



**ASSOCIATION *for***  
**MANITOBA ARCHIVES**

**ASSOCIATION**  
**MANITOBAINE *des* ARCHIVES**

## MANITOBA ARCHIVAL INFORMATION NETWORK

Policy Guide

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to ensure the data entered in MAIN is both consistent and standards-based to make using MAIN easier and more efficient for end-users, both for those creating content, and for those maintaining it.

## 2. Data Consistency

MAIN is a multi-repository database. Different descriptions are formatted in different ways based on a given repository's internal standards and policies. However, those using MAIN search and browse across multiple repositories and a lack of consistency can make this challenging. In addition, a lack of consistency can make upkeep almost impossible, adversely affecting the AMA's ability to provide content creators with the support they need. This section provides information on how some fields can be populated consistently to facilitate better research across MAIN. For more information on populating fields in MAIN, see the [MAIN User Guide](#).

### 2.1. Authority Records

An authority record consists of information about a person, family or corporate body. Authority records should not be created for other entities such as places. Winnipeg, for example, is a place, and therefore is not an authority record. However, the City of Winnipeg, in its capacity as a municipal government (i.e., a corporate body), should have an authority record.

#### 2.1.1. Duplicated Authorities

Records belonging to a single creator may exist across numerous repositories in Manitoba. Consequently, when creating a new authority record, repositories should search for the authority in MAIN prior to creating one, to ensure that the authority record they wish to create does not already exist. If an existing authority is found, the repository should contact the **Maintaining repository** referenced in the authority record and request permission to link to their records to the same authority and, if needed, edit the existing authority record to include more information.

#### 2.1.2. Authorized form of name

In compliance with Library of Congress standards for authorities, if a **Type of entity** is "Person", the **Authorized form of name** field should be filled out as:

- [Surname], [Given name], YYYY-YYYY
- Example: Smith, Jane, 1900-1999

This is done to ensure that there are not multiple authority records for the same entity (e.g. "Jane Smith" vs. "Smith, Jane" vs. "J. Smith", etc.). A user searching for Jane Smith would have to search for all variations to find the records they needed. By standardizing authority record names, it also makes it easier for those creating content in MAIN to determine if an authority record already exists (see [section 2.1.1.](#)) so that duplicate authorities are not created.

##### 2.1.2.1. Field Note

Only include the name of the authority. Do not include added information such as dates of existence in the authorized form of name unless it is used to distinguish authorities with the

same name from each other. For example, to distinguish Louis Riel (father) from Louis Riel (son), the following authorities can be used:

- o Riel, Louis, 1817-1864
- o Riel, Louis, 1844-1885

### 2.1.3. Dates of existence

If an authority is still living or in existence, the date range should be left open ended, for example:

- 1900 -

**And not:**

- 1900 - present
- 1900 - today

If you are unsure of how to format **Dates of Existence**, follow the standards provided in [ISAAR](#).

## 2.2. Archival Descriptions

### 2.2.1. Title Proper

For top-level descriptions (i.e., fonds or collection) or sous-fonds, the title should always include the level of description. Make sure your level of description for all fonds, collection or sous-fonds name is formatted as follows:

- Smith Family fonds
  - o Jane Smith sous-fonds

Identifying the level of description in the title field for lower levels of description (series, subseries, file and item) is not necessary.

### 2.2.2. Access Points

The purpose of an access point is to bring together archival records relevant to a common subject or topic. Used appropriately, access points can help make content more discoverable and useful for researchers. Used improperly or too liberally, they can bury content and make it more difficult to use, as researchers will be bombarded with access points that lead to records that are only vaguely related to their research interests, causing them to miss those records that are most relevant. It is therefore necessary to use access points strategically. It is also important to know that access points are not the only ways researchers can discover records. MAIN's search function parses through description fields such as **Scope and content** and **General note(s)**. If a subject, person, or place is only vaguely related to your records, it is probably better to rely on archival description fields rather than access points. See [section 6](#) to more effectively improve the discoverability of your records.

