OhioLINK Database Management and Standards Committee
Encoded Archival Description Task Force
EAD Starter Packet

Version 4: Revised 04/01/08
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1. Introduction

OhioLINK is creating and hosting a statewide repository of archival finding aids to increase access to and showcase the rich collections housed in Ohio libraries, archives, historical societies, and other cultural heritage institutions. The Task Force has created this packet to help institutions prepare themselves and their finding aids for participation in the OhioLINK Repository. Included is the document “Why EAD?” explaining the advantages of encoding finding aids in EAD, as well as a chart of required elements for a minimally encoded finding aid to be contributed to OhioLINK. Institutions can evaluate their finding aids and make sure the information for the required elements exists in their finding aids. The packet also includes instructions for finding or requesting a Library of Congress Repository Code. This code uniquely identifies each repository in a shared resource environment, and will be required for EAD finding aids submitted to OhioLINK. We have included a list of recommended reading, as well as links to examples of other cooperative EAD projects. The final section of this packet outlines future developments on the road to an OhioLINK repository of EAD finding aids.

In December 2004, the OhioLINK Database Management and Standards Committee (DMSC) appointed an Encoded Archival Description (EAD) Task Force to develop standards and guidelines for the creation and use of electronic finding aids within the OhioLINK repository. The initial charge of the EAD Task Force in December 2004 was to:

- Develop specification/template for EAD documents that may be contributed to OhioLINK.
- Follow progress of DLXS (the EAD software) enhancement requests
- Customize software toolkit for multi-institutional environment (e.g., in the context of EAD metadata and content, customize search options, and institutional branding)
- Generate some marketing/training ideas
- Educate members of the DMS committee on progress and findings

During its first year, the Task Force created Content Guidelines defining the range of requirements – from “minimally encoded” to “fully encoded” – needed to contribute a finding aid to the EAD repository. The content guidelines and tools will encourage consistency across Ohio EAD finding aids as well as developing a web-based application which allows for improved accessibility to collections through searchable and indexable data fields and provision of a centralized repository of standardized institutional finding aids. In its second year, the Task Force continued its work on refining the content guidelines, focusing primarily on basic, collection-level components of the application as well as developing a Web-based template for encoding finding aids. One of the primary advantages of this progress is that institutions across Ohio will be able to create EAD finding aids without having to know or understand the technicalities of XML encoding.

The Task Force’s charge was extended into 2007 in order to complete work remaining on development and testing of the Finding Aid Creation Tool and Repository. Ideas for training programs were also discussed. Development of the Finding Aid Creation Tool and Repository was completed in spring 2008, while work continues for training in the use of the Tool and Repository.
Current OhioLINK EAD Task Force Members
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More information about the Task Force is available online at:

   http://platinum.ohiolink.edu/dms/ead/index.htm
2. Why EAD?

Institutions encoding their finding aids using EAD will make their collections more accessible, be able to provide enhanced services to their patrons, and ultimately reduce the amount of staff time devoted to finding aid processing because EAD:

1. **Is expressed in XML, a structural and preservation format**

The advantage over HTML is that XML tagging describes the document content, whereas HTML merely formats content for display. For example, EAD has a tag for the scope and content of the collection called `<scopecontent>` (“Scope and Content”). A human or a machine examining EAD encoding will know the particular type of information in the `<scopecontent>` tag, whereas in HTML, information appearing in a paragraph or `<p>` tag could be the title of the web page, copyright information, description of a collection’s creator, etc. HTML simply tells a browser how to visually display information and link between documents. For example, the `<p>` simply tells the browser to skip a line and begin a new paragraph and the `<h1>` tag tells the browser to display the information at a certain size, but any kind of information could potentially be contained in that tag. XML format also facilitates repurposing of data. A finding aid in XML can be converted into a variety of different formats for display and access to users. An HTML and PDF version of the finding aid can easily be created via the same EAD document.

2. **Mirrors the structure of a finding aid**

EAD was designed specifically for archival finding aids. EAD includes tags defined for all of the traditional finding aid data elements, including biographical and historical notes, restrictions, collection and series titles, physical location, appraisal, and repository information.

3. **Creates searchable and indexable data fields out of traditional elements of archival description**

Because of the meaningful tags available in EAD, software can be customized for targeted searching and retrieval. For example, subject browsing and searching can be configured using the “controlled access” terms identified in the finding aid. Additionally, EAD finding aids allow software to search across finding aids from multiple institutions, finding aids from one institution, or finding aids from one repository within an institution.

