

# From Silos to (Archives)Space: Moving Legacy Finding Aids Online as a Multi-Department Library Collaboration

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## Abstract

Prior to 2014, finding aids from Hunter Library's Special Collections did not have a publicly accessible online presence and resided as Microsoft Word documents on an internal library server. In 2014, Hunter Library began transferring these finding aids to ArchivesSpace, an open source archives information management application. ArchivesSpace allowed librarians to publish and export EAD finding aids on the web. This article discusses the project as an interdepartmental collaboration among Special Collections, Cataloging, and Digital Projects. The authors consider this paper useful as a workflow model for libraries which lack technical infrastructure but want to transfer legacy collection descriptions to ArchivesSpace.

*Keywords:* ArchivesSpace; Finding Aids; Special Collections; Project Workflow; Collaborative Models; Legacy Collections

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The Special Collections department at Western Carolina University's Hunter Library houses archival materials that showcase southern Appalachian life and natural history, with particular attention to Western North Carolina. Notable collections focus on Horace Kephart, renowned naturalist, author, and promoter of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and George Masa, whose photographs of the Appalachian region were used as promotional materials to support the establishment of a national park in the Smokies. However, these collections remain largely inaccessible outside of the library's walls. The approximately 700 finding aids for these collections reside in Microsoft Word format and are available only to users who physically visit the Special Collections department or contact the department via phone or email.

## **Background**

Hunter Library previously attempted to make key finding aids accessible online with the help of "North Carolina Exploring Cultural Heritage Online" (NC ECHO), a statewide digital library program run by the State Library of North Carolina from 1999 to 2012 ("North Carolina ECHO," n.d.). The goal of the NC ECHO project was to use the internet to increase public access to cultural heritage resources held by libraries, museums, and archives in North Carolina by providing grants, developing best practices for digitization and creation of metadata for digital content, and offering workshops on metadata standards such as

Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and Dublin Core. In 2010, as part of an effort sponsored by NC ECHO to coordinate metadata creation for the state of North Carolina, Hunter Library received templates for creating EAD finding aids. EAD finding aids enable archives and special collections to present information online in a standard manner (“Encoded Archival Description, Version 2002 Official Site,” n.d.), so the library’s participation efforts in this process were deemed justifiable. Consequently, Hunter Library’s Head of Cataloging and the Metadata Librarian created detailed EAD documents in Notepad++ based on the Microsoft Word finding aids. Hand coding the finding aids into EAD in Notepad++ was, however, an extremely time consuming process. Furthermore, Hunter Library was limited to the generic templates provided by NC ECHO; though the templates could be modified, to do so required technical expertise Hunter Library’s staff did not possess at that time. Publishing EAD finding aids online also required working with elaborate style sheets, another area in which the library staff lacked expertise, and ultimately, only 35 EAD finding aids were migrated to the web as HTML documents.

Those 35 finding aids are currently accessible under Hunter Library’s “Special Collections” webpage. Despite the fact that nearly 700 collections have finding aids available, with so few online, these unique collections of the library remained hidden. As the university library of a mid-sized academic institution, Hunter Library has limited finances and staff time. Though there had been considerable interest in making these finding aids more accessible, lack of dedicated personnel who possessed technical knowledge to migrate them online prevented further progress.

## Literature Review

Much of the research on migrating legacy finding aid data online has been done in light of the adoption of EAD, which was first introduced in 1993. EAD finding aids published online provide the user with access to subject information contained in historical and biographical notes, series summaries or scope and content notes and container lists (Hostetter, 2004). Yakel and Kim (2005) postulate that the adoption of EAD may hinge on the decision to convert “outmoded access tools to modern finding aids or updating analog finding aids into digital documents” (p. 1435). While over half of archives and libraries are now using EAD (Gracy & Lambert, 2014), at times its implementation has been a source of frustration and uncertainty.

