

Archivists' Toolkit: Search Functional Area

Se: Overview

The Archivists' Toolkit is designed to provide a modest search interface to support some very basic reading room activities such as identifying the location of materials requested by patrons, searching for known resources or surrogates, searching for topics, and searching resource component records across all of a repository's described holdings.

The AT application will support the following kinds of searches:

- Search for resources by resource ID, by title, or by creator, or by subject
- Search for resources, resource components, surrogates, and surrogate components across all a repository's holdings by title or by subject
- Search for locations

The AT is not designed to support robust searching of the database contents by end users. It is expected that the access products created by the AT—EAD finding aids, METS records, DC catalog records—will be accessed and searched independent of the AT.

The application designers have assumed that, in most cases, repository staff will use this search interface while assisting on site users. However, if the repository is comfortable providing access to this read-only interface, there is no reason why on site users should not be able to use the search interface directly. To that end, it will be possible to make the search interface the default screen on public terminals. From the search interface, a researcher will only be able to read the database contents in pre-established forms; the researcher will not be able to create or edit records or view any of the other reports possible in the data entry modules.

Se1: Search for resources by resource id, by title, or by creator term

This search function may be most important for repositories that do not make their finding aids available in an EAD finding aid database. In those situations, reference staff will be able to search the AT for a resource by resource ID, resource title, resource creator, or resource subject.

Searching by resource ID is the most exact of these searches, as it will retrieve only the record for that resource or result in the message that the resource ID is not yet used in that implementation of the Toolkit. Searching by title, creator, or

subject may result in the retrieval of a single resource record, when only one resource record matches the search query; or in a browse list of resource records, when more than one resource record matches the search query; or in the message that no resource records match the search query.

In all four cases, the operator will select the type of resource search, and the machine will then provide an appropriate query template.

The operator will then be presented with a resource record in those instances where only one resource corresponds to the search query, or with a browse list of all the resources corresponding to the search query, or with the message that there are no resources corresponding to the search query.

If presented with a browse list, the operator will then select the resource record to be viewed. When the resource record is displayed, it will include an option to display the rest of the finding aid. If that option is exercised, the entire finding aid will be displayed as a scrollable and searchable text.

If in any of the three cases, there is no resource record corresponding to the search query, the application will display the message that no such resource exists in the AT. The operator will be prompted to press any key to continue. Pressing a key will then return the operator to the initial search interface.

Se2: Search across all resources for resource, resource component, surrogate, and surrogate component titles

The second kind of search supported by the AT for reference staff and researchers is cross resource search for title in resource records, resource component records, surrogate records, and surrogate component records. In short, this is a keyword search of all the titles of all the components of all the resources that a repository has described in the Toolkit.

When selecting this search option, the reference staff is presented with a query template for entering the search term. The machine then returns either a message that there are no matches for the query or returns a browse list of all component titles that match the query. The titles will be sorted first by resource ID, and then by container number within the resource.

Each entry will consist of the resource ID, the title in the record, and the container information. Clicking on the resource ID will display the resource record, from which the reference staff or researcher will have the option to display the entire finding aid. Clicking on the component title will display the resource component record, the surrogate record, or the surrogate component record, thereby allowing the reference staff or researcher to access any notes and additional information associated with the component.

Se3: Search for resource locations

Determining the location of resources is a frequent need for reference staff. When a researcher requests archival materials, the reference attendant will be able to use the AT to determine the shelf location of the materials and direct the paging staff directly to the materials.

The search utilizes the resource ID and the location records. The reference attendant enters a resource ID, and the machine returns all the container sequences and locations for that resource. The reference attendant, or page, can then determine where a single box is located.
