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ArchivesSpace at the University of Kentucky

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ARCHIVES SPACE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Ruth Bryan
Midwest Archives Conference Session #s603
April 30, 2016
Why ArchivesSpace?

- 2009-2010: Moved from four individual databases into Archivists Toolkit
- 2012-2013: Version of Java supported by library didn’t work with AT
- September 2013: AS 1.0 rollout
- Fall 2013: SCRC became charter members
- Nov 2013-July 2015: testing and cleaning data; beginning documentation
- 2015 July: final migration/implementation

Four databases (mainly FilemakerPro): University Archives, Appalachian collections, public policy collections, and audiovisual collections (represented individual areas of processing and description each headed by a curator-archivist)

Advantages of a collection management system
--manage accession numbers and locations
--standardization of processing and description
--integrated searching and browsing across all accessions; majority don’t have online finding aids and catalog records
--many collections are interrelated (people, locations, subjects)

Once started in AT, because of other system constraints, didn’t have a choice; had to move to AS when we did
- AT was managed by our central library IT, and sometimes it was difficult to get their attention
- no programming support for updating AT (had to remap database connections for each new user and each time a user used a new computer)
- plus, we thought AS would be a better collection management system
- plus, starting as charter members would be an opportunity to shape the
development of AS
- Digitization focuses on entire collections or selected series or subseries within large collections.
- There are scripts that automate linking
- Users of AS are Special Collections staff

-public interface wasn’t very developed; had choice about whether to stick with AS and wait for development or put resources into developing our own digital library. If public interface for AS gets better in the future, can always switch.
Staffing

- Collections management archivist
- University archivist
- Digital archivist
- Programmer

-the programmer works on all Special Collections digital infrastructure projects, of which ArchivesSpace is one of several.
-this presentation represents the collaborative work of all of us, although it will focus on the areas I work in and think about most in relation to University Archives
-useful that all are in Special Collections administratively (not in separate IT unit)
Considerations

- Manage University Archives and manuscript collections (and oral histories) in all formats in one repository
- Balance
  - Existing procedures, workflows, and expected functionality from AT
  - Enhanced AS description options/robust data gathering
  - Time required to complete an accession or resource record
  - Would we need to add to existing records?
  - What is or should be locally required description versus optimal

-mainly transfers and gifts with some purchases; very few nonpermanent records; no student or personnel records
- there are many cross-references across all collections in Special Collections and being able to search agents and subjects, plus keywords in description fields, is key

-implementing new options would mean having to edit old accessions and resource records in order to make data useful across all records

-and looking ahead to implementing EAD 3
- Outside of fields that map directly to `<ead>` tags, such as in the basic information fields, until AS is more stable and more developed...
- first dramatic change: move collection development and collection management steps into a separate events table
- second dramatic change: change to containers

- Don’t yet know how container plug-in will work
- Again, with focus on University Archives and accession records
- the majority of our procedures and description standards that worked in AT continue to work fine in AS

Decision areas

- **New** AS functions we have implemented or plan to implement within the next year
- **Previous** functions available in AT, but not yet (fully) implemented in AS that we have developed short-term workarounds for
- AS functions we have explored and decided **not to use**
- Workflows developed with AT functionality that don’t work completely with AS and that may need to be **modified**
- Students and volunteers don’t need access to our servers in order to have access to AS: volunteers don’t need to go through a UK authentication/identification process and students doing short-term projects can just dig right in without waiting for server access.
- Flexibility to bring the laptop to the collections, rather than the collections to the computer (except if WiFi in processing room isn’t working well or computer doesn’t connect); especially when we will be getting new computers with the option for laptops.
- We have situations (which I’ll describe a bit later) where we need to copy and paste information into archival object records. The keyboard shortcuts available in AS make this a viable option for working with large collections.
-especially being able to tab through fields has made rapid data entry and copying and pasting from, say, a GoogleDoc, much faster (more about the GoogleDocs later)
We need to keep track of basic donor functions, so this is the place in AS for doing that. But, there are many other event types that AS offers.

Primary event types we use are agreement sent, agreement signed, acknowledgment sent, custody transfer, and cataloged. These fields were available in AT, but without the level of detail in AS. Are exploring using other fields such as migrated and processed. Would be great to have a field (or in local practice select one such as the plain “acknowledgment” to indicate when there were outreach or publicity or donor-related events on the collection.)
- Particularly useful for hybrid analog and electronic format collections, increasingly common in manuscript and university archives, but especially routine in University Archives publications
-- this particular accession is College of Nursing magazine titled Opportunities. We have both print and digital versions. We follow standard practice by having two extent types per part. In the case of cubic feet we indicate number and often types of boxes (in this case, it’s one folder). In the case of bytes, we indicate the number if items/files.

--EAD3? <physdescstuctured>?  

Coverage=part or whole  
Physdescstructuredtype=“carrier,” “materialtype,” or “spaceoccupied”
Would like to implement classifications, even if building reports on them is still not supported. Could still browse them, which by itself would be very useful.

