

Chapter 7

Accessioning archival materials

Overview


The accessions functional area is designed for establishing basic intellectual and physical control over a new accession at the time it is received in the repository. It allows for recording basic information about the accession transaction, about the contents of the accession, and about several basic management actions related to the accession.

An accession record documents a single accession transaction. The Toolkit requires two data elements, though you may enter many more, and the repository may establish additional required elements. The required elements are a unique accession number and the date of the transaction. These elements serve to document the accession transaction only.

The Toolkit provides additional elements for describing the accession more fully, and for capturing basic collection management information. It also allows for the addition of creator, source, subject, and location information to an accession record by linking the record to name, subject, and location records.

If the sole objectives are to create end-user descriptive products, such as finding aids and catalog records for the repository's archival resources, then it is not necessary to use the accession module.

Basic steps for creating an accession record

1. From the **Main Screen**, select **Accessions** and press the  **New Record Button**.
2. Enter a unique **Accession number**.
3. Enter the date of the accession transaction in the **Accession date** field.
4. Save the accession record by pressing the **OK** command button at the bottom right corner of the window.

Caution: The record cannot be saved if the accession number is not unique. The Toolkit will indicate that the accession number is not unique, and will prompt you to change it to a unique string.

If the record does not include the required elements listed above, the Toolkit will indicate that the record cannot be saved because one or more of the required fields is not completed. The uncompleted fields will be

indicated in the error message. The required field(s) must be completed in order to save the record.

Accession data elements

Elements Required by the Archivists' Toolkit

1. **Accession Number.** The accession number must be unique. It may consist of up to four individual elements of which only the first is required. Although only the first element is required, it is best to use more than one element if the accession number is a multi-part number such as year followed by consecutive number. In all displays and outputs, the Toolkit will insert a period between each element.

If the accession number is not unique, the Toolkit will alert you that the accession number already exists in the system, and ask you to provide a unique number for this accession. Enforcing uniqueness ensures that every accession record in the Toolkit represents only one accession.

DACS Reference: 5.2.5

Examples:

One element: G10669

Two elements: 1976.034

Four elements: NYU.Fales.2010.33

2. **Accession Date.** The date of the accession transaction. It represents the date of receipt of the materials, which is not necessarily the same as the date the accession record is being created. In other words, the date stamp that the Toolkit automatically assigns to the accession record documents the record creation, and is not intended to document the accession transaction.

The date must be input according to the format established as the preferred date format in the application. (See Chapter 16 Customizing the Archivists' Toolkit).

Examples:

12/03/2004

Additional Elements

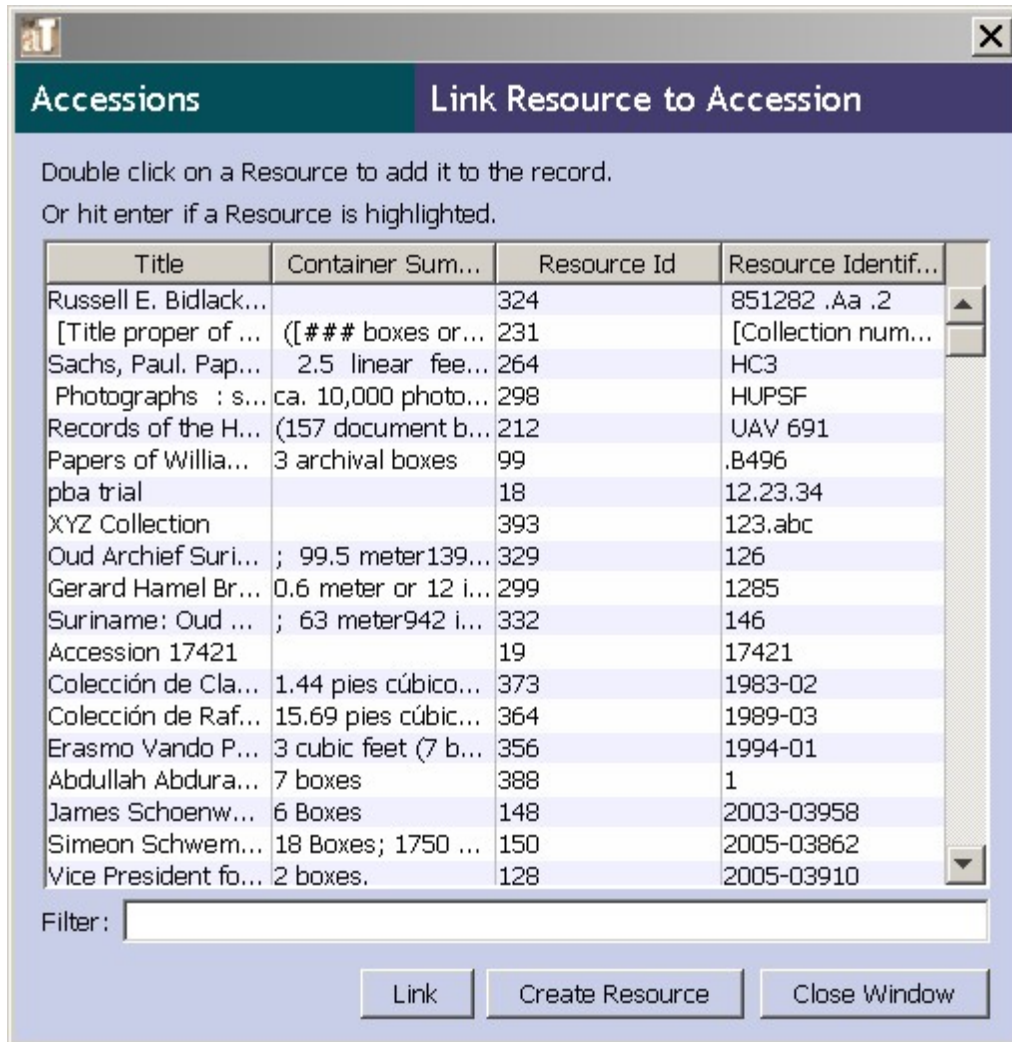
You can extend the minimum accession record by recording data for any of the following data elements available for the accession record. None of these data elements are required to create an accession record. However, there are requirements associated with some of the data elements if they are utilized. For instance, dates must be expressed in normalized fashion and must always contain the year.