One of the major challenges that libraries and archives faced from the very beginning when implementing EAD was a lack of resources. In 2008, Sonia Yaco surveyed librarians and archivists on their perceptions

of EAD. Twelve of 16 survey respondents listed “lack of staff” and 8 of 16 identified “lack of infrastructure/IT support” as barriers to implementation (p. 466). Hostetter (2004) found the three most common reasons institutions do not have their finding aids online were a lack of time, staff, and money, with lack of staff being the top barrier (p. 123).

Creating EAD finding aids requires a certain level of familiarity with XML and reworking existing staff workflows to incorporate new tools has been difficult for many who are implementing EAD. As Roth’s (2001) survey found, making the time needed to develop encoding routines has been one of the biggest challenges (p. 229). In their 2005 article, Goulet and Maftai question whether it is “not enough to simply introduce the staff to EAD, as part of their general culture in archival science, and to focus the training on one or two staff members” (p. 51).

Another factor contributing to delayed implementation of EAD is that many archivists view the online migration process as an opportunity to rewrite legacy finding aids. Yaco’s (2008) survey found that many archives planned to rewrite their finding aids before implementing EAD so that their descriptions would meet Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) or current archival standards. In fact, 10 of Yaco’s 16 respondents noted that they planned to “augment, update, or rewrite existing finding aids” (p. 468). Likewise, James Roth’s (2001) survey of 47 institutions implementing EAD found that, if resources were not an issue, they would use those resources to convert the inconsistent content of finding aids (p. 228).

The process is further complicated by the fact that many archivists consider availability of online finding aids as a double-edged sword: “While they help bridge the distance gap, they also place more demand on the archives staff and resources” (Hostetter, 2004, p. 136). More online patrons create a larger user base for online finding aids, meaning archives which publish findings aids online may see more users who “did not even suspect the existence of archival repositories and of archival resource” and would need the help of an archivist to focus and guide their search (Goulet & Maftai, 2005, pp. 51-52). In reality, even after finding a perfectly marked-up finding aid online, researchers might still need a reference archivist’s help (Roth, 2001, p. 228). According to Altman and Prange (2015) online finding aids that supplement printed bibliographies and catalog entries promote research in special collections. However, they too note that librarians and archivists may find themselves assisting users even more as the latter now have to sort through multiple sources of information (Altman & Prange, 2015). Finally, some archivists believe that the creation of web-based finding

aids should not supersede appraisal and description activities (Hostetter, 2004, p. 135).

Perhaps the most significant barrier to implementing EAD has been the need for a tool that transforms the EAD XML finding aid data into a web-accessible format suitable for use by researchers. Earlier studies by Richard Higgins (1998) and Jill Tatem (1998) note that major obstacles for implementing EAD have been tied to unavailability of easy-to-use software on both publisher and user ends. In 2005, Yakel and Kim found that archivists reported a great need “for an end-to-end, off the shelf software solution, and the need for more boxed systems that did not require knowledge of scripting, middleware, and server modifications” (p. 1434).

## Choosing ArchivesSpace

Hunter Library, like many other libraries and archives, lacked the staff time and technical expertise needed to successfully encode and migrate EAD finding aids to the web. ArchivesSpace filled this need by allowing organizations like Hunter Library to move through all stages of encoding and publishing, as opposed to using as many as six applications for encoding a single finding aid (Yaco, 2008, p. 461). A community-developed, open-source archives information management application released in 2013, ArchivesSpace combines features of two archives management systems—Archon, which has the capacity to publish descriptive archival information on the web without any encoding (“Archon,” n.d.), and Archivists’ Toolkit, an open source archival data management system with the ability to export EAD finding aids (“Archivists’ Toolkit,” 2009). These ArchivesSpace offerings provided Hunter Library with the ability to present its finding aids on the web and export EAD finding aids without additional technical training for staff. Since EAD finding aids are a “fundamental building block of sharing archival descriptive metadata” (Riley & Shepherd, 2009, p. 99), the library wanted to have this option available even if it did not envision exporting EAD from the start of the migration process.

