

CDSS Archiving Toolkit

Chapter 4 Resources

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Chapter 4.1 Video Transcript

Intro:

ORGANIZING YOUR COLLECTION

Welcome to Chapter Four: Organizing Your Collection.

In the last couple chapters, we talked about the various kinds of donations you might receive for your collection. Now, we're ready to talk about how to organize your collection, so this is where you'll want to pull in that person on your team who just loves organizing things and thinks it's really fun to create order out of chaos.



The primary goal here is to make things in your collection easy to find – easy for you, and easy for anyone using your collection. And there are tried and true ways to do that, used in library, archives, and museum work, so we'll be drawing on guidelines and principles from those professions. We won't go into as much depth as professionals would, but we'll provide enough for you to create a solid organizational structure for your materials. That said, if you have someone on your team who has that kind of knowledge and experience, they will be a great asset here!

There are two videos for you to work through: the first video—**What You Need to Know: Organizing Your Collection**—will provide you with some important background information on ways to organize your collection. We recommend you watch this video first to inform your viewing of the second video.

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We'll also be starting to enter information in Tab 3 of the spreadsheet. Tab 3, used in this chapter and the next one, is entitled "Items in Your Collection". It's where you'll store all the searchable information about the material in your collection. The second video—**Using the Spreadsheet**—will walk you through the information that you'll be adding to Tab 3.

So, let's begin!

Chapter 4.2 Video Transcript

What You Need to Know:

ORGANIZING YOUR COLLECTION

In Chapter 2, we talked about doing a first pass and a second pass through your collection. The first pass was for the purpose of familiarizing yourself with what was in your collection or what was being donated, making sure anything physical was in decent condition, and ensuring that you could open and read all digital files. The second pass, that you'll do in this chapter, is to get the material into its permanent archival storage and get it organized and labeled. There are three parts we'll talk about: 1) **sorting through your material** to determine what categories of material you have, and 2) **labeling the material** in your collection. Your main goal with these two parts is to make things as easy to find in your collection as possible. 3) The third part is **getting material into its permanent storage**, and your main goal here is to preserve it carefully so it can last far into the future.

Sorting Through Your Material

Our first recommendation is to create a number of categories that define what the obvious groups of material are in your collection. For example, imagine you've taken everything in your collection and dumped it out onto the floor in front of you. As you scan through everything that's there, where do your eyes go? What jumps out at you?

Maybe you notice different **types** of formats of material. For instance, do you have a big collection of photos? or video? Do you have an amazing collection of kits or costumes that have been worn over the years? Do you have a small library of documents including songs, lyrics and sheet music? Maybe what makes most sense to you is to organize it into different types of material that you have.

Or do you look at the pile on your floor and see material for songs, material for dances, administrative records of your organization and publicity material? Maybe what makes most sense to you is organizing it based on the **content** of your collection.

It doesn't matter which of those directions you take; the key thing is to ask yourself the questions: "What would make it easy for people to find things in this collection? What will people want to look for?" If you know that people will be really interested in searching through photos, then you might want "Photos" or "Images" to be one of your categories. Or if you know that people might want to find examples of songs from a certain date, then maybe "Songs" is one of your categories, perhaps organized chronologically. The most important thing

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to keep in mind in choosing your categories is how to make finding things as clear as possible, given what you anticipate people will want to find in your collection.

As you choose your categories, here are five key guidelines we'd like to offer:

1. The **categories need to be clear** to you and to any of the users of your collection. For the most part, anyone looking at the title of your categories should have a pretty clear sense of what they are just from the title.
2. Which leads to another key rule: **“Miscellaneous” is not allowed**. It's too ambiguous and doesn't help anyone who is using your collection.
3. Any item in your collection **should clearly fit in one of the categories** and not in any of the others. (We'll show some examples at the end of this video.)
4. The categories **should encompass everything in your collection**; nothing should be “left out” at the end.
5. Typically, it's **considered best practice to have around 3-6 categories** at most. Fewer than three can result in categories that are too broad, and more than six results in categories that start to become too narrow. There's a “just-right” balance you want to try to strike that balances the time it will take to organize all the material and the ease of finding things once they're organized.

For organizations that may not have very much material, you might consider just setting up three categories, such as:

- Visual Images (this can include photos, slides, video, artwork, etc.)
- Documents
- Ephemera (physical "stuff" such as costumes, kits, buttons, souvenirs, etc.)