The Basic Information Tab

The screenshot displays the 'Accessions' application window with the 'Basic Information' tab selected. The interface is organized into several sections:

- Title:** Accession =
- Accession #:** [Field]
- Accession Number:** [Field]
- Accession Time:** [Field]
- Resources Linked to this accession:** A table with columns 'Resource Identifier' and 'Resource Title'. Below it are 'Link Resource' and 'Remove Link' buttons.
- Extent:** Extent Number [Field]
- Container Summary:** [Text Area]
- Date Expression:** [Field]
- Date:** Date Begin [Field] Date End [Field]
- Bulk Dates:** Bulk Date Begin [Field] Bulk Date End [Field]
- External Documents:** A table with columns 'Href', 'Type', 'Title', and 'Content'. Below it are 'Add Document', 'Remove Document', and 'Open in Browser' buttons.
- Deaccessions:** A table with columns 'Date', 'Extent', and 'Extent Type'. Below it are 'Add Deaccession' and 'Remove Deaccession' buttons.
- Navigation:** A row of buttons: First, Previous, Next, Last, Reports, Cancel, OK, and OK + 1.

1. **Link Resource.** You may link the accession to one or more archival resources using the **Link Resource** button. This will open a list of resources. To link to the resource, locate its name by scrolling through the list or use the **Filter** box to narrow down the list. Then, select the resource in the list and press **Link**, or double click on the resource.



You may add multiple resource IDs to link the accession record to more than one archival description. This may be necessary if the accession has a mixed provenance and its contents are distributed among multiple archival resources. When this occurs, you may wish to use the **Disposition note** field to provide more information.

Once you have linked all of the desired resources, press **Close Window** to return to the accession record. The linked resources will appear in the **Resources linked to this accession** area.

DACS Reference: 2.1.3

2. **Resource Type.** Each resource can be classified into a subdivision of the repository's holdings. For example, a College and University Archives may wish to distinguish manuscript collections from archival records for the purpose of generating statistics. A manuscript repository may have multiple collecting areas that it wishes to track, such as literary collections, business collections, etc. The

Toolkit provides a list of default options for the field (Collection, Papers, Records), but the list may be customized by the repository (See Chapter 16).

DACS Reference: 2.3.18

Examples:

Organizational records

Personal papers

History of science and technology collection

3. **Title.** The title is usually a concatenation of the creator name and a term describing the form of materials, whether general (papers, records) or specific (correspondence, diaries). The title of the accession will typically, but need not, match the title of the resource to which the accession belongs. For example, the accession title may be John Smith Diaries, which is to become part of the Smith Family Papers.

