Council on
East Asian Libraries

Task Force for Reconstruction of the CEAL Mailing List Archive

Charge Approved on June 12, 2020
Membership Approved on June 29, 2020

Term: June 2020 – May 2022

Members:
Tang Li, University of Southern California (Chair)
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Background:
The CEAL mailing list, Eastlib, was established on the listserv server at the University of North Carolina (UNC) of Chapel Hill in 1999 and has been used by subscribers for various communication needs: announcements, job postings, discussions, inquiries, etc. On the CEAL website, Eastlib had messages posted for searching and browsing of archival postings. In early March of 2020, the Eastlib manager discovered that this message was no longer valid as the archiving setting was found to have been inadvertently reset to the system default of 90 days record retention. An investigative report on the matter from the UNC Listserv office could not determine when and why the archiving setting had been changed to the default setting. The likelihood was that it had happened during various system migrations over the years. Thus, with deep regrets, the Eastlib manager informed the CEAL president of this state of affairs.

The Eastlib archive was a crucial resource for CEAL as an organization, and a useful tool for future research about CEAL. Therefore, rebuilding the lost archive is considered essential for CEAL. The CEAL Executive Board (EB) has thus suggested the establishment of a task force to undertake the reconstruction of this archive. The rebuilt archive will be accessible to CEAL mailing list subscribers.

Apart from this Task Force charge, after exploring different options for the future of the listserv, the CEAL EB has come to the conclusion that it would be best to move Eastlib to the Listserv WordPress Plugin in order to have more control of CEAL's communication tool. The Chair of the Library Technology Committee has been asked to investigate this option further and develop a listserv switchover plan for CEAL.

Charge:
The Task Force shall investigate ways to collect past posted messages of Eastlib, how to host and maintain the archive, how to remove duplications from the collected postings, where to store the archive, and how to make the archives accessible to CEAL subscribers, etc. The Task Force shall prepare a recommendation for EB approval, and upon approval, shall proceed to rebuild the lost archive based on the approved proposal.

The goal is for CEAL to create a rebuilt Eastlib archive accessible to CEAL subscribers, and to facilitate long-term preservation of this archive.

Please consult CEAL Bylaws Articles VI and XI for guidance.

The Task Force shall submit to the President its action plan, including a timeline, by September 2020.