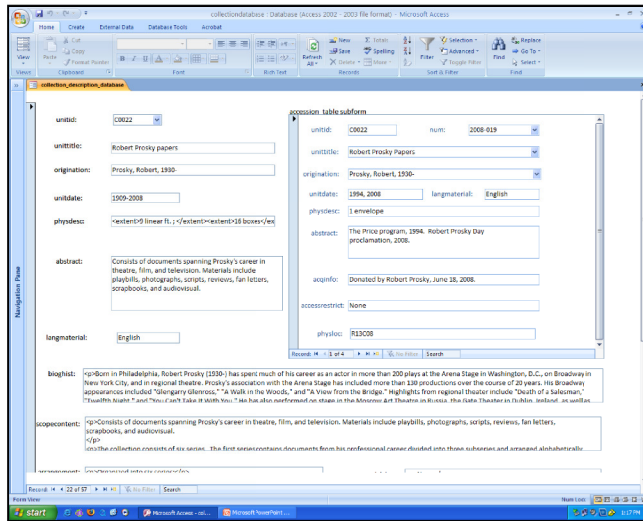


INTRODUCTION

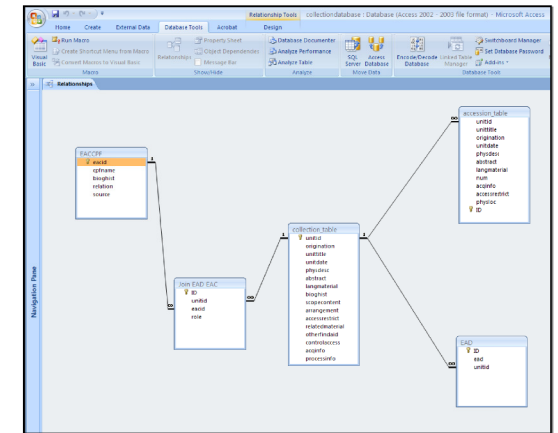
In February 2008, I began working in GMU's newly created Processing Archivist/Librarian position. After completing a collection survey, I designed a database to convert a paper-based accession system to an EAD-based electronic system. The primary goal was to establish both an accession and a collection numbering system to facilitate access and processing.



Forms for the collection and accession tables use drop-down menus and restrictions to minimize student data-entry error. Using EAD as the base standard allows for exporting data as XML to use both with EAD finding aids and with MARCXML to convert to DAT format for uploading into cataloging software and to OCLC. Using EAD also provides flexibility to repurpose descriptive information for another electronic system such as Archivist Toolkit.

DATABASE DESIGN

The core table of the database describes collections using fields based on EAD (excluding <dsc>). A collection number is assigned as the primary key to link the collection table with other tables in order to create queries and location guides. MS Access allows fields to be set as OLE Objects that can link to the location of the EAD finding aid. Queries can retrieve data about which collections have finding aids to assist processing plans. EAC records link to the collection table through a many-to-many relationship and contain fields for data on administrative histories of university offices and departments, and queries can generate data about relationships between collections through personal and corporate names.



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Microsoft Access was chosen over an archives-specific database because of its known features that allow for the creation of data entry forms suitable for student use and for its capability to create reports that group collection accessions that are not physically shelved together. Access can be used to create tables and forms to track the existence and maintenance of EAD finding aids and EAC records.

Data entry has proceeded well, and both new accessions and legacy data from old accession forms have been successfully entered. Queries and reports have returned location information for both university archives and historical manuscripts collections. A few issues remain unresolved. Student workers have yet to use the system because other projects have taken precedence. The tables for EAD and EAC data have not been used consistently, but preliminary query testing seems promising. A researcher table has been planned but not created, so it remains unclear how the table will work with the system.

Accession	Accession number	Physdesc	Originator	Date	Physical	Accession
Academic Affairs records						
8600	86	Office of Continuing Professional Education	2008-018	5.8 linear ft.	1 box	None
8603	8603	Student Appearance Affairs and Accounting	2008-018	2.3 linear ft.	1 box	None
86	86	Office of Admissions	1962-021	1 linear ft.	1 box	None
86007-01	86007-01	Office of the President	1962-021	1 linear ft.		None
American Political Items						
Coleridge Collection						
86002	86002	Maize, Theodore	1982-001			None
86001	86001	American Political Items Collection	1981-001			None
Arena Stage records						
86007	86007	Fulcher, Zaida	2008-004	18 boxes		None
86007	86007	Arena Stage	2008-018	10.5 linear ft.		None
Arthur Peterson papers						
86007	86425-06	Peterson, Arthur	1962-004	1 audio cassette		None
Athletic records						
86000	86000	Back hallway shelf	2008-020	1 banner		None
86000	86000	Intercollegiate	2008-027	1 folder		None