DACS Reference: 2.3.18-2.3.22

Examples:

John Smith Diaries

Office of the President Correspondence

Marie Dolores Jones Papers

4. **External Documents.** Link to related external documents that are stored outside of the Toolkit. For example, you may wish to link to transfer documents, deeds of gift, or preliminary descriptions made available online.

To link to a document, press the **Add Document** button.



You will be asked for the **Title** and the **HREF** for the document.

- a. **Title.** Enter the document title. This will be used as the linked text in any outputs.

Examples:

Deed of Gift

Office of Admissions Transfer
Sheet

- b. **HREF.** A Universal Resource Identifier (URI) for the document. A persistent identifier is preferable if the links are to remain viable over time, though there is nothing to preclude you from using a

local directory path and filename.

Examples:

```
ftp://ftp.is.co.za/rfc/rfc1808.t
xt
http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2396.
txt
file:///etc/hosts
```

Once you've entered the **Title** and **HREF**, press OK to save the link. You may also preview the document by pressing the **Open in Browser** button.

4. **Extent.** First, enter the number of units as a whole or decimal number. Then select the type of measurement (cubic feet or linear feet).

DACS Reference: 2.5.4-2.5.9

Examples:

```
10 cubic feet
148.5 linear feet
```

5. **Container Summary.** Enter an enumeration of the number and type of containers that house the accession.

DACS Reference: 2.5.4-2.5.9

Examples:

```
5 cartons, 3 boxes, 1 flat box
10 record cartons, 3 archives boxes, 4 map
folders
```

6. **Dates.** A number of elements are available for recording the dates of creation of the materials. Dates can be entered in normalized form (**Date 1 Begin, Date 1 End, Bulk Date Begin, Bulk Date End**), and/or as a free-text string (**Date Expression**). Normalized dates are used to support computer processing of date information (e.g., searching). The date expression is designed for human readability, and allows for the use of qualifiers, such as circa or before. It is the date expression that displays to end users.
 - a. **Normalized dates. (Date 1 Begin, Date 1 End, Bulk Date Begin, Bulk Date End).** Normalized dates must be entered in the YYYYMMDD format, though month and day elements are not required.

To enter a single date, use the **Date 1 Begin** field. Enter inclusive dates using the **Date 1 Begin** and **End** fields. Enter bulk dates in the **Bulk Date**

Begin and **End** fields. For accessions, you may enter bulk dates without entering inclusive dates, if the exact and complete dates of the materials are not yet known. However, the Toolkit will not allow you to enter bulk dates if a begin date is entered without an end date (e.g. a single date), or to enter bulk dates that do not fall within the range of the inclusive dates.

DACS Reference: 2.4

Examples:

19220614

1900

- b. **Date Expression.** A natural language expression specifying the date or date range of the materials. As you type dates into the **Date 1** and/or **Bulk Date** fields, the dates also appear in the **Date Expression** field. For example, if you type 1954 in **Date 1 Begin** and 1975 in **Date 1 End**, 1954-1975 will appear in the **Date Expression** field. You can further modify this if you choose. For example, if the dates are based on a preliminary assessment you may wish the **Date Expression** to read circa 1954-1975.

If you wish, you may only enter a **Date Expression** rather than using the fields for normalized dates. However, doing so may limit your ability to support meaningful date searching.

DACS Reference: 2.4

Examples:

Between 1925 and 1953

ca. 1911

1913-1998, bulk 1950-1972

8. **Deaccessions.** You may link a deaccession record to an accession or resource record. See Chapter 8 for instructions.

The Names & Subjects Tab

Use the Names & Subjects tab to add names as creator, source, or subject, and to add topical subject terms. See Chapter 12 for instructions.

The Collection Information Tab

1. **Acquisition Type.** Indicate the type of accession transaction. This refers to the way in which the accession was acquired. Options include: gift, purchase, transfer, or deposit. You also have the option of entering a value of your own, for example “gift and deposit.”
2. **Acknowledgement Date.** Provide the date that the repository sent a letter acknowledging the accession. This field will assist you in tracking the status of accessioning activities, and can be used to output a report of accessions that need to be acknowledged, since null values in the field would mean an acknowledgement letter had not been sent.

The date must be formatted according to the preferred date format established for the application. See Chapter 16 for information on establishing date format preferences.

Examples:

2005/10/3

06-12-6

3. **Agreement Sent.** Record the date that the repository mailed a deed of gift, purchase agreement, transfer agreement, deposit agreement, etc., to the source of the accession. This field will assist you in tracking the status of accessioning activities, and can be used to output a report of acquisition agreements to be mailed.

