News

9-29-2000

A number of things to bring you up to date on.

The EAD Cookbook, with templates and stylesheet is done, and available at the EAD Help Pages http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/ead/. Please READ the Cookbook. It provides explicit instructions for downloading files, explains what they do and where to put them in your XMetaL directories.

HRC and TTU have received their first batch of finding aids from Apex. A quick look at HRC's files revealed that not all of our instructions were followed. I queried Apex on this, and they are re-doing the files (Lynn, they may be redelivering TTU's as well, so don't mess with the first ones too much. We should have them today.) So when you get files back, please check them right away to ensure that you're getting what you wanted. If Apex has made a mistake, i.e, not followed your instructions, they'll fix it.

I have received web forms for a few more finding aids. Please send to Apex whatever you have ready--they're chomping at the bit.

A couple people have asked whether they can exceed their page quota. There is a possibility that we'll be able to send more pages than originally estimated, but we won't know for sure until close to the end of the project (February at the earliest), so please stick to your original estimates for now.

On to the search engine.....

-Kris

6-6-2000

By now everyone who submitted finding aids to Apex for our little test run has gotten their files back (except Rice--I'm not sure where your files are). An analysis of the returned files will be the basis for our meeting next Thursday. The meeting will take place in the Perry Castaneda Library, which is just down 21st Street from the Ransom Center. We will meet in the administrative suite, room 3.204, from 10 until 4:00.

Those of you who have visited Apex's FTP site know that the files from all the repositories are in the PUB/UTEX directory. Those of you who did not send test files are invited to go to the site (Netscape or IE will take you there) at ftp.apexinc.com and take a look at the files posted there so you'll have some notion of what we're talking about next Thursday (not to mention what you're in for when you start sending your own files). Those of you who have already downloaded your own files might go back and take a look at some of the others. It's educational!

It is very important that everyone take a good look at their files so we can formulate a list of questions for Apex and a list of things we want them to do differently. I have reviewed at least one finding aid for every repository, and will try to do more before the meeting. If there is a particular finding aid you'd like me to look at, please let me know by Friday. I suggest that you bring to the meeting printouts of the converted files and copies of the original finding aids as well.

Those of you who are traveling, please be sure to keep track of your expenses. Our financial wizard, Diane Cox, will need that information to track the cost sharing for the TIF grant. Your repositories will be paying for your travel, but Diane needs the numbers so we can keep our noses clean. Please send the information to Diane as soon as you get back to the office.

Also, I think it would be very useful if the web site had contact information for all the representatives from all the repositories, not just Mark and me. If you would send full contact info (name, title, institution, phone, fax, email, etc.) to Carolee Miles, she will add them to the TARO site.

As always, let me know if there are questions.

-Kris

5-24-2000

NEH Grant Opportunity to Fund Conversion of Finding Aids

NOTE: We are asking for a response from interested parties by **FRIDAY, JUNE 2**

BACKGROUND
We are sending this message in order to locate any of you who are interested in participating in the creation of an NEH grant that will provide funding to continue work on the Texas Archival Repositories Online (TARO) Project. Whether we actually write the grant or not depends upon the interest shown by repositories to this message about the project. The TARO project recently received funding by the Texas Telecommunication Infrastructure Fund (TIF) and we have begun to convert finding aids using the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) format.

The goal of the project is to build a repository of finding aids that can be located through a single search interface and then used to find the actual objects in the collections themselves. In the beginning (and what this message is about) we will focus on building the repository of finding aids...however, we are developing a grant to begin a project that will provide for the digitization the collection materials that can be linked to finding aids in the repository.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE
The same grant team that developed the TIF grant that was funded this past Fall is looking to expand the collaboration and incorporate at least 5-10 more repositories into the TARO project. Whether we actually write the grant or not depends upon the interest shown by repositories to this message. So, we are asking for your serious consideration of the following criteria for participation in this project:

1. Repositories should be able to devote at least 1 computer to running the Xmetal software (software used for editing XML and SGML files).
2. Should be willing to use the finding aids guidelines developed by the TARO project.
3. Should have collections that are of national interest.
4. A letter from your repository/library/museum expressing your intent to participate.

The project will provide:

1. Centrally managed server hardware/software
2. Centrally managed Quality Assurance/Testing of finding aids after markup
3. Centrally managed search engine (being developed as part of the TARO project)

If you are interested in participating please contact grant team members no later than **Friday, June 2** :

TARO GRANT TEAM:

Mark McFarland
General Libraries
University of Texas at Austin
m.mcfarland@mail.utexas.edu
512.495.4358

or

Kris Kiesling
Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center
University of Texas at Austin
kiesling@mail.utexas.edu
512.232.4614

-Mark

4-11-2000

Aaron and company have completed their work on the cover sheet that will be attached to each finding aid. Yay! You will find it at: http://taro.lib.utexas.edu/forms/submissions.html

You can also get to it from the "collections" button on the project Web site.

The purchase order with Apex is complete, so we can begin to send finding aids to them for conversion. Each repository should submit 2-4 finding aids for the test batch. Make them fairly representative of what you will be converting through the course of the project, so if you have several formats that Apex is going to have to handle, send one of each.

You must fill out a Web form for *each* finding aid. After you have filled it out, print off a copy and attach it to the finding aid.

The finding aids can be sent to:
  Tom O'Brien
  Apex Data Services, Inc.
  120 Presidents Plaza
  198 Van Buren Street
  Herndon, VA 20170-5338

When you hit the "submit form" button, I get an email that I will print out, sign, and send to Diane so you can be reimbursed for the photocopying. I will endeavor to keep track of how many pages each repository sends, but please also do this yourselves so we don't go over budget. If you don't remember how many pages you said you wanted to convert, let me know.

When Apex has completed the conversion, you (whoever's email is provided on the form) will get a message giving you an ftp address from which you can download the file.

-Kris

3-10-2000

After a month of wrangling with UT's Purchasing Office, we have bids on all components of the project, all of which are about to be awarded.

Apex Data Services will be doing the conversion (we knew that two months ago, didn't we?). The purchase order should go out next week, so if you haven't made copies of a few finding aids to send as part of our initial test, please get them together soon. We'll get the web form cover sheet ready.

We got a major deal on XMetaL direct from SoftQuad, so it looks like we may (I emphasize may) be able to fulfill all of the revised requests for hardware and software. We don't have the final figures on the hardware just

yet. Mark should be able to tell us next week.

Nice to be able to pass along some good news for a change!

<div align="right">**-Kris**</div>

2-22-2000

We have received 1 bid on the workstations...as soon as we get 2 more we'll evaluate the bids then make the purchase. Our purchasing office has also informed us that we will need to receive all the computers here at UT Austin to that we can verify that all the equipment was received. We will then ship the hardware to each campus. I apologize for het another delay...but, just wanted you to be aware of how the process will work. It shouldn't be much longer on the hardware.

The software order has not been bid yet...we have done all necessary paperwork on our end and are awaiting information from purchasing as to the status. I am assuming, but have not yet confirmed, that the software will also be received here first then shipped out.

Just wanted to let you know where we are in the process.