

Migrating Past Perfect to ASpace: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the CSV

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Archives and Special Collections at NMSU

- 10 FTE Employees in ASC
 - Three TT faculty archivists, one special collections librarian
- Used Past Perfect to track accession data; previously transferred from FileMaker Pro
- Launched ASpace January 2016
 - Hosted by Lyrasis
 - Non-member status
- Initial plans for migration
 - Have Systems department head work with archivists to transfer data from Past Perfect to ASpace



Image courtesy of NMSU Library

Initial Challenges and Problems

- Staffing
 - First having to rely on another department to make time; then, having to rely on one person to complete this among all other duties
- Technological expertise
 - General lack of experience with large-scale database cleanup and migration projects
- Non-member status
 - No access to documentation, so had to cobble together what we could find online
 - Related to general lack of resources: unable to afford yearly membership dues, while also unable to afford bringing in outside help
- The data itself
 - Legacy data and all the problems that come with it

The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly: Working with Legacy Data

The screenshot shows a software window titled 'Accessions'. The interface is divided into several sections:

- Top Bar:** Includes a 'Sort by' dropdown menu, an 'Accession#' field, and a 'Thank you Letter' button.
- Left Panel:** Contains navigation and utility icons: Error, Next, Add, Browse, Edit, Spell, Find, Delete, Print, and Exit.
- Main Content Area:**
 - Received as:** Gift
 - Accession#:** RG2005-117
 - Source:** Rotary District 5520
 - Contact:** Loren Kuehne, Executive Director
 - Address:** 3265 Arrowhead Road Suite 200
 - City, State, Zip:** Las Cruces, NIM, 88011
 - Email / Country:** loren@rotary5520.org, 522-3763
 - Web site:**
 - Credit Line:**
 - Brief Description of Accession:** Records, Rotary District 5520, 1973-2004, 8.75 linear feet. Accretion to earlier Rotary District 5520 accessions. Video cassettes, Audio cassettes, Convention Programs, Slides, Correspondence, Pamphlets, Photographs. Polio eradication, Rotary District 5520, Service organization - New Mexico Western Texas
 - Restrictions:**
 - Phone Numbers:** Home# / -, Work# / -, Fax# / -, Cell/Pager / -
 - Notes:** WEBB 3 AUG 2005
 - Accession Activities:** Received 8/2/2005, Accessioned / /, Inventored / /, Photographed / /, Deed of gift sent / /, Thank you letter sent / /, Deed of gift returned / /, Review for Deaccession / /, Offered to other institut. / /, Deaccessioned / /
 - Deed of Gift:** TC Receipt# (View), Contact Id# (View)
 - Deed of Gift:** Add/View additional donors
 - Setup Multimedia links:**
- Bottom Panel:**
 - No catalog records:** Add catalog records, Edit, delete, or view catalog records
 - Table:** Columns for ObjectID, Objname, Title, and Description / Summary.
 - Status:** Record 7164 of 7507
 - Footer:** Updated 06/15/2010 10:34 AM, Updated by staff, Update History

The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly: Working with Legacy Data

The screenshot shows a web-based application for managing museum accessions. The interface is divided into several sections:

- Navigation and Tools:** Includes buttons for 'Prior', 'Next', 'Add', 'Browse', 'Edit', 'Spell', 'End', 'Delete', 'Print', and 'Exit'. A 'Sort by Accession#' dropdown is also present.
- Accession Details:**
 - Accession#:** RG97-037
 - Received as:** Gift
 - Source:** Ghens, W. Earl and Mary
 - Contact:** (empty)
 - Address:** 3800
 - City, State, Zip:** (empty)
 - Email / Country:** (empty)
 - Web site:** (empty)
 - Credit Line:** (empty)
- Phone Numbers:** Home# / -, Work# / -, Fax# / -, Cell Pager / -.
- Notes:** Located in Range 16A-17.
- Restrictions:** (empty field).
- Accession Activities:**
 - Received
 - Accessioned //
 - Inventoried //
 - Photographed //
 - Deed of gift sent //
 - Thank you letter sent //
 - Deed of gift returned //
 - Review for Deaccession //
 - Offered to other institut. //
 - Deaccessioned //
 - Dataset
- Table:** A table with columns for 'Object ID', 'Objname', and 'Title'. The table is currently empty, with a message 'No catalog records' above it. A link 'Add catalog records' and 'Edit, delete, or view catalog records' is visible.
- Footer:** 'Record 5595 of 7507', 'Updated 05/29/2014 11:38 AM', and 'Updated by archstu'.