4. **Is supported by OhioLINK, in conjunction with Kent State University, with guidelines, templates, and search and retrieval software**

OhioLINK supports EAD finding aids from all institutions in Ohio, not only member institutions (as long as the records of the contributing institution are publicly available). In addition to these guidelines, training options to assist institutions beginning or thinking about implementing EAD projects are in development. OhioLINK is hosting the Repository, which
provides browse and search functionality, as well as increased access to collections throughout the state.

5. Automates MARC record creation for collections

In addition to creating multiple versions of a finding aid (e.g., HTML, PDF, etc.), a surrogate record for a finding aid, such as a MARC record, can be created. XML not only allows elements to be defined, but also provides units called attributes (abbreviated “@”) which facilitate better description of the information within an element. For example, the attribute “encoding analog” (expressed as: @encodinganalog) can be used to match data elements in EAD to those of another encoding standard (e.g., MARC or Dublin Core). An encoding analog value of “245$a” in the “title of the unit” of a collection matches the collection title to a MARC 245 title field. Scripts have been created that will read an EAD finding aid and produce content appropriate for a MARC record.

6. Is required by national granting agencies, such as National Endowment for the Humanities

Realizing that EAD ensures the discoverability and interoperability of archival information, national granting agencies strongly encourage the use of EAD finding aids when considering grant proposals to preserve and create access to archival collections.
3. Content Required for Minimally-Encoded Finding Aids in the OhioLINK Repository

The chart below shows information that must be supplied in order to create a minimally-encoded (basic, collection-level) finding aid in the OhioLINK Repository. When preparing finding aids for inclusion in the Repository, be sure that you can supply data for each of the elements listed. The EAD Task Force Content Guidelines provide more information on each of these elements.

**EAD Header**
- Title Preface
- Title
- Author(s)
- Creation (automatically supplied)
- Year Encoded (automatically supplied)
- Language(s) of the Finding Aid
- Revisions (mandatory only if applicable)

**At the Collection Level**
- Summary of the Collection
- Origination
- Inclusive Dates
- Extent
- Language(s) of the Material
- Abstract
- Unit ID
- Scope and Content
- Biography or History (mandatory only if applicable)
- Arrangement
- Preferred Citation
- Controlled Access Heading(s) (at least one heading must be applied)
- Restrictions on Access (mandatory only if applicable)
- Restrictions on Use (mandatory only if applicable)
4. Explanation of Required Content Terms

Abstract - A brief summary of the materials being described that may include information about the creator(s), scope, and content.

Arrangement - A statement that provides an explanation of the logical and/or physical arrangement of the materials, naming and describing the divisions (into series and subseries, for instance) that the archivist has established in the collection. This should help researchers to locate specific groups or types of materials. Arrangement can take the form of a one-sentence statement, an explanatory paragraph, a simple list of series and subseries--or some combination of the above.

Biography or History - Contains biographical information about an individual or family, or the history of a company, institution, or other corporate body responsible for the creation of the collection.

Controlled Access Headings - A list of subject terms which serve as key access points to the described materials. At least one controlled access heading must be identified for each finding aid created.

Creation - A statement that provides information about the encoding of the electronic finding aid.

Date of the Unit - Documents the time period for the accumulation, creation, assembly, and/or use and maintenance of the described materials. Record all dates as a range of dates or as a single date. At the collection level, provide inclusive dates and bulk or predominant date(s), if necessary.

EAD Header - Information about the finding aid (as distinct from information about the collection). Identifies the finding aid as a unique electronic document, and provides information about its creation, and any revisions made to it.

Extent - Quantity and expression of space occupied by collection or portion of a collection. At the collection level, provide the exact or approximate number of measuring units (e.g., linear feet, boxes, etc.) for the entire collection.

Language(s) of the Finding Aid - Identifies the language(s) in which the finding aid is written.

Language(s) of the Material – Indicates the language(s) of materials in the collection being described. This should not be confused with the language in which the finding aid is written.

Origination - Identifies the individual, family, or organization responsible for creating, assembling, or maintaining the collection before its deposit in an archive or special collections library.
**Preferred Citation** - Used to indicate the preferred style or format for a citation of the unit being described in a list of sources used; bibliography, reference list, footnotes, etc.

**Restrictions on Access** - Statement of conditions affecting access to the collection or parts of the collection.

**Restrictions on Use** - Defines the terms and restrictions for how the material may be used once accessed. May contain procedures or restrictions for quoting or reproducing from the materials due to copyright or donor imposed restrictions.

**Revisions** - Describes changes made to the encoded finding aid.

**Scope and Content** - A summary of the collection, allowing researchers to determine whether the materials in the collection are relevant to their interests. At the collection level, the Scope and Content encompasses the entire collection. It may also be used, with increasing specificity, at successive levels such as Series, Subseries, and File.

**Summary of the Collection** - Brief descriptive information about the collection appearing at the beginning of the finding aid.