- Would need to go back to all UA accessions and add, but since would probably have to look at the accessions anyway to build the classification scheme, this might be a good use of time.
-also, the ability to facet classifications would be helpful
Previous functions available in AT, but not yet (fully) implemented in AS that we have developed short-term workarounds for:

- can add plain <title> or <emph> tag without attribute values, but have to manually put in the appropriate attribute name and value with correct spelling and grammar.
- Have a text document with the correct attribute values and syntax to copy and paste from so that tagging is correct
- Also validate ead in O2 before sending to Sarah to check grammar and syntax
- In AS, the new sibling is always inserted at the bottom of the list. Thus, must spend time moving the lists around and sometimes this can be slow and/or can freeze or make some other kind of error.
- Especially for large collections where the organization of files within a unit of description isn’t complete until we’ve worked through the entire unit, have option to use a GoogleDoc or a GoogleSpreadsheet (to sort), then copy and paste using the +1 function or encode and import (if it’s a flat arrangement).
- Less time overall to copy and paste or encode than to reorder.
AS currently doesn’t have the functionality present in AT of aggregating detailed container (item and folder) information in order to assign a box a location. You must put the location in for every lowest container level. We decided this would add too much time to finishing a finding aid and wouldn’t provide significant or extra information to assist researchers.

--this is an example of a resource record with the instances listed on the collection level (Ron Eller papers, 2013ua007).

This will be changing shortly with the addition of the [Yale plugin] but in the meantime we put box number ranges at the highest description level where it makes sense (mainly on the collection level) with their appropriate locations. Put in box number ranges per individual location.
AS functions we have explored and decided not to use at this time (but may change)

-at least at accessioning, because basic information in AR and DO record is the same—why duplicate?
Treat as analog formats and use “usual” information fields for content description and container fields for physical media or server location. What we give up by not using the DO is the ability to specifically track formats.

Locations described in general note.
Put in the size of all the files plus how many files.
The number of files then becomes the “container” numbers, with item as the type.
“Computer disks” is currently the only format available. It would be more accurate to say “digital materials” or “electronic records”. Since we just started doing this, we would have the option, I would think, of globally changing the type from computer disks to digital materials once another type is available.
Server name is treated as a location. This is also what we did in AT.
-This is a view of some of the rights statements fields available in edit mode.

-Also, the property ownership and copyright status of the vast majority of our collections are the same

--for university records, UK and thus SCRC owns copyright; all records created pre-1923 are in the public domain; for non-university records, the donor gives SCRC property rights but not copyright; we allow research access to all material (unless it’s restricted by the donor) under the fair use clause of the US copyright law; very few donors put access restrictions on their donations [check copyright table and copy and paste?]
-Example from the Martin Luther King, Jr., commemoration committee records (2015ua030)

For accession and resource records for archival material, the information in the rights statements was generally duplicating information already entered in <userestrict>, <accessrestrict>, retention rule, and the collection development-related events fields.

-We use additional rights statements when something about the copyright, access, or property ownership is different from our standard situation. The main examples would be if the donor has restricted access to the collection and/or if the creator of the work (especially for audiovisual material) can give us the copyright.
Modified workflows

- Workflows developed with AT functionality that don’t work completely with AS and that may need to be modified

- Spreadsheet recording individual transfers using a temp number
- Spreadsheet with addition of permanent accession number was being imported into AT to create accession records
-But, in AS, collection development events such as transfer received and acknowledgment sent now don’t import into AS without a lot of changes to the API (application programming interface), which our SCRC programmer doesn’t have time to work on.

-so, what to do? Import the basic information portion of the spreadsheet and do the rest individually? Or don’t import at all?
- What information is recorded in AS and what information is recorded in other spreadsheets?
- We have workflows we’re testing for both accessioning and processing.
- As we have seen, right now, for accessioning, most information is recorded in AS in a minimal way.
- For processing, we’re testing using both spreadsheets and AS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accession number</th>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Physical media type</th>
<th># of extracted files</th>
<th>Total storage</th>
<th>Media log link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015ms007</td>
<td>Ron Elar papers</td>
<td>3.5&quot; floppy disks</td>
<td>76</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1l7sDHRw3PgPcXh5dBi8w41zPq1R8D6_8rXw/uc/">https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1l7sDHRw3PgPcXh5dBi8w41zPq1R8D6_8rXw/uc/</a> -&gt; share CSV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013ms0846</td>
<td>Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence records</td>
<td>3.5&quot; floppy disks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1aqCDf0jOET65EGqPvR9UtL27kzZv98WmuBx33J1v/">https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1aqCDf0jOET65EGqPvR9UtL27kzZv98WmuBx33J1v/</a> edit -&gt; share CSV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014ms0254</td>
<td>Gatewood Galbraith papers</td>
<td>3.5&quot; floppy disks</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/193wC9PKYtrvQ865CoAf/ylZ5jw-N2W9hgL2kXzbPX4V5Elk4/">https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/193wC9PKYtrvQ865CoAf/ylZ5jw-N2W9hgL2kXzbPX4V5Elk4/</a> -&gt; share CSV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Electronic records series of the Ronald D Eller papers, with disks numbered and listed by disk label—sort of an extension of accessioning.
Born digital media log for the Ronald D Eller papers. Disks also listed by label/title, with disk number in left-hand column. Electronic record preservation data in right-hand columns. This will probably not form part of the description in the resource record.
Repository specific

- IT support
- Number of staff and their functions
- Immediate needs and long-term development
- Use of earlier collection management systems
- Existing workflows/arrangement and description traditions
- Reporting/assessment requirements
- Fit