The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly: Working with Legacy Data

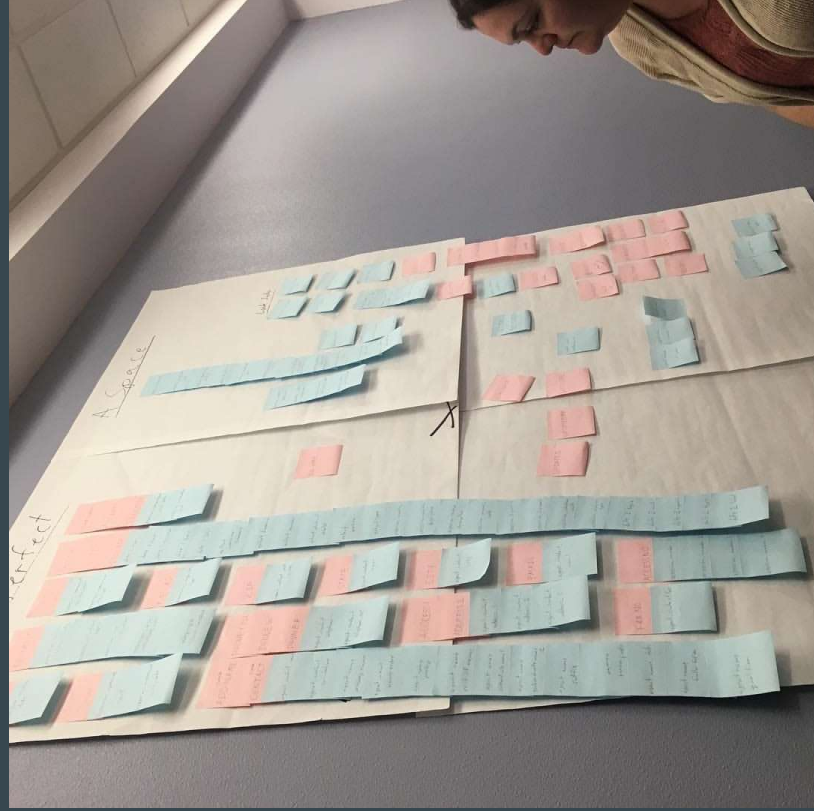
The screenshot shows a software window titled 'Accessions'. The interface is divided into several sections:

- Top Bar:** Includes a 'Sort by' dropdown set to 'Accession#' and a 'Thank you Letter' button.
- Form Fields:**
 - Received as:** Gift
 - Accession#:** RG2005-117
 - Source:** Rotary District 5520
 - Contact:** Loren Kuehne, Executive Director
 - Address:** 3265 Arrowhead Road Suite 200
 - City, State, Zip:** Las Cruces, NIM, 88011
 - Email / Country:** loren@rotary5520.org, 522-3763
 - Phone Numbers:** Home# / -, Work# / -, Fax# / -, Cell/Pager / -
 - Notes:** WEBB 3 AUG 2005
 - Restrictions:** (Empty field)
- Table Section:** A table with columns for 'ObjectID', 'Objname', 'Title', and 'Description / Summary'. The table is currently empty, with a status bar at the bottom indicating 'Record 7164 of 7507'.
- Right Panel:** A vertical list of activities with status indicators:
 - Received: 8/2/2005
 - Accessioned: / /
 - Inventoried: / /
 - Photographed: / /
 - Deed of gift sent: / /
 - Thank you letter sent: / /
 - Deed of gift returned: / /
 - Review for Deaccession: / /
 - Offered to other institut.: / /
 - Deaccessioned: / /
 - Dataset: (dropdown menu)
- Bottom Bar:** Includes 'Updated: 06/15/2010 10:34 AM' and 'Updated by: staff'.