The date must be formatted according to the preferred date format established for the application. See Chapter 16 for information on establishing date format preferences.

Examples:

2005/06/08

05-6-08

4. **Agreement Received.** Enter the date that the repository received a signed acquisition agreement. This field assists in tracking the status of accessioning activities, and can be used to output a report of acquisition agreements that have not yet been received.

The date must be formatted according to the preferred date format established for the application. See Chapter 16 for information on establishing date format preferences.

Examples:

2005/08/17

05-8-17

5. **Change Repository.** Press the Change Repository button to open the list of repositories and change the repository to which the accession is assigned.

Note: This option is only available to users with class 5 permissions.

6. **Accession Disposition Note.** Note documenting the eventual disposition of the accession. May include information about materials weeded, the archival resource(s) into which the accession was integrated, any materials returned to the source, etc.

DACS Reference: 5.3, 6.3

Examples:

During processing, it was determined that the accession included materials created by both John Smith and his cousin and business partner, Zachariah Smith. The accession was separated into the John Smith papers and the Zachariah Smith diaries.

Duplicates weeded and returned to the donor.

7. **Retention Rule.** Indicate any statute, regulation, or rule establishing the minimum period for maintaining the records.

8. **Cataloged.** Indicate if the accession is represented in a completed catalog record (e.g., MARC) record. If the accession has been cataloged, check this box. This can be used to generate a report of all un-cataloged accessions.
9. **Cataloged Note.** Record notes related to the catalog record, for example the record control number of the MARC record documenting the accession.

Note: To produce a MARC record from the Toolkit, you must complete a preliminary description record. MARC records cannot be output from an accession record.

10. **Processing Plan.** You may type or paste a complete processing plan here. Or, if a processing plan exists in print or electronic form externally, you may provide a reference to its existence and location here.

Examples:

Processing plan available in control file.

11. **Date Processed.** Indicate the date when arrangement and description of the accession is completed. This will likely be added later, rather than at the time of accessioning. This field will assist in tracking processing activities, and can be used to produce a report of processed accessions.

The date must be formatted according to the preferred date format established for the application. See Chapter 16 for information on establishing date format preferences.

Examples:

1997-10-13

10/13/97

12. **Inventory.** You may enter or paste a container list or other form of preliminary inventory in this field. As an alternative, you may provide a reference to the existence and location of an external paper or electronic document that contains the inventory.

Examples:

Box list from office of origin filed in archives.

c:/transfers/provost/20061213contentslist.doc

or

Box 1 Correspondence, ca. 1970-1983

Boxes 2-3 Subject files, 1972-1984

Box 4 Program files, 1980s

13. **Rights Transferred.** Indicate if intellectual property rights have been transferred to the repository. If the source of the accession has transferred intellectual rights to the custodial repository, check this box.

Because this is a simple yes/no field, repositories that wish to track this information should establish a documented policy on its use. For example, whether or not to indicate “yes” if rights have been transferred for only a portion of the materials.

DACS Reference: 4.4

14. **Restrictions Apply.** Indicate if restrictions apply to the accession. This is a simple yes/no field. Click to put a check mark in the box if there are restrictions, and use the next field to describe the terms.

DACS Reference: 4.1.5-4.1.6; 4.2.6-4.2.7; 4.3.5-4.3.6

15. **Access Restrictions.** Express the terms of the restriction(s). Indicate the length of restriction, the materials to which the restrictions apply, and the authority for the restriction.

DACS Reference: 4.1.5-4.1.6; 4.2.6-4.2.7; 4.3.5-4.3.6

Examples:

Diaries in box 12 have been restricted by the donor until 10 years after her death.

Medical records in cartons 42 and 66 are restricted by legal statute until 75 years after the date of their creation.

Manuscripts in box 33 are fragile and restricted from use.

16. **Use Restrictions.** Express the terms of the restrictions (for example, reproduction or publication) that apply after access has been granted.

DACS Reference: 4.4

Examples:

Material is in the public domain.

17. **Description.** This field serves as a preliminary scope and contents note, and should include description of document types and topical contents represented in the accession.

DACS Reference: 3.1.4-3.1.7

Examples:

Contains correspondence and financial records for Smith's clothing business, as well as personal diaries.

Provost's correspondence, subject files, and program files. Includes information about diversity protests formation of ALANA scholarships.

