

# TAPAS Annual Report, 2015

## *Summary*

This report describes the activities of the TEI Archiving, Publishing, and Access Service (TAPAS) during 2015, the second year in which TAPAS has operated as a formal benefit of TEI membership and the second year in which the TEI has provided financial support to TAPAS. During this period, TAPAS has developed the 2.0 release of the service with expanded features and has built a thriving user community; TAPAS is developing into a major benefit of TEI membership. We have also submitted two major grant proposals and are planning further funding proposals for submission. We are grateful to the TEI for its renewed support of \$10,000 in 2015 and we would like to request a subvention of \$15,000 in 2016.

## *Project Activities*

During 2015 TAPAS's work has been focused in three main areas. The first of these is ongoing progress on the project's second development phase, funded by an NEH grant (begun in March 2014). Under this grant we are adding long-term repository functions to the TAPAS service. As projected in our last annual report, the repository component is complete and operational as of the beta release of TAPAS 2.0, announced at the TEI annual meeting in 2015. As noted in our last annual report, TAPAS has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Northeastern University Library through which the library commits to providing repository services for TAPAS's TEI data for the long term (an initial 20-year term, renewable by agreement) at no cost; image data associated with TEI files will be stored for a cost-recovery fee (currently \$600 per TB and projected to drop steadily over time). TAPAS is thus in a position to provide for the long-term storage and curation of TEI data for the TEI community for the very long term, including both data from TAPAS projects (i.e. from TEI members) and also data contributed by non-members, making its reach extremely comprehensive.

The Fedora/Hydra work undertaken during this grant has also enabled us to redevelop the TAPAS architecture to take advantage of Hydra's capabilities and to reimplement the TAPAS user interface in Hydra. This change enables us to handle files and file relationships more naturally, offering users more flexible ways of constructing projects and collections. It also puts the project on a stronger long-term basis and will make it easier to build and share further interface components in the future. The new user interface also takes advantage of feedback we have received from users during the first year of usage, providing streamlined workflows and a cleaner design.

During the second development phase we have also added new features to TAPAS, including:

- Handling of page images and embedded images
- Handling of personography, placeography, and bibliography, with display of data from these resources in the reading interface
- Improved search capabilities
- Significant improvements to the reading interface, supporting a wider variety of TEI features and improving the overall typography

Our second area of focus has been in seeking further external funding for TAPAS. We currently have two grant proposals submitted:

- An NEH Digital Humanities Startup Grant for TAPAS Classroom, which would enable us to develop improved support for using TAPAS in the humanities classroom; this proposal grew out of our first TAPAS working group whose focus is on pedagogy
- An NEH Research and Development grant to support the development of “open notebooks” and sharing of resources such as stylesheets and schema customizations

The third strand of activity is the continued work of outreach and the development of a TAPAS user community, which has been undertaken by the TAPAS project manager, a research assistant position made possible in part by the TEI’s financial contribution to TAPAS in 2014. We have retained Ben Doyle, an exceptionally talented and energetic graduate student for this role and he has served as the public voice of TAPAS since starting work in July 2014. He has continued to cultivate early adopters from within the TEI community and assist them in getting projects set up in TAPAS, and has also worked on preparing documentation, troubleshooting and answering questions, setting up and monitoring user forums, and maintaining the TAPAS web site.

## ***TAPAS Usage***

TAPAS usage has been extremely encouraging. During summer 2015, we did not undertake active outreach activities because of the upcoming migration of data to TAPAS 2.0, so registration is lower than it might otherwise be. Nonetheless as of October 2015, TAPAS has:

- 128 registered users
- 450 TEI files
- 27 TAPAS projects

Anecdotally, we are also observing that individuals and institutions are joining TEI deliberately in order to get access to TAPAS, so TAPAS as a membership benefit is starting to serve its purpose of attracting new members to the TEI. We do not yet have a mechanism for formally tracking the source or motive for new TEI memberships; this may be something to explore further.

## ***TAPAS Financial Planning and Long-term Support***

The current TAPAS NEH grant supports further technical development to the TAPAS service into early 2017. TAPAS is hosted within the Digital Scholarship Group at the Northeastern University Library, and its staff are Northeastern University employees. In the absence of other funding, DSG will continue to provide basic trouble-shooting to keep the service in operation, but active technical development of the service and active support of user programs will require an income stream. As noted above, we are working actively on new grant proposals to support major development on the service. We are also continuing to develop diverse sources of revenue which can help support TAPAS. The next step in this work is to develop an expanded program of TAPAS workshops, which will be more feasible following the release of TAPAS 2.0. In addition to offering workshops taught by TAPAS staff, we are in the process of recruiting workshop instructors to broaden the geographical reach of TAPAS and to incorporate it into existing TEI workshop programs. This expanded workshop program will include:

- support for adding a short TAPAS module to a TEI workshop, including slides, suggested hands-on exercises, assistance with TAPAS registration and account creation, and troubleshooting support
- the option for workshop instructors to work directly with TAPAS to provide TAPAS-sponsored workshops (with a portion of the registration fee going to support TAPAS)
- regular training and orientation sessions for TEI instructors wishing to familiarize themselves with TAPAS

The TEI Consortium has provided a generous subvention of \$10,000 in 2014 and 2015, and we understand that this subvention will be revisited for the coming year. As noted earlier, this funding has been vital in enabling TAPAS to hire a project manager (a position not currently covered by grant funding). Continuing this support for the coming year will make a huge difference to our ability to support the growing TAPAS community. We are very encouraged by early signs that TAPAS is becoming a significant benefit of TEI membership. We would like to request a subvention of \$15,000 in 2016, which would cover half of a research assistantship for the year.

## ***TAPAS Governance***

This year, TAPAS completed the establishment of its governance with the first TAPAS election, held during the TEI 2015 elections. Four elected members were added to the TAPAS steering committee; two of these will serve for one year to establish a rotation. The steering committee meets periodically, approximately three conference calls per year.

## ***Next Steps***

TAPAS's current NEH grant runs through February 2017; the bulk of the technical development will be completed by August 2016, after which we will be conducting a series of "code-along" events during which TAPAS members will be invited to participate in brief, intensive data enhancement and encoding activities with support from the TAPAS team. The goal of these events will be to help TAPAS projects improve and clean up their data to take advantage of the new XML-aware features being built under the grant's auspices.

During the coming year, the following new features will be added to TAPAS:

- support for XML-aware visualizations
- support for bulk file upload
- expansion of the reading interface stylesheets to provide specialized display
- development of the TAPAS Commons as a shared community repository
- data profiling tools for analysis and data curation
- an API through which TAPAS data can be accessed for third-party use

We will also prepare and submit grant proposals to fund further development effort. Some of the most promising ideas generated by the TEI community include:

- Support for user-contributed stylesheets (both XSLT and CSS) within the TAPAS interface to support a wider variety of formatting options for a wider range of TEI data
- Support for meaningful sharing and curation of user-contributed schemas and stylesheets

- Implementation of more advanced XML-aware visualization tools (which are covered in a preliminary way by the current NEH grant but requiring more work for a full implementation)
- Advanced support for community schema customizations (such as EpiDoc or MEP) with specialized features and work flows
- Support for community peer review mechanisms

Finally, we are continuing to explore partnerships with other organizations, including TextGrid, DARIAH, and the Text Creation Partnership.

The TAPAS team is pleased by the progress we have made so far and grateful to the TEI Consortium for its support. We hope TAPAS will continue to grow into a valuable benefit of TEI membership and an important resource for the TEI consortium. We welcome ideas and input from the TEI Board on ways we can better serve the TEI community.