Planning Process: Reviewing the Data

- First step was looking over the data we had
- Downloaded accession database into a CSV file
- Got a holistic sense of:
 - Commonly and uncommonly used fields
 - Most likely locations of different types of data
 - Easily fixed irregularities (ex. Typos in accession numbers)
- Collections assessment completed the year before
 - Approximately 1050 unprocessed accessions were assessed and the relevant Past Perfect accession records updated
 - Ensured that much of our data was accurate and up to date

Mapping the data



Past Perfect	Aspace
ACC DATE	accession_accession_date
RESTRICT	accession_access_restrictions_notes accession_restrictions_apply accession_use_restrictions accession_use_restrictions_note accession_access_restrictions accession_agreement_sent accession_agreement_sent_date accession_agreement_received_date accession_agreement_received accession_acquisition_type accession_number_1 accession_number_2 accession_number_3 accession_number_4 agent_contact_email agent_contact_fax agent_contact_post_code agent_contact_region agent_contact_city
DG SENT DATE	
DG REC DATE	
RECAS	
ACCESSNO	
EMAIL	
FAX NO	
ZIP	
STATE	
CITY	
DEAR NAME	accession_acknowledgment_sent_date
TYLDATE	accession_acknowledgment_sent
TYLETTER	
ADDRESS1	agent_contact_address_1
ADDRESS2	agent_contact_address_2
	agent_contact_address_3
PHONE CELL	agent_contact_telephone
PHONE W	agent_contact_telephone_ext
PHONE H	

Data? I never even meta!: Cleaning up

- Explored options
 - Use OpenRefine to clean up data prior to import
 - Separate data into fields by hand
- Needed to balance ease of clean up with what was possible with staff and resources available
- Decided to clean up data by hand as much as possible prior to import
- Possibility of going through paper accession records after transition in order to reconcile ASpace records with originals, but this is a long way off

No Looking Back: The Migration Process

1. Create working copy
2. Break data down into manageable sections
 - a. By year
 - b. By number (i.e. 5, 10, 50 records at a time)
3. Clean up data within spreadsheet
 - a. Eliminate empty fields
 - b. Reformat dates/other data that transfers one-to-one
 - c. Separate relevant pieces of data into respective fields
4. Copy data into ASpace Accessions CSV
5. Import CSV into ASpace
6. Cautious optimism/resignation

Challenges, Challenges

- Large amounts of data = mistakes can get lost in shuffle
- Significant amount of time to transfer data into accessions csv and clean it up
- Location data did not transfer
- Our motto: “The perfect is the enemy of the good.” Do we want it perfect, or do we want it usable?

ca. 1,00 linear feet Records, Rio Grande Irrigation Project, 1931-1992. Anthropological study; also incorporates folklore and the study of water uses (need to determine provenance as to whether this was an NMSU project, or done outside the University). Interviews conducted by Neal Ackerly and assistants, ca. 1990-1991, concerning life in the lower Rio Grande Irrigation area, primarily in areas covered by the Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID). Twenty-four (24) oral interviews conducted with farmers and others familiar with agriculture in the Mesilla Valley and within the EBID of the Bureau of Reclamation. Neal Ackerly was project lead for these interviews. Includes variety of subjects from throughout the farming region of the Mesilla Valley, including La Union, Anthony, Hatch and Mesquite. Includes project notes, transcripts and signed releases for interviews. RGHC staff typed abstracts of these interview in Spring 2001.

Papers, Henry Ossian Flipper, 1856-1940 (first Afro-American Graduate of the U.S. Military Academy) 2 folders Manuscripts. Newscippings. Articles. Subjects/places include Ft. Davis TX, Ft. Quitman TX, engineering, Buffalo Soldiers, and Afro-American History (19th Century). Correspondents, Henry O. Flipper. Oversized folder containing various information on Henry O. Flipper, the first Afro-American Graduate of the U.S. Military Academy. Flipper was court-martialed on a trumped-up embezzlement charge; however, the decision was reversed in 1976. After leaving the military, Flipper enjoyed a distinguished career as a mining engineer, once living in El Paso in that time (ca. 1900s-1910s). NOTE: Accessioned for control purposes only; found without accompanying correspondence/information in the south-central section of the 3d Floor Archives. WBB. 7/26/2002.

Current Status of the Project

- 1794 accession records transferred (1997 through present)
out of 5580 total (approximately 32% of total)
- 281 resource records transferred out of approximately 500
 - Many of these are not in Past Perfect and are instead being entered by hand or uploaded from EAD
- Work is being completed by one FTE staff member

Tips and Takeaways: Migrating from Past Perfect to Aspace

- Not a one-size-fits-all approach
- Probably will take a lot longer than you think it will
- Largely dependant on the state of your existing data
- Best to break it down into small tasks and take it one step at a time
- It can be done!

Questions? Comments?

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