For organizations that may have more material, or that have one particular type of thing, such as photos and video, that is much larger than other parts of your collection, you might consider breaking it down into a little more detail, such as:

- Photos and Slides
- Video
- Documents
- Ephemera

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If your collection has a lot of physical documents in it, you might want to specify some document categories that provide more guidance about what they're about, such as:

- Correspondence
- Administrative minutes and notes
- Publicity material

and then keep broader categories for your other types of material:

- Ephemera
- Visual Images

The choices are up to you; you can establish whatever categories make the most sense for your collection—as long as they are clear to any users of your collection.

Notice that the category titles could indicate the **FORMAT** of the items in it, such as Ephemera or Visual Images. Category titles could also indicate the **CONTENT** of the category, such as Correspondence, Administrative Minutes and Notes, or Publicity Materials. You can use both **FORMAT** and **CONTENT** categories in the same collection—as long as it's clear where any particular item in the collection belongs.

We've created several different examples to give you an opportunity to practice describing categories, then comparing your thinking to what we would do. Those examples are included at the end of this video; if that sounds useful to you, please take a look. If not, you're welcome to skip that part at the end of this video.

Labeling Your Materials

The kinds of labeling you decide to use depend once again on your particular situation and your personal preferences. We'd like to offer suggestions for two different types of labels.

The first type of label is a **keyword**. We strongly recommend that you do *some* sort of keyword labeling because it's such a ubiquitous way to search for material. We'll get into keyword labeling in the next chapter.

The second type of label is an **identification number**. We'll talk about it here, because—if you decide to do this—then labeling items with an identification number is something you'll want to do now as you're getting your material into permanent storage.

Assigning an ID number is not necessarily something that everyone would choose, so why might you decide to do this? There are certainly trade-offs. The advantage to doing this is that it makes items in your collection much easier to find. For example, if someone is looking for a

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particular set of photos from 1980 or a special one-of-a-kind document, then being able to pinpoint precisely which ones they need can be made much easier with an ID number, as opposed to having to comb through many digital or physical photos or having to search through a folder of many documents. The downside is that it can take a lot of time to do the necessary labeling. You can reduce the amount of time by choosing to only label individual items that you think will be in demand in your collection and then grouping other material into folders and labeling each folder rather than each item. But again, it's a trade-off between the time you have to put into this and how easily you want people to be able to access your material; you'll have to decide what works for your situation.

What kind of identification number should you put on an item? You can make up any kind of numbering system you want for your items; the numbers do not have to be complicated or long. You could, in fact, just number them 1 - 999. In our experience, we chose identification numbers that had the year of creation (if we knew it), followed by a sequential number. If we didn't know the creation year, we just used xxxx-.

If you think you might like to use identification numbers with archival material, we've added some additional information at the end of this video that we recommend you watch. If you're not going to use ID numbers, you can skip that part.

Getting Your Materials into Permanent Storage for Preservation

At this point in time, your material is in its temporary storage, so last of all, we'll talk about getting it into its *permanent storage*. We'll describe the best possible option, as well as some good-enough options if "best" isn't manageable.

What do you do with paper documents?

Paper can yellow and get brittle over time, so getting any paper documents into special archival, acid-free folders is best. There are several great sources for archival supplies:

- Gaylord Archival
- University Products
- Hollinger Metal-Edge

We've provided the URLs to each of these companies in the Resources PDF for this chapter. However, as wonderful as they are, archival materials are not cheap. If you cannot afford acid-free folders, then regular file folders are a "pretty-good" option. You can also choose to buy a small supply of acid-free folders for your highest priority materials and then use regular file folders for the rest of your material.

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Keep in mind that newspaper will cause other paper it touches to yellow over time, so now is the time to decide—if you haven't already—about whether you're going to keep physical copies of clippings or scan them and just keep the digital copy. If you keep the originals, separate them out and relegate them to their own folders.

What do you do with physical photos or slides?

Best options include getting plastic sleeves for any photos that you feel need individual attention, such as a particularly fragile one or one that you deem to be especially valuable. Slides can be stored as a best option in slide pages with individual pockets for each slide. Again, these supplies can be pricey, so maybe consider buying a few for those particularly special photos, or ones that may be aging and need some special preservation. If you're shopping with archival supply companies, look for polypropylene or polyester photo sleeves.

