

Archivists' Toolkit: Accession Functional Area

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Accession Functional Area

(Revised May 16, 2006)

A1: Description

The essential purpose of the accession functional area is to document the transactions whereby archival repositories acquire archival resources. However, in the AT, the accession functional area also includes some minimal collection management data elements. In subsequent development of the AT, collection management might be designed as its own functional area.

An accession record documents a single accession transaction, and to use this function, repository staff are required to provide three data elements for each accession record: a unique accession number; the date of the transaction; and one or more resource IDs. The relationship of accession records to resource records in the AT is many-to-many, meaning one or more accession records may be linked to the same resource record and one or more resources may be linked to the same accession record. The first case accommodates resources that are built of several accessions acquired over time. The second case accommodates accessions that are distributed to two or more resources. It is a requirement that each accession record be linked to at least one resource record. "Orphaned" accessions are not permitted by the AT. Some repositories may choose not to utilize resource IDs and assume that each accession constitutes a new resource; in these instances, an accession number may be entered again as the resource ID.

The accession number is to be comprised of four distinct elements or component parts. The entire set of component parts is to represent a unique accession number for the repository. Repositories will be required to use only the first of the four parts. All of the parts used are, collectively, the accession number. Repository staff will specify in the repository ID record the formula to be followed for building and interpreting its accession numbers. They will indicate if the component part is a string, date, or number, and they will specify which part is to be used for automatic counting of accessions. It is desired that accession numbers that are regular and have a counting component increment automatically with the creation of each new accession record.

The default accession number is a four digit number representing a year (first component part) and another number, 1-n (3 digit places), representing the sequence of accessions for a given year. Thus, the tenth accession for 2005 would be represented as 2005.10.

The resource number is managed in the same manner as the accession number. It too consists of four components parts. Repositories will specify in their repository ID record the formula for their resource numbers, indicating if the

component part is to store a number, a date, or a string. And the repository will indicate which component part of the resource number is to be used for counting. The default resource number is "AR" in component part one and a number 1-n (4 digits) in the second component part. The second part is the counting part.

Additional information about the accession can be provided, such as the type of resource (papers, records, or collection); the resource's title, creator, topics and source, and the resource's physical extent and enumeration of containers and container types in which it is housed.

Repositories wanting to may also record basic collection management information for the accession. Types of information supported include scope and content notes and inventories for unprocessed accessions, status of intellectual rights for the accession, description of restrictions applicable to the accession, processing plan, and, of course, location in the repository's storage area where the accession is shelved.

A2: Business Rules

1. Every distinct accession can be documented by one and only one accession record.
2. An accession may be comprised of a single item or of an aggregation of materials of any sort or complexity.
3. An accession record must contain a unique accession number, a date for the accession, and a resource ID. An accession record may not be created unless it contains these three data elements.
4. One or more accession records may be linked to one or more resource description records.
5. An accession record may be linked to zero, one, or more than one name records.
6. An accession record may be linked to zero, one, or more than one subject records.
7. An accession record may be linked to zero, one, or more than one location records.
8. Creation and last editing of an accession record is captured. Data captured is name of creator or editor and date of creation or last modification.

A3: Required Tasks Sequence

1. Select option to create an accession record
2. Assign accession number (automatically, automatically and then manually edited, or manually input)
3. Record date of accession
4. Record at least one resource ID
5. Save accession record

A4: Optional Tasks Sequence

1. Indicate type of resource (Papers, Records, Collection, etc.)
2. Enter name of person or agency responsible for creating the resource creator name (separate record process)
3. Enter title of archival resource
4. Enter single, approximate, inclusive, and / or bulk dates for the accession
5. Record physical extent (number and the type of number, e.g., linear or cubic feet) for the accession
6. Enumerate number and type of containers housing the accession (e.g., 4 archives boxes, 2 record cartons, 1 oversize folder).
7. Record brief description of the accession, emphasizing document types and topical contents
8. Compose, paste, or reference a box / container list or other preliminary inventory of the accession
9. Record disposition of the accession, such that one part was added to resource A, another part to resource B, and perhaps a third part returned to the donor. This is a free-form note. Granularity of the description is left to the recording repository.
10. Record the retention authority if one exists either by transcribing the authority into the element or referencing or linking to the retention schedule.

11. Record special conditions and handling requirements
12. Record name of source from whom / which the accession was acquired (separate record process)
13. Indicate if accession transaction is a gift, purchase, transfer, on deposit, or other.
14. Enter date letter acknowledging the accession was sent
15. Enter date acquisition agreement (deed of gift, purchase agreement, transfer agreement, deposit agreement, e.g.) was sent
16. Enter date signed acquisition agreement was received and filed.
17. Indicate if source of accession has transferred intellectual rights to the custodial repository.
18. Indicate if restrictions apply to the accession.
19. Express the terms of the restriction(s).
20. Compose, paste, or reference processing plan
21. Create location record for assigning shelf location to accession in the custodial repository
22. Enter name of person or agency that is a subject of the accession
23. Apply subject records to accession (separate record process)
24. Indicate date when processing and description of the accession is completed
25. Indicate if accession is represented in a completed catalog record (e.g., MARC) record.
26. Record catalog record identifier or make other note about the catalog record.

A5: User intentions / Application response sequence

User Intentions (Required in Italics)	Application Response / Action
<i>Open new accession record</i>	

	Display accession record with repository default elements
	<i>Automatically provide unique accession number</i>
Edit automatically provided accession number	
<i>Enter accession number (if option to have number provided automatically is not activated)</i>	
<i>Enter date of accession</i>	
<i>Enter resource number(s) to which the accession belongs</i>	
Enter optional additions to the accession record	
	System does not respond except for when other record creation processes are activated. All input data is displayed in its frame.
<i>Save Accession Record</i>	Indicate record cannot be saved because one or more required fields are not completed. Highlight the required fields that need to be completed.
	Or indicate record has been saved

A6: Inputs

- Accession Number
- Accession Date
- Resource Identifier
- Resource Type
- Title
- Date Expression
- Date 1 Begin
- Date 1 End
- Bulk Date Begin
- Bulk Date End
- Extent (2 fields)
- Container Summary
- Description
- Inventory
- Disposition
- Retention Rule
- Condition
- Acquisition Type
- Acknowledgement Date
- Agreement Sent
- Agreement Received
- Rights
- Restrictions
- Terms
- Processing Plan
- Date Processed
- Cataloged
- Catalog Record Note

A7: Reports

- Accession Record
- Accession Receipt
- Processing Plan
- Repository Production Report
- Cumulative List of Acquired Accessions
- Cumulative List of Accessions Processed