This background also explains why Hunter Library, despite licensing CONTENTdm to host digital collections, did not use it for hosting its archival finding aids. Although CONTENTdm allows for the mapping of what Cornish and Merrill (2010) consider an “acceptable cross section” of the EAD tag library, it can only ingest EAD-finding aids, not create them (p. 159). As the authors point out, the CONTENTdm solution “assumes that a library or archives is creating EAD content using an external editor, which can be a complex and expensive proposition” (Cornish & Merrill, 2010, p. 161). The benefits CONTENTdm holds for institutions that

are pressed for resources, such as the ability to generate a publically accessible, full-text searchable HTML document from an EAD finding aid using the default stylesheets provided in the Project Client Finding Aid Wizard, were therefore not applicable in Hunter Library's context. Even for institutions that have EAD finding aids, CONTENTdm is not without problems. Bill Fliss (2010) pointed out in his presentation, delivered at the Midwest CONTENTdm Users Group Annual Meeting, that while CONTENTdm is able to deliver the EAD finding aids to the user through the use of style sheets that render finding aids into HTML, the Finding Aid Wizard lacks a batch feature. So, only one finding aid can be created at a time. Furthermore, prior knowledge of XSLT is needed to manipulate the Wizard's default stylesheets for correct display of the finding aids on the web (Fliss, 2010).

Fortier's (2010) CONTENTdm Users Group Meeting webinar demonstrates how finding aids written in Word can be exported to CONTENTdm. He describes converting the Word finding aids to multiple page PDF files and uploading them as compound items. Fortier (2010) recommends formatting the finding aid information into the broad categories of "descriptive summary," "administrative information," "collection description," and "collection inventory." These categories make subsequent mapping to DublinCore fields in CONTENTdm easier. However, while this solution allows finding aids to be added to CONTENTdm without having to be first encoded in XML, it does mean that the finding aids need to be added to CONTENTdm one at a time and cannot be imported in batches.

Finally, within Hunter Library itself, the use of CONTENTdm for hosting the library's digital collections meant that CONTENTdm had come to be viewed primarily as a software for managing digital image collections rather than a system which could also be used for hosting finding aids. For example, the Head of Cataloging, who had been extensively involved in creating EAD finding aids in Notepad++, considered CONTENTdm to be designed more for digital collections of images and audio recordings. For all these reasons, use of CONTENTdm for the finding aids was never an option for Hunter Library, and ArchivesSpace became an obvious choice for making the library's special collections available to the public.

The ability to use a hosted instance of ArchivesSpace from LYRISIS, a regional membership organization of American libraries and the "organizational home" (Matienzo & Kott, 2013) of ArchivesSpace, was another important consideration behind Hunter Library's choice. Since the library did not have the required server space or a technical team who could manipulate an open source software to meet institutionally

specific needs, LYRASIS' offering helped meet a critical need. As the "organizational home," LYRASIS is responsible for software development, operational support, and community engagement, all of which are supported through a robust membership and governance structure (Matienzo & Kott, 2013). Hunter Library thus secured hosting for ArchivesSpace through LYRASIS, becoming the third university library to do so. Under this arrangement, LYRASIS provides server support, technical assistance, and system upgrades for ArchivesSpace. This support is invaluable, as it provides Hunter Library with needed technical infrastructure support. LYRASIS charges two fees for relevant services: the cost of ArchivesSpace membership and the cost of LYRASIS for ArchivesSpace hosting and support. As a medium-sized university, Hunter Library pays \$3,000 a year in membership fees, \$4,032 for server hosting, and \$360 for support. Altogether, Hunter Library pays \$8,235 annually. LYRASIS also charged a one-time setup fee of \$1,200. The ArchivesSpace membership is optional, but it gives Hunter Library access to user support, community forums, training resources, and the ability to serve on the ArchivesSpace Governance Board ("ArchivesSpace membership," n.d.). Additional privileges of membership include regular notification from LYRASIS about updates to user documentation content and the ability to vote on prioritizing software development tasks.