18. **Condition.** Enter notes about the physical condition of the materials, preservation actions that may be necessary, and any special handling requirements.

Examples:

Rolled drawings in tubes 10-17 are brittle and in need of humidification.

Collection is filled with mold and silverfish. Deep freeze treatment is scheduled. Materials should not be unpacked in the department and persons processing the materials should wear inhalation guards.

Nitrate negatives in box 12 are in poor condition and should not be filed with other negatives. Schedule for reproduction and subsequent destruction.

19. **Locations.** Use the **Add Locations** button to assign locations to the accession. See Chapter 13 for specific instructions on assigning locations.

Relationships with other records

Adding creator, source, subject, and location information to the accession record involves establishing relationships with records from other functional areas.

1. **Description.** Accession records may be linked to one or more description records. Linking accessions to their eventual archival resource records requires linking to the **Resource ID** for the appropriate archival resource.
2. **Creator(s).** Adding creator information to the record involves linking the accession record to one or more name records. See Chapter 12.
3. **Source(s).** The source refers to the individual or organization from which the repository acquired the materials. As with creators, adding a source to the accession record involves linking to a name record. See Chapter 12.
4. **Subject Name(s).** As with creators and sources, adding a name as subject to the accession record involves linking to a name record. See Chapter 12.

5. **Subject(s).** Adding topical, geographic, and genre headings to the accession record requires linking to one or more subject records. See Chapter 12.
6. **Location(s).** To assign a shelf location for the accession, you will need to create a location record linked to the accession. See Chapter 13.

Accession reports

You can generate many descriptive, administrative, and statistical reports drawn from the accession records. Chapter 14 provides instructions for generating reports. Examples of the following reports are available in the Appendices:

1. **Print Screen** Prints the list of accessions as displayed in the accessions list screen.
2. **Cumulative List of Acquired Accessions** Select a date range of accessions using the accession date to show a list of all accessions acquired in a specified period of time. Report contains accession number, title, extent, accession date, container summary, cataloged, date processed, rights transferred and their total number and physical extent.
3. **Cataloged Accessions** Select any accession or any group of accessions to show records that have been checked as cataloged. Report contains accession number, linked resources, title, extent, cataloged, date processed, a count of the number of records selected that are checked as cataloged, and the total extent number for those records cataloged.
4. **Accession Container List** Select any accession or any group of accessions to show records that contain an inventory. Report contains accession number, linked resources, title, extent, accession date, container summary, and inventory.
5. **Accession Intellectual Property Status** Select any accession or any group of accessions to show records' intellectual property status. Report contains accession number, linked resources, title, extent, cataloged, date processed, rights transferred and a count of the number of records selected with rights transferred.
6. **Cumulative List of Accessions Processed** Select any accession or any group of accessions to show records that contain a date processed. Report contains accession number, linked resources, title, extent, cataloged, date processed, a count of the number of records selected with a date processed, and the total extent number for those records with date processed.
7. **Accession Processing Plan** Select any accession or any group of accessions to show records that contain a processing plan. Report contains accession number, linked resources, title, date range, extent, container summary, and processing plan.
8. **Accession Production Report** Select a date range of accessions using the accession date to show a summary statement of the total number of accessions

- and their total extent, extent processed, and extent cataloged within a range of accession dates.
9. **Accession Receipt** Select any accession or any group of accessions to show a brief note to document the accession transaction. Report contains accession number, title, extent, accession date, and repository.
 10. **Accession Record** Select any accession or any group of accessions to show all of the accession record data.
 11. **Cumulative List of Accessions with rights transferred** Select any accession or any group of accessions to show records where intellectual property rights have been transferred. Report contains accession number, linked resources, title, extent, cataloged, date processed, access restrictions, use restrictions, rights transferred and a count of the number of records selected with rights transferred.
 12. **Accession with linked names and subjects list** Select any accession or any group of accessions to show records with their linked names and subjects.
Report contains accession number, linked resources, accession date, title, extent, linked names, and linked subjects.
 13. **Un-cataloged Accessions** Select any accession or any group of accessions to show records that have not been checked as cataloged. Report contains accession number, linked resources, title, extent, cataloged, date processed, a count of the number of records selected that are not checked as cataloged, and the total extent number for those records not cataloged.
 14. **Cumulative List of Accessions Un-processed** Select any accession or any group of accessions to show records that do not contain a date processed. Report contains accession number, linked resources, title, extent, cataloged, date processed, a count of the number of records selected with date processed, and the total extent number for those records without a date processed.