A “pretty-good” option is to put photos into a folder, and if possible, place a piece of acid-free tissue paper between them. Make sure your photos have no residual adhesive material on them that would cause them to stick to other photos in the folder. A “pretty-good” option for slides is to store them in a small plastic slide case or box.

What do you do with physical video or audio cassettes?

Best options include storing each video or audio cassette in its own individual case to protect from dust, damage, and humidity. There are special acid-free archival boxes that fit video cassettes, and special boxes sized to fit two rows of audio cassettes. For a pretty-good option, use conventional plastic cases.

Keep in mind that the tape typically used for video- and audio-cassette tapes is not very stable over the long term and will start to degrade over time. You may want to consider digitizing any video or audio cassettes that you receive or seek out help from people who do this professionally. Sometimes a tape will break in the process of digitizing it, so you may only have one chance to capture it; for particularly valuable tape, working with folks who are prepared for this can help ensure that you're successful.

What do you do with ephemera, a fancy archival word for physical objects?

Best options include finding an archival box that is sized appropriately for whatever you're trying to store. Having enough room to fit the item or items in the box but without a lot of extra remaining space is ideal. If you do have extra space around the item or items, then fill it in with archival tissue paper.

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A pretty-good option is to find a solid box with sides and a lid that will not collapse easily, and to wrap the items in tissue paper to protect them from dust or damage. Most of all, you don't want the items to be able to move around inside the box, so add some packing material if you need to, to keep it from sliding around.

Lastly, what do you do with digital files?

The best option for any of your digital files—interviews, photos, video, documents or other scans—is to choose the appropriate file format for long-term preservation. You can review the chart of these file formats in the Resources PDF for this chapter. Then establish your file-naming practices and be consistent! As we've said before, make sure you have back-ups stored ideally in three different locations.

A pretty-good option is to have files saved in whatever format is readable for you. You can refer to the chart of file formats to see other acceptable formats that may not be the best but are quite usable.

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Before moving on, if you'd like to try some guided practice examples for creating organizational categories, those come next. Or you can get some important tips for labeling with identification numbers. If neither of those are of interest to you, you can move on to the final Chapter 4 video, *Using the Spreadsheet*, to start to enter information about your materials into Tab 3.

Examples for Practice

Example #1: A Morris team has a collection of photographs and short video clips, both physical and digital, some annual meeting notes from over the years, some random bits of team kit and some documents, again both physical and digital, either providing information about dance-out events or address lists of who was on the team. What categories do they need?

- Since the team has both photographs *and* video, it might make sense to group those together under the broader heading of “Images” or “Still Images and Moving Images”.
- The random bits of team kit are clearly a separate category, so they could be put in a category of “Ephemera” or “Clothing”. Ephemera might be preferable to “clothing,” since it is more general and would allow you to include any other physical items that might get donated, such as name buttons, special pins, or other souvenirs of dance-out events.

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- Both the annual meeting notes and other documents are all “documents,” so you could use that as a category. Should you separate them into two categories of “annual meeting notes” and “other documents?” That’s up to you. If there is a lot of material in each group, then it might make sense to divide them up. If not, they are probably best left as one category.

Upshot: This collection could have three categories—Images / Ephemera / Documents—or it could have four categories—Images / Ephemera / Administrative Materials / Documents, with the understanding that anything administrative goes there, even if it is a document. It’s OK to define a particular category in the way you want, as this example does with documents—any document that is not administrative materials—as long as you have information for your users that lets them know that’s how you’ve defined it. We’ll talk about how to do that in the next chapter on making your collection available.

Example #2: A dance organization has collected interviews of older members of its community, and is starting to collect interviews with younger, newer members. People have donated photographs, photo albums, and digital photos. Someone else donated their slide collection from a special event. People have donated flyers for various events, as well as programs for various dances showing what dances were done and who the music staff were. Other people have donated posters advertising some of the events. What categories do they need?

If you’d like to practice figuring out the categories for this collection, you can pause the video here and decide what categories you would come up with. Then continue to hear what we came up with, and why.

- The interviews appear to be a central part of this collection and an easy category to define. So, one category is “Interviews”.
- The photos, photo albums, and slides are all types of images and again, an easy category to define. So, another category is “Images” or “Still Images”, to indicate that there is no video. Your choice.
- The flyers, posters, and programs are all documents so you could choose to use “Documents” as a category, grouping them as similar formats. Alternatively, you could look at the content and say to yourself: “The flyers and posters are both promotional materials, but the programs are not.”

