ExtentCalculator

Last updated: May 15, 2025

ExtentCalculator is an online app created in R by Kelsey Poloney, hosted on the Archives' shinyapps site.

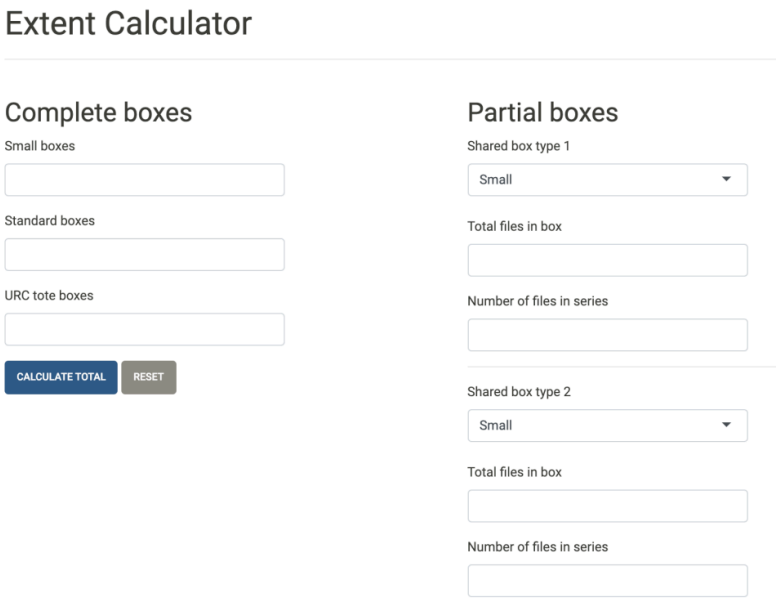
- For code documentation, see the developer's Github page.

The Calculator provides an interface for determining an extent in linear metres based on standard box sizes.

- URC tote box = 33.33 cm
- Standard box [archival container] = 12.5 cm
- Small box [small archival container] = 6.5 cm

The linear metre measure is mostly used for textual records. Non-textual records are typically stored in other box types, e.g. clamshell boxes (photographs) and cassette boxes (audiotapes) or directly to shelf (map cabinet). Their extent is more typically expressed as a count of items rather than in linear metres. This is also true of textual records stored flat in newspaper boxes or digitally on optical discs.

For more on expressing extents, see the Archives' GitHub site for data entry guidelines for the Physical description field.



Usage

Use the **Complete boxes** section to get the extent of a set of boxes belonging to the same unit (e.g. at the fonds level).

- Enter the quantities in the appropriate box fields.
- Click the **Calculate total** button.
- Extents under 1 m will be expressed in cm; otherwise extents are given in metres.

Use the **Partial boxes** section at the series level where there is no 1-to-1 relationship between the series and the box.

- One series can spread across several boxes and one box can include files from several series.

For a box shared by several series:

- Select the type of box (gets the total box size).
- Enter the total number of files in the box (gets the average file size for that box).
- Enter the number of files from the target series in the box (multiples by average file size to get the total extent).

For example, in a typical scenario series x:

- Begins in a box shared with another series (shared box 1).
- Has a number of its own complete boxes not shared with another series.
- Ends in a box shared with another series (shared box 2).
- Use **Shared box 1** and **Shared box 2** for the beginning and end boxes and **Complete boxes** for the boxes it does not share to get the total series extent.

This method assumes all files in a box are roughly the same size (= average file size). This is not always the case, but it gives a good ballpark estimate that can manually revised as needed for outliers.

Links

Online app:

- https://sfuarchives.shinyapps.io/extent_calculator/

Developer (Kelsey Poloney) GitHub site:

- https://github.com/kpoloney/extentcalc_shiny