From Basics to Barcodes

Leveraging Technology for Collection Projects

Jake Sheff, Registrar – Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites
Marie-Page Phelps, Registrar of Collections – New Orleans Museum of Art
Caitlin Podas, Registrar – Mingei International Museum
with contributions from Emily Brown, Contract Registrar
Indiana State Museum and 11 State Historic Sites.
ISMHS Historic Sites Inventory Project

Project Overview
- Inventory all objects located at seven State Historic Sites
- Create a digital record of all objects at State Historic Sites
- Identify a system that fits our institution’s needs and capabilities

Project Goals
- Allow for object data to be made available to all ISMHS staff
- Standardize and prep object data for input into MIMSY XG
- Provide MIMSY XG access to all State Historic Sites by 2022
Catalog records entered using fields from MIMSY XG.
Example of a completed Object Entry Worksheet.
View of the Search form.
View of relational coding in VBA.
Data is transferred from the Object Entry Worksheet to the database.
NOMA
New Orleans Museum of Art
NOMA Relocation Project

Project Overview
- Relocation to new, offsite storage
- ~ 25,000 works of art
- 6 months to pack, move, and rehouse
- Minimal NOMA staff (2-4) + Artex base team of 14
- Budget determined by FEMA

Barcoding Goals
1. Track chain of custody for each object
2. Improve ease and speed of object relocation
3. Build a tracking system that would have future applicability
4. System functional for multiple people with minimal training
1. Compatible with our database (MIMSY XG)

1. Reads barcodes

1. Updates to database in real time

1. Customizable
Building barcodes: view of MIMSY XG record and Crystal Report barcode label template with data fields used
Example of barcode labels report in Crystal
Scanning objects into containers, moving objects, and rehousing tagged objects
Mingei Transformation 2018–2019

The Basics
- 26,000 Objects
- 6 months to pack and move
- Normal staff consisted of 4 collection/registration staff, 2 part-time art handlers
  - Contracted 1 Registrar, 5 packers, 3 truck drivers
- 5 different off-site storage locations

The Goals
- Don’t break or lose anything (aka track objects)
- Get minimal condition info/images
- Treat the move as a pseudo inventory project
General Object view in EmbARK
General view of the Collections Move Base - used to track object location, condition, and container numbers. Additional Tables track containers, pallets, and storage locations.
Example of relational Tables within the Base
Packing Team at work
Using barcodes to assign containers to pallets for shipping and subsequently assigning locations to containers once they arrived at the storage facility.
Offsite Check In table to record new locations in storage.
Container Table with Block view of Inventory Sheet
Barcodes placed directly on large shrink-wrapped objects, as well as on boxes and bins.
This block shows the weekly progress of packing the collection. Each color represents a different Airtable user and the number of objects the individual condition reported for packing.
In Conclusion:

**Excel:**
- Little to no cost for creation and maintenance of the database
- Helps expand understanding of collections management best practices
- System-wide integration
- Barrier to entry for creation
- Not directly integrated with CMS

**Axiell:**
- Barcodes save time
- Easy to use if already invested in Axiell systems
- Direct feedback to database minimizes error and improves efficiency
- Report software = flexibility
- Infrastructure build-out in advance necessary
- Still requires some manual checks and balances
- Formatting matters for reports

**AirTable:**
- Easy to track, manipulate data, update in real-time, and have multiple users
- Barcodes save lives
- Basic version is free and can do a lot; option to upgrade for AirTable support *non-profits get a discount!*
- More work on the backend of the project to import info back into Database
- Images difficult to import/export from AirTable
Helpful Links

www.airtable.com
www.automateexcel.com
www.axiell.com
www.barcode-labels.com
www.barcodedirect.com
www.barcodewiz.com
www.lineapro.store
From Basics to Barcodes

Caitlin Podas, Registrar
cpodas@mingei.org

Jake Sheff, Registrar
jsheff@indianamuseum.org

Marie-Page Phelps, Registrar of Collections
mphelps@noma.org

Thank you!