LYRASIS offered some limited customizations for Hunter Library's instance of ArchivesSpace at no additional cost as part of its hosting services. For example, LYRASIS created the subdomain "wcu.lyrasistechnology.org" under the "lyrasistechnology.org" domain name. They also created one plugin as part of the setup which applied the library's logo, the university's purple and gold colors, and some localization of language in public and staff landing pages of the library's ArchivesSpace instance. The library did not modify this plugin or add any other additional plugins to its instance of ArchivesSpace. Since the library lacked the necessary technical support, the initial configurations done by LYRASIS were helpful, and they meant Hunter Library only had to provide certain basic information (such as organization code, collection, and website names). The library's Systems Librarian, who oversaw the contract with LYRASIS, holds an administrator user account and is responsible for adding and editing ArchivesSpace user accounts. The customizations were made available to Hunter Library a week before the agreed "go-live" date, that is, the date the system could be used for production purposes. The one week period provided a buffer during which the library could assess the branding and make sure logins and user accounts were active and working. Hunter Library staff members were also provided with three hours of interactive webinar training on creating

and editing repositories, editing user accounts and groups, and creating and modifying metadata.

Once Hunter Library's instance of ArchivesSpace went live on June 23rd 2015, the library could use LYRASIS's ticketing system to request technical support for ArchivesSpace. Overall, the Digital Technology Services section of LYRASIS, which is responsible for hosting and support of ArchivesSpace, has been responsive to the library's email questions and provides timely notification of bug fixes, upgrades, and reboots to the software. LYRASIS also seeks feedback on the quality of their hosting services.

## **A Collaborative Workflow**

Once ArchivesSpace was in place, the library had to determine the workflow for transferring the finding aids to ArchivesSpace. As noted, Hunter Library lacked strong technical infrastructure, particularly programming and developer support. Due to these deficiencies, a large-scale import of the finding aids from the library's server into ArchivesSpace was not a feasible option. Rather, migration of the finding aids would involve copying and pasting from Word documents and adding controlled vocabularies, such as names and subject headings, that would help users search the library's ArchivesSpace repository. Additionally, a key component in this migration process would be mapping data from the finding aids created by the library's Special Collections to corresponding fields in ArchivesSpace. Upon migration, each finding aid would have an "accession" and a "resource" record in ArchivesSpace. The accession record would store information about receipt of materials by Special Collections, and the resource record would provide the bulk of the information, for example, description of the archival material and information about creators and topics ("ArchivesSpace User Instruction Manual," n.d.).

Assembling the skills needed to complete this project required interdepartmental collaboration. Hunter Library is comprised of four departments: Content Organization and Management (COM), which is responsible for the library's cataloging and metadata; Digital, Access and Technology Services (DATS), which provides public services, technical support and digital projects management; Research and Instruction Services (RIS), which is responsible for reference and classroom instruction; and Special Collections, which collects and archives materials related primarily to Western North Carolina). Once ArchivesSpace was installed, the library's Associate Dean assembled a project team to represent three of these departments. The team was

comprised of the COM Metadata Librarian, who is responsible for cataloging; the DATS Digital Initiatives Librarian, who is in charge of the Digital Projects unit and whose graduate studies included courses on archives and records management; and a Library Technical Assistant, who has worked in Special Collections for nearly ten years. These three stakeholders had the necessary skillset to complete this project: knowledge of Special Collections' holdings and procedures, an archival and technical background, and knowledge of cataloging.