#### 2.2.2.1. Place access points

Place names should be specific (e.g., "Portage Avenue (Winnipeg, Man.)", and **not** "Portage Avenue". Place names should also have a meaningful relationship to the subject of the records being described and should not be used because the records were created in a given location.

### 2.2.2.2. Name access points (subjects)

A name access point automatically generates an authority record in MAIN if one is not already created. You should not create a new name access point in MAIN unless you are willing to populate the authority record with a biography, dates of existence, and other information about the authority. If you cannot or do not wish to create a more descriptive authority record, or if the person is only vaguely related to the records being described, consider naming the person/family/corporate body in a field that is better suited, such as the **General note(s)** or **Scope and Content** fields.

## 3. Quality Checking

MAIN will undergo periodic reviews for quality control. These reviews will evaluate the following:

- Are fields populated according to standards? (See [Data Consistency](#))
- Are authority records being duplicated where they could have been linked?
- Are there features in AtoM that aren't being used, but which might increase the usability of the records for researchers?
- Should some authority or description entries be revised or deleted?

When inconsistencies or potential revisions are identified, an institution may receive an e-mail from Digital Initiatives requesting that content be revised, edited and/or deleted. All changes suggested are meant to improve MAIN for all repositories and users. Ultimately, it is up to the institution to accept and implement the proposed feedback from Digital Initiatives. However, implementation of some changes may be mandatory in cases where a repository's use of MAIN negatively impacts other users (e.g., changes that slow down the system, generate errors, bury other repositories' descriptions, etc.).

### 3.1. Internal Quality Checking

If more than one person in your repository is entering descriptions, you should ensure that each person is provided with guidelines so that content is entered and described consistently for all your holdings. You should also ensure that one staff member is responsible for quality checking content created by multiple people to catch any potential errors or inconsistencies.

## 4. Digital Objects

For the purpose of this document, "digital object" refers to a digital copy of an archival record in your repository, such as scanned documents and photos, or "born-digital" photos from a digital camera. While MAIN can be used to display digital objects, it is not intended to house a repository's entire catalogue of digital records. Rather, repositories should upload only a sampling of their records to showcase their holdings. When uploading digital objects, the following should be considered:

### 4.1. Preservation

Only access copies should be uploaded to MAIN as it is not a preservation system for digital objects. While digital objects can be ingested into MAIN, it has no preservation features and has limited space. Consequently, a repository is responsible for maintaining its preservation master outside of MAIN.

## 4.2. Rights Management

Institutions should only upload digital objects in MAIN if they have been formally acquired by the institution (i.e., there is a donor agreement or records schedule confirming the repository has the right to make the object publicly available). Institutions are further responsible for managing their own reproduction rights. The AMA is not responsible if a record uploaded to MAIN is used by a third party without permission or improperly cited. It is the responsibility of the institution to ensure that their uploaded record does not violate copyright.

### 4.2.1. Records in the Public Domain

By legal definition, records in the public domain can be used freely and without permission. For this reason, any records ingested into MAIN which are in the public domain should preferably be uploaded in formats that do not limit use (e.g., free of watermarks).

## 4.3. Digital Object Format and Space

Digital objects are uploaded to MAIN so that they can be accessed by researchers and other users. Only copies of archival records qualify as digital objects. Internal documents used by a repository to manage their records, such as finding aids and policy documents, do not qualify as digital objects and should not be uploaded. There is a separate area in MAIN in which finding aids can be generated or uploaded (see the [MAIN user guide](#), section **6.3 Uploading an Existing Finding aid**).

MAIN has limited space available for digital objects, which must be shared across institutions. For this reason, digital objects **should not** be in formats that are meant for preservation or are otherwise larger than necessary. As well, digital objects should be in formats that are widely accessible so that users can access them freely. Using formats other than those listed below can cause MAIN to misidentify a digital object's media type (e.g. a textual record may be listed as an image if in JPG format), which limits discoverability.

