you'll need to export them to Word, in the same way you might have done with the National Committee Review sheets. Once in Word, some additional formatting of the main program will be required. You can do most of it with global search-and-replace operations. If you are a WordPerfect user, it will read rtf formats (and is far more flexible for this sort of thing, in my humble opinion). First, all the participants will have to be in a continuous paragraph, so replace semi-colons or commas followed by hard returns with semi-colons or commas followed by spaces. In situations where the organizer(s) and chair(s) are the same person, you will need to substitute the dual entries with ■Organizer & Chair. • In situations where there is more than one chair, organizer and moderator, you will need to collapse them into a single a line, separated by commas and ampersands (&). Once these minor details are addressed, the Preliminary Program is ready to send.

Letters to Participants

Close the Preliminary Program report and Click on the Letters to Participants button. The button ■labels • will provide a printable report of mailing labels for all participants in the database. The label type for these is Avery 5260. To print the letters, you will need to use the five Microsoft Word documents provided with the database. However, before you can do this, you will need to hit the update button below the labels button. If you begin printing letters and then make some change with regard to a session's schedule, make sure you hit the update button before continuing to print.

This manual briefly covers the mail merge process. Close the database, make sure all the Word Documents for letters are in the same directory as the database, and then open ■Presenter Letter.doc. • This document, and the others provided, were created in 2001 and you will need to modify them. When you open the document the first time, Word will tell you that it cannot find its data source. Click the ■Find Data Source • button, then navigate to the directory containing the letters and the database. Change the file type to ■MS Access Databases, • then select ■SAChair.mdb. • You will then be presented with an intimidating list of data sources. Go to the queries tab. There are a series of queries with the prefix ■qryletter. • Choose the one that matches the role for the given letter. You will only have to do this once per letter type, provided that you leave all materials in the same directory and leave the directory in the same place on your hard drive.

Edit the letter, replacing references to the 2001 conference with references to your conference. Be sure that while editing, you do not change any of the merge fields, which are

enclosed within characters similar to these: ■<< >>•. Finally, insert your signature as a graphic (gif files work best for this), and hit the merge button at the bottom of the menu bar. You will be given a dialog box that allows you to select the number of pages to print. The letters are one page each. I suggest printing about 100 at a time, unless you have a high output printer. Repeat these steps for each letter. After you finish with a letter, close the Word document and close any open copies of the database. Word will open the database during the merge. For training purposes, re-open the database.

Final Program

When you click the Final Program button, you will see a dialog box that asks you if want to update before printing. If this is the first time you have used this button, or you have made *any* changes to session, presentation, participant, or author information, click yes. Otherwise click no. The Final Program will be before you, ready to print. Apart from the workshops, which will require abstracts, very little additional formatting is required. In situations where the organizer(s) and chair(s) are the same person, you will need to substitute the dual entries with ■Organizer & Chair. In situations where there is more than one chair, organizer and moderator, you will need to collapse them into a single a line, separated by commas and ampersands (&). You should also remember to edit the poster sessions as per the instructions in the *A note on posters* section above.

Abstracts Volume

Printing the Abstracts Volume involves the same process as printing the Final Program. Two reports will be presented, one for sessions and one for presentations. You may want to merge them into a single Word Document after export, but no additional formatting is required. After this volume is completed, you are basically finished. However, please read the last, important technical note in the final heading below. Good luck being Program Chair! And remember, for the sake of your own sanity, make a backup copy on a different computer (preferably in a different building) EVERY DAY THAT YOU EDIT THE DATABASE!

A note on ■bloat•

Several subroutines in the database delete hidden records and tables and replace them with new data. Deleted data is retained by the database, causing file size to increase significantly, unless you ■compact• the deleted entries. The database should never be larger than about 18 megabytes. Weekly compaction is not a bad idea. Go to the ■Tools• menu at the top of the Access window, select ■Database Utilities,• then select ■Compact and Repair Database.•