The first step for the team was to divide the 700 finding aids into priority batches based on frequency of use and number of user requests. For example, the Special Collections assistant identified some of the library's most popular and requested collections for research, such as the *Horace Kephart* and *George Masa* collections. He divided the finding aids into three folders and marked them as Priority 1, 2, and 3. The most requested collections went into the Priority 1 folder for immediate transfer, while collections with incomplete descriptions and those with access restrictions were given the lowest priority. Assigning lowest priority to some of the finding aids implied their migration to ArchivesSpace would be contingent on Special Collections enhancing them or securing permission from donors to make them public.

The next step involved mapping the contents of a finding aid accurately to ArchivesSpace. For this step, the project team member from Special Collections took the Special Collections' finding aid template and mapped each field to corresponding fields in "accession" and "resource" records in ArchivesSpace. For example, the [Accession #] on a Special Collections' finding aid was mapped to [Identifier], or unique identification number field, in the accession and resource records in ArchivesSpace (see Appendix A). Once the mapping scheme had been established, the team decided on the best way to transfer finding aids to ArchivesSpace to maximize use of the library's existing staff resources without placing an unnecessary burden on any department. The team identified catalogers in the COM department as possessing the necessary skills to complete this task.

The project team's assertion that catalogers could be easily trained to work in ArchivesSpace was based on several factors. First, catalogers are experienced in working with controlled vocabularies, and adding controlled vocabularies to ArchivesSpace records had already been identified as the most significant aspect of the migration work. Additionally, the catalogers work with digital collections in CONTENTdm and were comfortable working in content management systems other than traditional cataloging software. For example, some features of ArchivesSpace, such as separate staff and public interfaces and

the ability to configure staff permissions for improved security (“LYRASIS ArchivesSpace Hosting Services,” n.d.), were aspects that had parallels in CONTENTdm and were easy to adapt to by the catalogers.

A second potential benefit of this workflow was that most of the catalogers came from the local area and were familiar with the area and its history. The project team thought their knowledge in these areas could prove to be useful in enhancing the information present in the finding aids that described local or regionally-specific collections. For example, catalogers could provide information on the birth/death dates or the fuller form of name of an individual in order to create a unique and accurate name heading for the creator or subject of a collection.

Third, the project timeline also proved to be a good fit for the catalogers’ schedules. The project team had started their work in June and catalogers were trained in ArchivesSpace during the summer, a time when their traditional workflow was lighter due to the end of the acquisition cycle for the academic year. This timing paved the way for the catalogers’ seamless integration into the project without disrupting the established workflows of their unit. The team wanted to make sure that incorporation of a new project into the catalogers’ workflow would not add undue burden to their existing workload.

The benefits of catalogers doing the work of migration were manifold. Nonetheless, this process was not without challenges. For example, even though catalogers were trained in adding controlled vocabularies, they were not familiar with some archival terminology. The distinctions between archival terminologies of file/series/collection were unclear to the catalogers at the beginning, so the project team held a separate meeting with the catalogers to establish term definitions and standards for entering them into ArchivesSpace.

The project team created a number of documents to assist the catalogers with this project. In addition to the crosswalk document mapping the data in Special Collections’ finding aids to fields in ArchivesSpace records (Appendix A), the team created a comprehensive glossary. The glossary list includes common archival vocabulary terms, descriptive elements from Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS), the official content standard of the U.S. archival community (“Describing Archives: A Content Standard,” 2013), and field names from accession and resource records in ArchivesSpace. There are four sections for each glossary entry (see Figure 1): elements (terms representing either DACS elements, archival terms, or ArchivesSpace field names); ArchivesSpace map (ArchivesSpace fields which correspond to these terms); definition; and example. The terms in the first section highlight required or optimum DACS elements. The second edition

of DACS, published in 2013, defines twenty-five elements to be used when describing archival materials and classifies these as “required,” “optimal,” or “added value.” For example, the DACS element “Conditions Governing Access” corresponds to the “Access restrictions” field in an ArchivesSpace accession record and is a required DACS field. Providing this information allows for high-quality archival descriptions. Each entry also has sections for definition and examples, many of which are taken from the Society of American Archivist’s “A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology” (2015).