**Title Preface** - Phrase preceding the title of the collection in order to construct the name of the EAD finding aid. Title preface options include "Guide to the", "Finding Aid for the", "Inventory of the", "Register of the."

**Title of the Unit** - Word or phrase (topical or otherwise) that uniquely identifies a collection, series, or item described.

**Unit ID** - A unique designation which identifies the unit being described. Example values include an ISBN and/or classification number for an item or an accession number for a collection of items. At the collection level, this element is used to identify the body of archival materials being described.

**Year Encoded** – Year in which finding aid is encoded in the EAD Finding Aid Creation Tool.
5. Selected Screen Shots of the EAD Finding Aid Creation Tool

The following screen shots demonstrate the interface of the Tool.

EAD Header summary page
EAD Header in editing mode
6. OhioLINK Finding Aid Repository

The OhioLINK Finding Aid Repository allows researchers to browse and search finding aids from Ohio institutions—allowing for cross-institutional searching by subject or keyword. The full-text of finding aids is searchable, while searches can also be limited to defined parts of the finding aids, or by the name of the contributing institution.

Advanced search interface

Finding aid display with navigation links in left-hand frame
7. Acquiring an LC Institution Code

Within the context of an OhioLINK Finding Aid repository, each participating institution will be required to have a Library of Congress institution code. These short alphabetic codes are used in union catalogs such as OCLC WorldCat and the OhioLINK central catalog to differentiate ownership of particular items and collections. Your institution may already have such a code if you participate in cooperative catalog projects.

- **How do you find out if your institution already has a code?**
  
  Read about how to search the MARC Codes database at:  
  [http://www.loc.gov/marc/organizations/orgshome.html#searches](http://www.loc.gov/marc/organizations/orgshome.html#searches)

- **How do you request a code?**

  Please note that requests take several weeks to process, so it is recommended that you apply for your code two to three months in advance of setting up your user profile at the OhioLINK EAD Repository. You must have a valid MARC code before you can begin encoding and contributing finding aids to the online repository.
8. Recommended Reading

*The American Archivist. Volume 60, numbers 3 and 4 (Summer and Fall 1997).*

NOTE: Entire content of these two issues was devoted to EAD. The contents of these issues were also published in book form as *Encoded Archival Description: Context, Theory, and Case Studies.* Edited by Jackie M. Dooley. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1998.

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NOTE: This work supersedes *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts (APPM),* compiled by Stephen L. Hensen. It provides descriptive standards for archival materials and collections.

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NOTE: This publication is available online on the Encoded Archival Description: Official EAD Version 2002 Web Site (http://www.loc.gov/ead/tglib/index.html)

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9. Selected EAD Web Sites and Searchable EAD Finding Aid Repositories

**Encoded Archival Description: Official EAD Version 2002 Web Site**
http://www.loc.gov/ead

Provides background information on the development of EAD; official documentation on EAD version 2.0 including the tag library; links to other sites related to EAD including tools and helpers; instructions on how to join an EAD discussion list. Also includes EAD conversion tools from 1.0 to 2002.

**EAD Help Pages (of the EAD Round Table of the Society of American Archivists)**
http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/ead

Includes the “EAD Cookbook” which provides practical, step-by-step assistance with the implementation of EAD; includes documentation on EAD as well as links to funding and training sites

Also includes **EAD Sites Annotated**
http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/ead/sitesann.html
A list of EAD implementers, with notes on how they encode their finding aids

**EAD Finding Aids at the Library of Congress**
http://www.loc.gov/rr/ead

Another site that allows the user to search and browse EAD-encoded finding aids. The homepage also provides useful explanatory notes on what archival finding aids are, what EAD is and how best to search the finding aids.

**Online Archive of California**
http://www.oac.cdlib.org

The OAC brings together historical materials from a variety of California institutions, including museums, historical societies, and archives. Over 120,000 images; 50,000 pages of documents, letters, and oral histories; and 8,000 guides to collections are available. **HINT**: Click on “Advanced Search” to see another set of options for how finding aids and other resources on the site can be searched.

**RLG Encoded Archival Description Advisory Group**

This working group helps shape standards for base-level application of Encoded Archival Description (EAD). Includes link to the RLG Best Practices for the use of EAD:
10. Current and Future Developments

The EAD Finding Aid Creation Tool and OhioLINK Repository will be publicly available in spring 2008. The Task Force is currently developing and implementing training programs to help users around the state learn how to utilize these tools. Both traditional, in-person training sessions and Web-based training modules are being developed.

The Task Force will also continue to monitor usage of the Finding Aid Creation Tool and Repository and consider requests for enhancements and additions to the functionality of both systems.