So, you might decide to create a category of “Promotional Material” and another category of “Documents” or simply “Programs”. Going with the more general “Documents” would allow you to group other documents that come into the collection in the same category, so might be

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preferable over “Programs.” However, if you have a large collection of programs and know that they would be of particular interest to users of your collection, you could choose to go with “Programs”.

Upshot: This collection could have any of one of the following combinations: Interviews / Images / Documents–or–Interviews / Images / Promotional Material / Documents–OR–Interviews / Images / Promotional Material / Programs.

Example #3: In creating the Marlboro Morris Ale Collection, we had a wide variety of material in our collection. We had both physical and digital photos, we had a large physical slide collection, and we had a bunch of videos again both physical and digital. We had a large collection of interviews, a large collection of administrative records from the organizing committee including a bunch of information about who attended and what years. We had posters, flyers, program books, magazine articles, newspaper clippings. We had a large collection of Ale t-shirts, name buttons for many of the years including some souvenirs from visiting teams. We have essays that people wrote, letters, correspondence, speeches and a bunch of material not necessarily about the Ale but about the history of the founding team. Whew! It was a lot!

If you’d like to practice figuring out the categories for this collection, you can pause the video here and decide what categories you would come up with. Then continue to hear what we came up with, and why.

Here’s what we did:

- The interviews were, for us, a central part of this collection and an easy category to define. So, one category was “Interviews”.
- We had a wide variety of written material—essays, letters, speeches, and written reminiscences. We decided to lump all those together in a category that we called “Correspondence and Writings”.
- Many of the administrative records were also handwritten in the early years, later shifted to digital formats. Because there was a lot of it, and it had a very coherent purpose—it was all about the organization of the event—we made a category called “Administrative Records” that included anything about the organization of the event, first by the team that founded it, and later by the organizing committee that took over from the team.
- We lumped all the photos, video and slides—both physical and digital—into “Images”.

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- We decided to gather together everything that had been printed for promotional use or had been published in some other format and called it “Printed Materials and Clippings”. This included posters, flyers, newspaper clippings, press releases, and published magazine articles.
- All of the t-shirts, name buttons, and souvenirs went into our “Ephemera” category.
- What was left over? The material about the history of the founding team. It wasn’t really about the Marlboro Ale, but the Ale *was* founded by the team, so it seemed too important to leave out of the collection. So, we chose to make an additional category simply called “Related Material”. We wanted a separate category to indicate that this material was NOT about the Ale itself but would be of interest to anyone looking at this collection, and we listed it as the last category because it was more peripheral to the collection.

So, in the end, we had seven categories, shown here.

Again, notice that we had some categories that were about content, like “Interviews”, Administrative Records or Related Material, while others were about format, like Images or Printed Materials and Clippings. That’s not a problem as long as you have a clear and obvious category for any item in your collection.

INFO ABOUT USING ID NUMBERS

If you decide to label your items with an identification number, here are some guidelines on how you can do that:

For Physical Items

Because you are trying to preserve an item in its original state:

- Don’t use ink; use pencil. Ink can bleed and smear on valuable original materials.
- If you’re writing right on the item, such as on a document or photo, pick an unobtrusive place to write the number. Some people choose to write the number on the back and in a bottom or top corner.
- If you can’t easily write on the item in pencil, such as on a piece of clothing, or artwork, or a name button, then write the ID number on a tag and attach the tag to the item.
- If items are in a folder, you can write the number somewhere on the folder in an easy-to-find location.
- Whatever you choose, be consistent so that any users of your collection will understand where to look.

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For Digital Items:

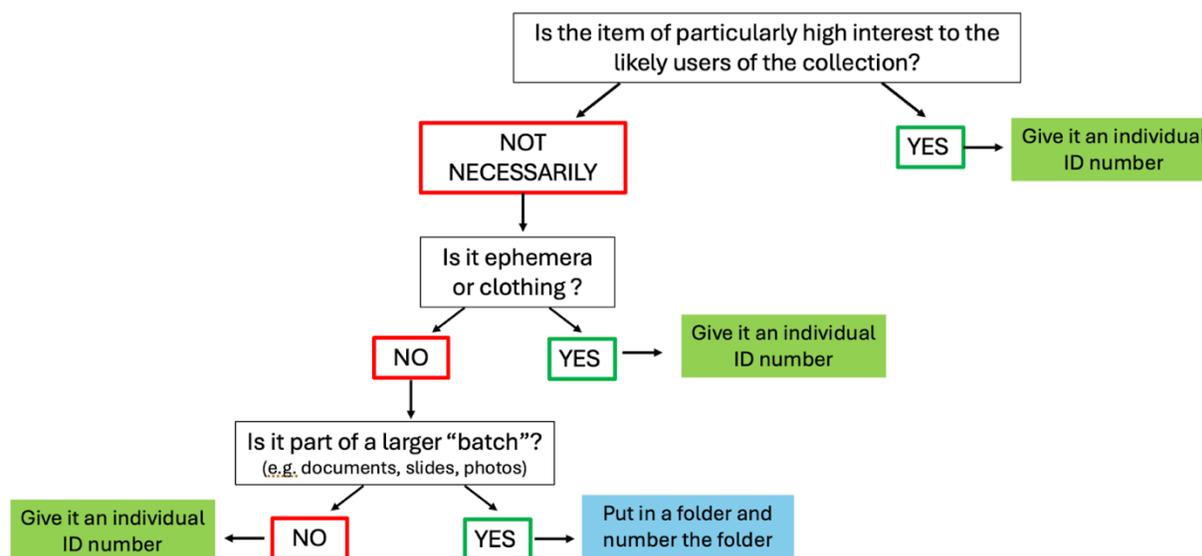
For digital items, the ID number belongs in the file name, so let's talk for a moment about file-naming guidelines. You can create whatever file-naming structure makes the most sense for your items, but consider the following two recommendations:

- Include the ID number in the file name AND...
- The file name does not have to fully describe the item; you can do that in a title for the item if you put it on a website.

Here are several examples from our collection with the item title we gave it in the left-hand column and the corresponding file name in the right-hand column. This is just to show that the file name does not need to match the item title and can be simpler -- which is sometimes easier when you're dealing with a lot of files.

What should get a number? Your decision here will have implications for how you store your materials. For example, let's say you have a pile of photos from your 1993 dance season. Do you need to give *every single photo* a number? The answer is....it depends! The grain size you choose to label in your collection is entirely up to you and is again about striking a balance between how much time you and your team have to create this list, and how easily you want users to be able to find things. It will be a compromise on both sides.

In our experience, the decision tree we used to decide what to label went something like this:



- First, we looked at the question "Is the item of particularly high interest to the likely users of the collection?" If we thought Yes, then we gave it an individual ID number. If we thought No, Not Necessarily, then we asked:

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- "Is it ephemera or clothing?" If it was, then we gave it an individual ID number. If not, we next thought about:
- "Is it part of a larger batch of something, like documents or slides or photos?" If Yes, then we thought "Put it in a folder and we'll give the folder a number". If not, then we gave it an individual ID number.

So, the choice is totally up to you, based on how much time you have to organize your collection, what materials you have for storing your items, and how popular you think different items in your collection will be.

Chapter 4.3 Video Transcript USING THE SPREADSHEET

In this chapter, we'll start entering information into Tab 3 of your spreadsheet. This tab is where the motherlode of information about your collection will live! There's a lot to talk about here, so we'll be paying attention to Columns A - G in this chapter, and we'll address the remaining columns in the next chapter. (If you haven't already watched the video "Organizing Your Collection," please watch that first before watching this video.)

Tab 3 is somewhat different in purpose from Tabs 1 and 2. Both of those tabs basically gave you a checklist of steps to follow for setting up your system for receiving donations, talking to potential donors of material, and then conducting and storing your interviews. Tab 3 is NOT a checklist of steps; instead, it's a place to gather all the searchable data that you'll provide for each of the items in your collection. We'll begin Tab 3 in this chapter and complete it in the next chapter as we talk through the various kinds of searchable information you might want to consider having. Then you can decide how much of this information you want to collect for your purposes.

And we want to emphasize that you can scale this up or scale it back, depending on your situation. We're giving you an example of a spreadsheet gathering the information that we think is important, but you may or may not need this much information. Within this spreadsheet, we've marked some of the columns as Essential—information that we think should be included, regardless of your situation; other columns as Recommended—information you might want to include to make searching easier in your collection; and other columns as Optional. The optional columns are ones that worked for us and our process but may or may not fit with how you put your collection together, so we just included them for illustration purposes.