Elements	ArchivesSpace map	Definition	Example
<p><b>Conditions Governing Access**</b> 4.1</p>	<p>Access restrictions</p>	<p>Access restrictions may be defined by a period of time or by a class of individual allowed or denied access. They may be designed to protect national security (classification3), personal privacy, or to preserve materials.</p>	<p>Records are closed, per agreement with the creating office, for fifteen years after the date of their creation unless otherwise stated.</p> <p>Researchers must receive prior written permission to use the collection from the Trustees of the Kenneth Winslow Charitable Remainder Unitrust.</p>

*Figure 1.* The entry for the glossary term “Conditions Governing Access.” The first column lists the term and the two asterisks note that the term is a required DACS element (element 4.1). Column two shows that this information goes into the ArchivesSpace field “Access Restrictions,” column three provides a definition, and column four gives two examples.

The last item in the training material is the step-by-step guide for working in ArchivesSpace. As ArchivesSpace is relatively new, there was little support documentation available when this project began. The guide provides detailed instructions for creating an accession record, explains which fields to fill in with corresponding information from the finding aid, how to generate a resource record from an accession record, and how to add information such as scope and content notes, and the container list. These training materials, which have been brought together in a manual (available at <http://bit.ly/WCU2014ASmanual>), were meant to be dynamic; as the project developed and new questions or problems came up, those issues were documented in the materials.

## Implementing the Project

After the manual was created, each project team member chose a finding aid from a high priority collection to migrate to ArchivesSpace.

Team members also decided to work with more complex finding aids. These included finding aids that were very detailed or collections which included multiple types of items such as photographs, personal papers, and publications. The project team believed this process would help them identify and then address in the training materials problems cataloging staff might encounter when migrating finding aids into ArchivesSpace. Through weekly meetings, the project team continued to refine the workflow and document decisions in the training materials.

Once the training materials were compiled, the project team asked one cataloger to migrate a finding aid to ArchivesSpace. Feedback from this cataloger regarding the migration process was incorporated into the training materials. At this point, an ArchivesSpace orientation and training session was held for the rest of the catalogers who would participate in the project. This orientation gave catalogers a chance to see ArchivesSpace “in action”: what published finding aids looked like, how to navigate and use the interface, and the process for adding controlled vocabularies and data. After training, catalogers worked in pairs to enter finding aid information into ArchivesSpace and reported back at a project team meeting held two weeks later. This meeting allowed the team to discuss problems, provide clarification, and improve workflow.

The final step in the process entailed notifying Special Collections when accession and resource records migrated to ArchivesSpace were ready for review. Special Collections would notify catalogers if any record created for a finding aid in ArchivesSpace needed editing. To enable this flow of communication, catalogers and Special Collections tracked their work in a shared document. Catalogers marked a finding aid as being “complete” in the document, which lists the names of all the finding aids that need to be migrated. Likewise, the Special Collections assistant used this document to note errors needing to be corrected by catalogers.

## Challenges

Hunter Library started the ArchivesSpace migration project in June 2014. As of June 2015, 120 findings aids had been migrated to ArchivesSpace. Hunter Library plans to migrate the remainder of the 700 finding aids within the next two years, with a goal of having 500 online by the end of 2016. Dedicated teamwork involving catalogers, a project team with assigned duties, and an established process for reviewing the migrated finding aids will make completion of the goal possible.

For the moment, Hunter Library has overcome the challenges of limited staff time and lack of technical back-up; however, certain hurdles persist. ArchivesSpace is a relatively new product with technical issues.

