

§1. An Archival Finding Aid Based on the Encoded Archival Description

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Historical Materials have been collected and preserved at archives and expected to serve as the evidence of various facts in the past. However, in order to access to these historical materials an appropriate catalogue of registered materials and a convenient electronic finding aid available through Internet are required.

Finding aid for the historical materials should reflect the specific features of these materials. In general, archival material is originally drawn up as a record of a certain action taken by the organization. And after completion of this action, these materials are preserved as archival materials. Thus these materials essentially include circumstances of the action or processes, in other words, archival materials have hierarchy structure and should be understood in the context of original actions.

Encoded Archival Description (EAD) is a de-facto standard for data of archival finding aid and is accepted as an international standard. EAD makes possible to describe the hierarchy structure of archival data: they are 1) information on the original organization, in which the document was born, 2) the history of the documents, 3) person who preserved the documents, 4) place, where the documents are stored and so on. When the database is based on EAD, the retrieval results are shown in the hierarchy order and help us to understand the structure of archival data (See Fig 2).

For this reason, Fusion Science Archives (FSA) began and continued to establish the archival database based on EAD. For this purpose, intensive collaboration with Sokendai, National Institute of Japanese Literature (NIJL), High Energy Accelerator Research Organization (KEK) and Institute for Molecular Science (IMS) has been performed.

NIJL has already owned a server accessible on the Internet that treats information of archival materials related to the history of Japan, and is advancing EAD-based archiving. Utilizing the tool developed at NIJL, so called "Archival materials information sharing Database (AMISDB)", we aim to establish a common database for materials information as a prototype.

General hierarchy structure in archival finding aids is shown in Fig. 1. We introduce following hierarchy structure in FSA EAD-based database.

Repository level : Fusion Science Archives

Collection level : a set of materials given by a certain individual or organization.

Series level : a set of materials in one box (ID = B301a, for example)

File level : a set of materials in one file (ID = B301-01, for example)

Item level : each individual material (ID = B301-01-01, for example)

Note that, in some cases we have no file level description.

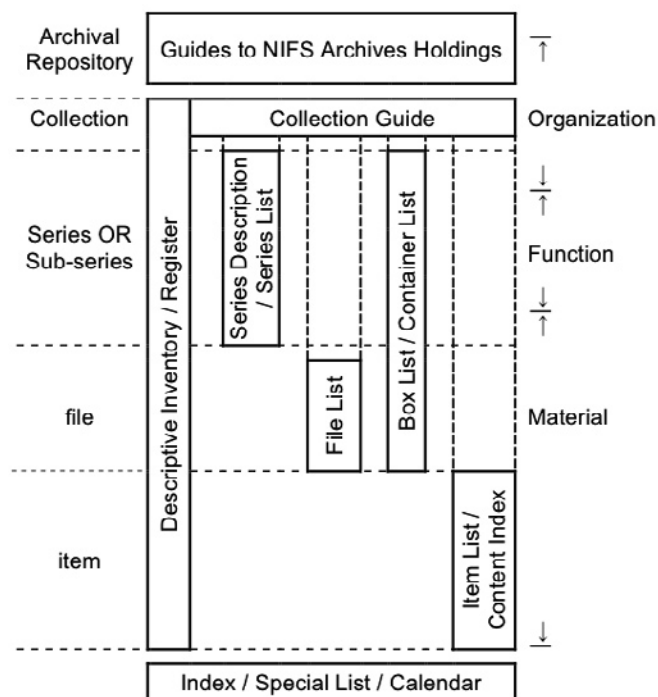


Fig.1 Types of archival finding aids



Fig. 2 A screen view of EAD-XML-based information retrieval system. Here one may see the hierarchy structure.

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