So, let's take a look at Tab 3. We'll go through Columns A - G with several different examples: Example 1 is a photo of two Morris dancers, and for those who might know Ha'Penny Morris in Boston from 1989, you might recognize those two dancers! Because we received this photo in a digital format, even though it was probably a physical photo originally, we'll record it as a digital photo in our collection. Example 2 is a digitized version of a physical photo, showing Morris dancers dancing on the field around a maypole in Marlboro, VT. Example 3 is the 2004 poster for the Marlboro Morris Ale in Marlboro, VT. Example 4 is an interview with Natty Smith, a member of the Marlboro Morris Ale organizing committee for many years as well as a dancer and musician. And Example 5 is a Northwest Clog team's notebook of the dances they perform, an item that was not digitized.

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In **Column A**, you'll enter the name of the donor of the item you're entering. Eventually, you will not need to associate the item with the person who donated it, but for now, we're tracking that information because you may have questions for that person as you enter information further in this tab.

In **Column B**, also listed as "recommended," note whether the item is coming to you in a digital format, or whether it's something physical. You want to note whether it's digital or physical at the time you received it, so even if you're planning to digitize a physical item later, list it here as "Physical". Similarly, if you've received a digital photo that you know was originally a physical photograph, list it as digital if that's how you received it.

Why do we care about noting this? Because it will be helpful as you're looking for items in your collection to know whether you're looking for a physical item or whether you're looking for a digital file.

Column C is optional; it's only relevant if you're choosing to assign ID numbers to items or folders. List the ID number that you are assigning to that item.

If you do create ID numbers, we strongly suggest that you keep a running list in Tab 4. In rare circumstances, you may want to change or drop an ID number. For instance, if you decide not to keep an item in your collection, then you could retire its number or make its number available for a future donated item. This list gives you a place to keep track of which numbers you've used, changed, or dropped.

We then decided that we wanted to track an additional step and that's what's shown in **Column D**. In Column C, we listed the number that was assigned to each item, but we then wanted to make sure we had labeled the item with the ID number. For digital files, we included the ID number in the file name, but for physical items, we needed to write the number in some unobtrusive place, or on a tag that we attached to the item. This column helped us keep track of whether we had done that yet.

In **Column E**, you're now going to create an Item Title so that's an essential piece of information. This can be fairly descriptive, because this is what you and the users of your collection will most often refer to. First, we have Sukey Krause and Deb Small dancing with Ha'Penny Morris. The next photo is one that we received physically but then digitized and we're calling it "Massed dancing around the maypole". We then had an Ale poster, and our very original title is "Ale Poster 2004". We've got the interview with Natty Smith. And the last one is "Team notebook of dance directions". So, those are the item titles.

In **Columns F and G**, both of which we recommend, we'll provide two different organizational labels that are each useful in different ways.

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In **Column F**, you'll keep track of what the format of the item is. We labeled this as recommended because we found that being able to sort our collection by the type of item was something we needed to do often. We've created a drop-down list of what we anticipate will be the most common kinds of donations to a collection, but you are free to create your own drop-down menu here if you choose. We do recommend using a drop-down menu here for the sake of consistency in labeling things in your collection. So, this first photo belongs in our Photo-Born Digital format because we received it as a digital photo, even though it was probably originally a physical photo. The next one we received as a physical photo. The Ale poster is a Poster or Flyer. And then this is an Interview. And then the team notebook of dance directions consists of a bunch of Physical Documents.

In this chapter, you've also established what categories you're going to use to organize your items into. And **Column G** is where you'll keep track of those categories. For this example, I used the categories we chose for our Marlboro Morris Ale collection; however, you would use your own list of categories here that you've chosen for your collection. Our first photo of Sukey and Deb would belong in our Images category as would our next photo. The Ale poster belongs in Printed Materials. The interview belongs in its own category, and we decided the Team Notebook of Dance Directions belonged in our Related Materials category, since it was not specifically about the Ale.

So, here we have Columns A - G completed!

So, this begins the process of creating an inventory of your collection entered in this tab. In the next chapter, "Making Materials Searchable," we'll look at what you need to know about creating the searchable information for each numbered item in your collection, and you'll complete the remaining columns in this tab. You're now ready to start with the introduction to Chapter 5.