Before January 2015, the public view of finding aids was not satisfactory. Published text in some fields did not display with paragraph divisions. This display was problematic since migration of findings aids often involved copying large sections of narrative text from Microsoft Word documents to the “Notes--Scope and Contents” field created for the ArchivesSpace finding aid. A lack of paragraph breaks in the public view made large sections of text difficult to read. The project team decided to continue migration of the finding aids but not to publish them until the issue had been resolved. Fortunately, ArchivesSpace version v.1.1.1 corrected this display problem and finding aids migrated to ArchivesSpace are now being published after a final review by Special Collections.

Inconsistency in finding aid descriptions presents a second challenge. Some findings aids have detailed information (e.g., creation dates, extent, and creator names) that helps catalogers in entering metadata. In fact, some finding aids exceed 50 pages in length and are described in minute detail. This situation has raised questions regarding how to appropriately invest time migrating finding aids to ArchivesSpace without sacrificing the quality of descriptions, and whether such detailed descriptions need to be migrated since they might overwhelm the user. So far, the project team has decided to include all information, as the goal is migration of data, not evaluation or editing of the descriptions. In contrast, some finding aids lack basic, crucial information related to dates or extent. In such cases, catalogers request Special Collections provide them with necessary information, if possible.

Third, Hunter Library’s Special Collections department is small and understaffed. The two full-time staff members include the Head of Special Collections and a Special Collections Library Technical Assistant who is also an ArchivesSpace project team member. Being short-staffed complicates Special Collections’ timely review and publication of resource records in ArchivesSpace. Not all finding aids migrated to ArchivesSpace have been made available for users online because they await review by Special Collections. The archivists view the migration as an opportunity to edit and enhance the finding aids because some finding aids contain inconsistencies, and they do not want to provide users with inaccurate information. The temptation to refine legacy finding aids can slow the process, which focuses on migration rather than editing.

The seeming absence of peer institutions with whom to compare workflows and learn poses a fourth challenge, as the majority of current ArchivesSpace users, unlike Hunter Library, are migrating from Archon or Archivists’ Toolkit. Hunter Library depends on ArchivesSpace to release new versions of the software and then relies upon LYRASIS to install those upgrades. Many current ArchivesSpace libraries are larger

institutions who host ArchivesSpace themselves and have the capacity to customize this open source software to suit their needs. Larger institutions have posted information on the web about their experiences migrating legacy finding aids. For more information, see Dallas Pillen's 2015 blog post about the Bentley Historical Library's migration of EAD finding aids with the ArchivesSpace EAD importer or Maureen Callahan's 2015 post on Yale's migration of Archivists' Toolkit databases into ArchivesSpace. While these posts contribute to the overall user knowledge base regarding migration models to ArchivesSpace, they are not particularly relevant for institutions like Hunter Library.

Finally, even as the library moves forward with migrating finding aids to ArchivesSpace, we remain unsure how ArchivesSpace will be incorporated as Hunter Library's primary archival content management system for Special Collections. Special Collections has not determined whether it will continue with the finding aid template that has been in use for the past four decades and create finding aids in Microsoft Word, or if they will enter collections descriptions directly into ArchivesSpace. The former scenario implies that the archivist creating the bulk of the descriptive information for the finding aid will not be entering that information into ArchivesSpace. Finding aids would continue to be created in Microsoft Word by Special Collections and then handed over to cataloging to be put into ArchivesSpace, with Special Collections finally reviewing and publishing the information online. Migration work would have to be incorporated as part of the permanent work flow of catalogers. Although catalogers have balanced the additional workload of ArchivesSpace migration well, and involvement of catalogers in entering controlled vocabularies is expected, handling the entirety of the migration to ArchivesSpace in perpetuity would likely involve significant restructuring of the catalogers' workflow.

## Future Directions

Hunter Library values sharing collections with the widest possible audience. The library will export EAD finding aids from ArchivesSpace to OCLC's Archive Grid, a service that provides access to archival resources across the world. Functioning much like a national union catalog, Archive Grid currently includes over four million records of archival materials representing more than a thousand different institutions ("ArchiveGrid," 2015).