Media Type	Format
Images (photos, drawings, etc.)	JPG
Textual records	PDF
Video	MP4
Audio	MP3

Even if a digital object is in one of these formats, it still may be too large to upload. Use smaller, lower resolution access copies (e.g., jpeg scanned at 300 dpi as opposed to a 600 dpi tiff) to ensure space is fairly available to all repositories. Audio/video records take up significantly more space than textual or graphic records – be mindful of this when uploading audio/video records and always try to make file sizes as small as possible by choosing smaller formats, for example. For space to be shared fairly across MAIN, it is recommended that the total number of digital objects uploaded by a given

repository represent approximately 2-5% of all digital objects in MAIN. You can view the total number of digital objects in MAIN by clicking **Digital objects** under **Browse by** on the home page. The total number of “results” (i.e., digital objects) will appear at the top of the page while the total number of objects per institution will typically appear on the left-hand side of the page.

#### 4.3.1. Finding Aids

Finding aids should be uploaded as PDFs by clicking on the upload button on the right-hand side of the fonds level description to which you wish to add a finding aid (see the [MAIN user guide](#), section **6.3 Uploading an Existing Finding aid**) to prevent finding aids from appearing alongside textual records when users are searching for digitized or born-digital archival content.

#### 4.4. Selection

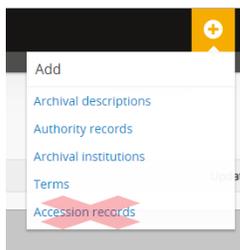
It’s important to be selective when uploading digital objects to MAIN. Objects should not be added just because they can be. Digital objects are meant to show a sampling of content within a given collection. For example, if repositories have similar photographs documenting the same event, they should consider only uploading one. Similarly, if you are uploading a two-sided record, such as a photograph, consider whether it’s important to upload the entire record. Information recorded in a caption written on the back of a photograph is more discoverable to a user if the caption is typed into the description of the photograph in the **Scope and content** field. Consequently, it may be more valuable for the repository to only upload the front of the photograph as a digital object.

### 5. MAIN Features to Avoid

MAIN runs on AtoM, which can be used as either a single-repository instance – holding only the descriptions of one institution or repository – or a multi-repository platform such as MAIN which supports records across various institutions. Consequently, MAIN includes some features that best serve single-repository instances of AtoM but which are discouraged for use in a multi-repository instance. This section describes some features of MAIN which are available to repositories, but which are not recommended for use as they can potentially negatively impact other repositories in MAIN.

#### 5.1. Accession Records

MAIN allows all users with login credentials to create accession records that contain private donor information. Adding an accession record in MAIN will make private information available to all repositories and users with login access. As such, use of this feature in MAIN has the potential to violate FIPPA legislation and should not be used. Digital Initiatives will periodically delete accession records if found. The creating repository will be contacted by Digital Initiatives prior to deletion. Note: An accession record is not the same as assigning the “Accession” **Level of description** in an archival description.



## 5.2. Linking to Physical Storage

**Linking to physical storage** is a problematic feature in a multi-repository instance like MAIN. Container names need to be unique but every institution has at least one “Box 1”. With multiple folders in a box, you can link all these folders to the same container. However, as shown in the example below, it is incredibly difficult to link to the correct “Box 1” if you do not assign your container a unique identifier:



The example above shows only a portion of all current containers titled “1” in MAIN. Container titles have to be unique to differentiate them from others. A second issue is that containers remain in the system even once you’ve deleted a collection or fonds. If you do not delete the containers prior to deleting the collection/fonds, it can be very difficult to find the containers afterward if they do not have a unique identifier. It can also be very time-consuming to delete containers depending on the size of your collection.

Furthermore, in order for MAIN to recognize that two container values are the same, they must be assigned a location. In a single-repository instance, this information can only be viewed by the repository so as to ensure that locations are not publicly advertised and minimize security risks. In a multi-repository instance, your location information is visible to all other users with an institutional log in, which may conflict with your security policies.