Chapter 4.2 Summary

What You Need to Know:

ORGANIZING YOUR COLLECTION

You'll do two passes through your collection:

- Pass #1 happened in Chapter 2 and was for the purpose of familiarizing yourself with what was in your collection or what was being donated, making sure anything physical was in decent condition, and ensuring that you could open and read all digital files.
- Pass #2 happens in this chapter and is to get the material into its permanent archival storage and get it organized and labeled.

Sorting Through Your Material

Recommendation: Create a number of categories that define what the obvious groups of material are in your collection.

You can organize by format, by content or by both; just be clear where something belongs. Think about: "What would make it easy for people to find things in this collection? What will people want to look for?"

Five Key Guidelines for Choosing Categories

1. The **categories need to be clear** to you and to any of the users of your collection. For the most part, anyone looking at the title of your categories should have a pretty clear sense of what they are just from the title.
2. **"Miscellaneous" is not allowed.** It's too ambiguous and doesn't help anyone who is using your collection.
3. Any item in your collection **should clearly fit in one of the categories** and not in any of the others.
4. The categories **should encompass everything in your collection**; nothing should be "left out" at the end.
5. Typically, it's **considered best practice to have around 3-6 categories** at most. Fewer than three can result in categories that are too broad, and more than six results in categories that start to become too narrow.

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Labeling Your Materials

We'd like to offer suggestions for two different types of labels.

Keywords: We strongly recommend that you do *some* sort of keyword labeling. More on that in the next chapter.

ID Numbers: If you decide to do this—then labeling items with an identification number is something you'll want to do now as you're getting your material into permanent storage. Why might you decide to do this?

- The advantage to doing this is that it makes items in your collection much easier to find.
- The downside is that it can take a lot of time to do the necessary labeling. You can reduce the amount of time by choosing to only label individual items that you think will be in demand in your collection and then grouping other material into folders and labeling each folder rather than each item.

What kind of identification number should you put on an item? You can make up any kind of numbering system you want for your items; the numbers do not have to be complicated or long.

Getting Your Materials into Permanent Storage for Preservation

Paper Documents	
Best Choice	Pretty Good Choice
Get paper documents into special archival, acid-free folders. Sources of good archival supplies include: Gaylord Archival www.gaylord.com University Products www.universityproducts.com Hollinger Metal-Edge www.hollingermetaledge.com Move newspaper into its own folder or Scan it and just keep digital versions	Regular files folders or A combination of a few archival folders along with regular folders

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Physical Photos or Slides	
Best Choice	Pretty Good Choice
Photos—plastic sleeves (can be purchased in different sizes) Slides—slide pages with individual pockets for each slide Look for polypropylene or polyester.	Photos—group them in a folder; make sure there's no adhesive; place acid-free or other tissue paper in between photos Slides—a plastic slide case or box with lid

Physical Video or Audio Cassettes	
Best Choice	Pretty Good Choice
Stored in individual cases Place individual cases inside archival boxes sized for specific type of cassette	Use conventional plastic cases

Ephemera	
Best Choice	Pretty Good Choice
Archival box sized appropriately for whatever you're storing Fill extra space with archival tissue paper	Sturdy box with a lid Wrap item(s) in tissue paper Minimize sliding around inside the box by adding packing material as needed

Digital Files

See the chart of preferred archival formats in the Resources document.

Examples for Practice

Example #1: A Morris team has a collection of photographs and short video clips, both physical and digital, some annual meeting notes from over the years, some random bits of team kit and some documents, again both physical and digital, either providing information about dance-out events or address lists of who was on the team. What categories do they need?

- This collection could have three categories: Images / Ephemera / Documents—or

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- it could have four categories—Images / Ephemera / Administrative Materials / Documents, with the understanding that anything administrative goes there, even if it is a document.

Example #2: A dance organization has collected interviews of older members of its community, and is starting to collect interviews with younger, newer members. People have donated photographs, photo albums, and digital photos. Someone else donated their slide collection from a special event. People have donated flyers for various events, as well as programs for various dances showing what dances were done and who the music staff were. Other people have donated posters advertising some of the events. What categories do they need?

This collection could have any of one of the following combinations:

- Interviews / Images / Documents—or
- Interviews / Images / Promotional Material / Documents—or
- Interviews / Images / Promotional Material / Programs.