Additionally, the Digital Projects unit within the DATS department plans to link finding aids in ArchivesSpace to Hunter Library's digital collections hosted in CONTENTdm. Finding aids migrated first to ArchivesSpace represented high priority or high use collections, and several of these collections have been digitized and put into CONTENTdm.

Consequently, overlap exists between ArchivesSpace finding aids content and digital collections in CONTENTdm. In order for users to access finding aids seamlessly and view digitized versions of the items to which the finding aids refer, Digital Projects will link ArchivesSpace records to CONTENTdm items. This linking will be done using the “Related Materials” note field in ArchivesSpace when linking to CONTENTdm, and the “Related Material” field in CONTENTdm when linking to ArchivesSpace. This crosswalking will help users navigate the library’s different content management platforms and increase discoverability of Special Collections’ materials.

The project team will also periodically reevaluate training materials. Over the course of the project, ArchivesSpace has released useful documentation and support materials. While Hunter Library’s current training materials have provided necessary guidance and clarity, it may be possible to supplement or change these resources using new documentation published by ArchivesSpace.

## Conclusion

The three-department collaboration to migrate legacy finding aids from Microsoft Word documents into ArchivesSpace was at times complex and overwhelming. To stay on track, the project team kept three questions in their minds:

1. What is the end goal?
2. Who has the knowledge?
3. Is progress or perfection more important?

The goal of the project was making finding aids accessible. While we were tempted to revisit descriptions for each collection, that level of editing was not the project’s purpose. Focusing on bringing together staff with knowledge to tackle the project rather than fixating on which department “owned” the project was also important. Going beyond silos and typical areas of responsibility helped establish effective interdepartmental collaborations and allowed Hunter Library to respond to the unique challenges of this project.

In an increasingly online world where “access deferred is access denied,” (Combs, Matienzo, Proffitt, & Spiro, 2010, p. 12) Hunter Library hopes that moving legacy finding aids to ArchivesSpace will make Special Collections’ resources accessible beyond those patrons who physically visit or personally contact the library. The library considers

that documenting its use of ArchivesSpace will serve as an example of both successful implementation of this software by a medium-sized institution and of ArchivesSpace as a “next generation archives management system” (Matienzo, 2013) that can be used by libraries with no or very limited technical support. In today’s digitally networked environment libraries are increasingly moving towards an “inside-out” collection model with emphasis on sharing special collections resources, research, and learning materials with a growing external audience (Dempsey, Malpas, and Lavoie, 2014, p. 394). In moving the finding aids to ArchivesSpace Hunter Library has taken the first steps towards breaking its silos of information and sharing its special collections. The authors hope their paper documenting the migration process will be useful and encouraging for other libraries as well and generate discussion on developing better workflows that optimize limited resources.

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Appendix A

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
ACCESSION FORM

Accession #: “Identifier”

Title: “Title”

Type: Under “Subjects”

Personal correspondence: \_\_\_\_\_ Other printed material \_\_\_\_\_

Diaries & minutes \_\_\_\_\_ Iconographic \_\_\_\_\_

Financial records \_\_\_\_\_ Audio \_\_\_\_\_

Legal papers \_\_\_\_\_ Genealogy \_\_\_\_\_

Clippings & scrapbooks \_\_\_\_\_ Maps \_\_\_\_\_

Literary productions & reports \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Date received: “Accession Date” Date processing completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Source: “Provenance” [typically, donor’s name]

Method of arrival: “Provenance”

Terms: “Acquisition Type” [usually, Gift]

Restrictions: “Use Restrictions” and “Access Restrictions”

Materials physical condition: “Condition Description”

Inclusive date: “Dates” > “Creation”

Size of collection: “Extents”

CONTENT AND SCOPE:

“Content Description” typically.

Beginning on the page following this Accession Form will be the collection description (typically a folder-level description), by box number.