



Vendors and Legacy Finding Aid Migration

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Once upon a time...



“Good” finding aids had lots of problems

Box 1

Membership list Box 1 title: *Early organizational history, correspondence, manuscripts*

Folder 1. (A list of early members of the society and a circular advertising for subscriptions to the *Compte-Rendus*, 1885.)

Folder 2. Projects pertaining to the University of Louisiana and the Athénée.

Folder 3. Correspondence, 1876-1907, on a variety of topics. (Included here are the letters pertaining to the resignation of Armand Mercier, 1880-1881. Of interest are a letter from Joseph Jones to Gén. Beauregard concerning Dr. Augustus de Plongeon, an explorer, 1884, and a long letter from a young woman who signs herself as Margoton du Cypre Mort and who claims to be uneducated, 1882.)

Folder 4. A letter from Pierre Latour, 1834 (*Latour* ^{not} Plaquemines Parish, to the unnamed author of a recent history of the state, complaining that the use of the verses of Casimir Delavigne, French poet, were inappropriate for a Louisiana History, and giving some suggestions for improvement. Fragile.)

Folder 5. Two letters to J.G. Hava from Chs. Bacarisse and an issue of "Le Grande Stenographe," 1880.

Folders 6 ^(title) Scientific manuscripts, (including essays on Dyspepsia, the Hydrology of the Mississippi River, the Philosophy of Solar Heat, Alimentary Substances, the Telephone, Tasmanian Insectivorous Plants, etc.)

Folder 7: T. Guyot letter on the barometer,
1877

Workflow – our responsibilities

Finding aid review process:

- Annotate copy of paper legacy finding aid to correct errors
 - Students check physical contents at the level described
 - Correct dates/titles as needed
 - Make notes of unprocessed materials
- All annotated finding aids sent as PDFs to the vendor (daily batches over 9 months)
- All finding aids sent with a cover sheet including any detailed instructions or requests

Workflow – vendor responsibilities

The vendor was provided with sets of data entry templates.

They were responsible for:

- Collection-level information (including scope)
- Creator information and authorities
- Subject and genre headings
- Inventory

The vendor sent regular release reports; weekly meetings at vendor's offsite location.

Working with a vendor – the Good

- Extra staffing meant quicker results
- Extra sets of eyes on materials
- Greater exposure for previously hidden collections

Working with a vendor – the Bad

- More work than originally anticipated
- Enormous staff burden
- Few issues with data-entry, but problems with appropriate subject headings and authorities

Working with a vendor – Avoiding the Ugly

- Work with a vendor that has archivists on staff
- Comprehensive contract covering everything
- Be clear on standards that should be used
- Periodic check-ins and ongoing review
- Is outsourcing always the best option?

Wrap Up

This paper will be available at eiratansey.com

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