While this feature is currently used by many repositories in MAIN, with the adoption of this policy guide, the use of this feature will be phased out.

## 6. Improving Search Capabilities

Researchers using MAIN can conduct advanced searches of the database and filter their searches to obtain better results when using MAIN. However, advanced searching is more effective if those inputting data into MAIN utilize certain features. Furthermore, repositories who do not utilize these features may find that their content is less discoverable. This section outlines some of the fields in your descriptions that can be used to ensure your records appear in a search list when they are relevant. To learn more about how to populate the fields mentioned below, see the [MAIN user guide](#).

- **Digital Objects Metadata – Media Type:** By uploading objects in the format that corresponds to a specific media type, as outlined in [section 4.3](#), users will be able to find your digital objects when they limit their search to digital objects only, and further filter that by media type.
- **Level of Description:** By identifying whether your description is a fonds, collection, series, file, part, etc., users who are filtering their searches by level of description are more likely to find your

content. In accordance with AtoM standards, you must assign a level of description to all descriptions. Undefined levels of description may generate errors in MAIN.

- **Finding aids:** Users can filter their searches to locate only those descriptions with finding aids attached. See section 4.3.3 of this guide regarding finding aids and section 5.3 of the MAIN user guide for instructions on how to upload finding aids correctly.
- **General Material Designation:** If you do not specify the types of media included in the level of description you are describing through the **General material designation** field, your descriptions will not appear in an advanced search when users want to filter by record types.
- **Dates:** If your description does not include either or both a start and end date, users who filter their searches by date will not be able to locate your records where relevant.
- **Repository:** If your description is not linked to your repository, a user filtering their search to only include records held by your repository will not find this description in their results.

## 7. Testing

Many institutions test certain features of MAIN before entering or uploading content (e.g., creating a test collection or authority, uploading a digital object, etc.). When creating test content, do not include any content that may be deemed offensive (see section [8. Takedown Policy](#)). Furthermore, ensure that you **ALWAYS** delete this content when you are done testing. Do not publish test content unless it is impossible to test the content without making it public (e.g., creating a test authority or testing the “generate finding aid” features of MAIN).

## 8. Takedown Policy

If at any time a repository creates content in MAIN that negatively impacts other repositories or MAIN’s users, Digital Initiatives may request that a repository take down or edit its content as needed to resolve the issue. Where possible, Digital Initiatives will provide the repository with alternatives to find a solution that works for all. While Digital Initiatives seeks to work with all repositories, in the event that a repository does not implement a change that could resolve issues in the system as a whole, Digital Initiatives may implement the change itself.

It is the responsibility of the repository to link their descriptions and authorities to their repository page (e.g., select your repository name in the **Maintaining repository** field drop-down menu when creating an authority record, or by selecting your repository in the **Repository** field in the **Title and statement of responsibility area** when creating a description) to ensure that Digital Initiatives can identify your repository as the creator of content in MAIN. If said repository cannot be identified, the description may be revised or deleted by Digital Initiatives.

Content may further be taken down if it violates criteria outlined in MAIN’s [takedown policy](#).

## Further Information and Resources

### **Association for Manitoba Archives MAIN Tutorials, Policies, and Resources**

<http://mbarchives.ca/AtoM-Tutorials>

### **International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families, Second Edition**

[https://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/CBPS\\_Guidelines\\_ISAAR\\_Second-edition\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/CBPS_Guidelines_ISAAR_Second-edition_EN.pdf)

### **Library of Congress Authorities Search (for authorities only)**

<http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names.html>

### **Library of Congress FAST Subject Headings (for subjects)**

<https://fast.oclc.org/searchfast/>

### **Rules for Archival Description**

[http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/RAD/RADComplete\\_July2008.pdf](http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/RAD/RADComplete_July2008.pdf)