Example #3: In creating the Marlboro Morris Ale Collection, we had a wide variety of material in our collection. We had both physical and digital photos, we had a large physical slide collection, and we had a bunch of videos again both physical and digital. We had a large collection of interviews, a large collection of administrative records from the organizing committee including a bunch of information about who attended and what years. We had posters, flyers, program books, magazine articles, newspaper clippings. We had a large collection of Ale t-shirts, name buttons for many of the years including some souvenirs from visiting teams. We have essays that people wrote, letters, correspondence, speeches and a bunch of material not necessarily about the Ale but about the history of the founding team. Whew! It was a lot!

In the end, we had seven categories:

- Correspondence and Writings
- Interviews
- Administrative Records
- Images
- Printed Materials & Clippings
- Ephemera
- Related Materials

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INFO ABOUT USING ID NUMBERS

Guidelines For Physical Items

Because you are trying to preserve an item in its original state:

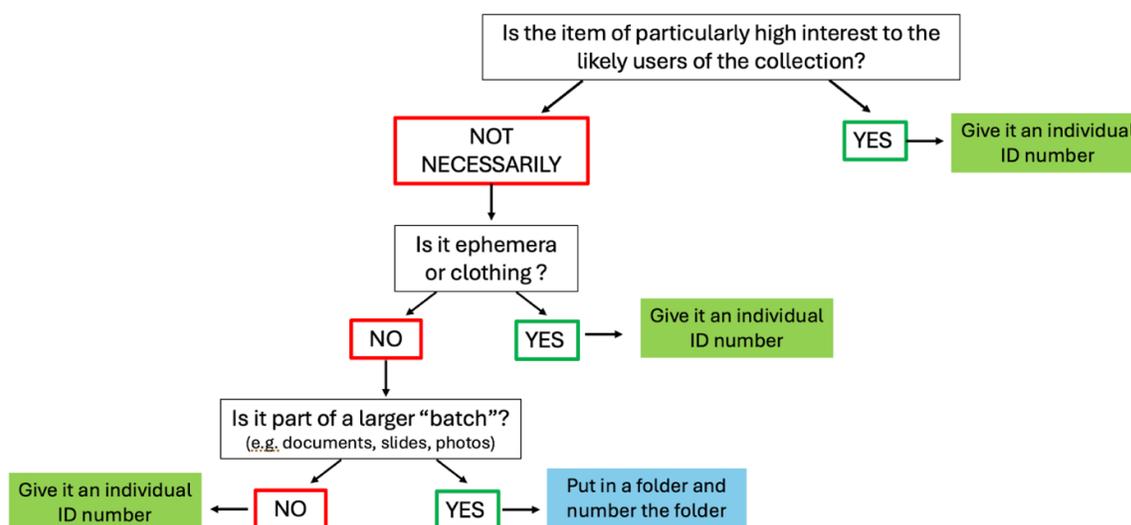
- Don't use ink; use pencil. Ink can bleed and smear on valuable original materials.
- If you're writing right on the item, such as on a document or photo, pick an unobtrusive place to write the number. Some people choose to write the number on the back and in a bottom or top corner.
- If you can't easily write on the item in pencil, such as on a piece of clothing, or artwork, or a name button, then write the ID number on a tag and attach the tag to the item.
- If items are in a folder, you can write the number somewhere on the folder in an easy-to-find location.
- Whatever you choose, be consistent so that any users of your collection will understand where to look.

Guidelines For Digital Items

- Include the ID number in the file name AND...
- The file name does not have to fully describe the item; you can do that in a title for the item if you put it on a website.

What should get a number? The grain size you choose to label in your collection is entirely up to you and is again about striking a balance between how much time you and your team have to create this list, and how easily you want users to be able to find things. It will be a compromise on both sides.

In our experience, the decision tree we used to decide what to label went something like this:



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- First, we looked at the question "Is the item of particularly high interest to the likely users of the collection?" If we thought Yes, then we gave it an individual ID number. If we thought No, Not Necessarily, then we asked:
- "Is it ephemera or clothing?" If it was, then we gave it an individual ID number. If not, we next thought about:
- "Is it part of a larger batch of something, like documents or slides or photos?" If Yes, then we thought "Put it in a folder and we'll give the folder a number." If not, then we gave it an individual ID number.

So, the choice is totally up to you, based on how much time you have to organize your collection, what materials you have for storing your items, and how popular you think different items in your collection will be.