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How to Manipulate Federal Bulletin Board Files

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When I was an inspector, I visited a number of smaller depositories that I thought would benefit from automating check-in procedures. Many of them did not have the budget to get shelf-listing services from Autographics or Bernan. I felt sure that one could make a shelf listing system using a database program and the electronic data that GPO was offering, and I would suggest that to them. But I wasn't sure exactly how.

When I came to Pace University, I got the opportunity to try out my own idea. I had a serious problem to solve. The microfiche had never been checked in. I knew that if I asked my assistant to begin checking microfiche in to the paper shelf list she was maintaining, it would double or more than double her work. I didn't want to do that. I knew I had to come up with a solution where she could do more work in roughly the same amount of time. I had to increase her efficiency.

My solution was to implement my idea of an automated shelf list using data from GPO freely available on the World Wide Web and Microsoft Access software that was part of the Microsoft Office already on our computers. You can use whatever database software your library already has access to.

View	Item	sudoc stem	title and forma	autonumber	supersession	weeding	agency
▶	0001	A 1.47:	Agricultural Staf	1			
	0001-A	A 1.47/2:	Agricultural Staf	2			
	0002	A 1.58/A:	Agriculture Deci	4			Agriculture Dep:
	0002	A1.116:	Rural Telephone	3			
	0003	A 1.76:	Agriculture Han	5			
	0004	A 1.75/2:	Structural and F	6			
	0004	A 1.75:	Agriculture Infor	7			
	0006	A 1.1:	Annual Report	8			
	0006-C	A 93.43:	Outlook for U.S.	9			
	0006-G	A 1.1/3:	"Semiannual Re	10			
	0006-H	A 1.138:	U.S. Departmer	11			
	0006-H	A 1.93:	Budget Estim	12			
	0006-J	A 1.1/4-2:	Annual Report c	13			
	0006-J	A 1.1/5:	"Report on USD	14			
	0006-J	A 1.1/6:	"Office of Inspe	15			
	0006-K	A 1.2/12:	"Accomplishme	16			
	0006-L	A 1.2/11:	Five-Year Plan f	17			
	0006-M	A 1.136:	"Annual Report,	18			
	0006-N	A 1.1/4-3:	"Appraisal of the	19			
	0006-P	A 1.137/2:	USDA Photo Fe	20			
	0006-R	A 1.135:	Ag in the Classi	21			
	0006-S	A 1.2/13:	"Fiscal Year Pri	22			
	0009	A 1.9:	Farmers' Bulleti	23			
	0010	A 1.2:	General Publica	24			
	0010-A	A 1.144:	"Agriculture Out	25			

First, I downloaded the List of Classes into a table. I added several fields to the List of Classes table, including an agency field and a supersession field. I had to key the data into these two fields, but perhaps there is an electronic way to do it I haven't thought of. The fields here are information that applies to each SuDocs stem.

item	selected	
▶	0001	N
	0001-A	N
	0002	Y
	0003	N
	0004	N
	0006	N
	0006-C	N
	0006-G	N
	0006-H	N
	0006-J	N
	0006-K	N
	0006-L	N
	0006-M	N
	0006-N	N
	0006-P	N
	0006-R	N
	0006-S	N
	0009	N
	0010	N
	0010-A	N
	0011	N
	0011-B	N
	0011-C	N
	0011-D	N
	0011-F	N

Secondly, I downloaded the Yes No list of items selected for my depository into another table with only two fields. I linked these two tables using the item number field.

Then I created a query that would select records from the List of Classes that

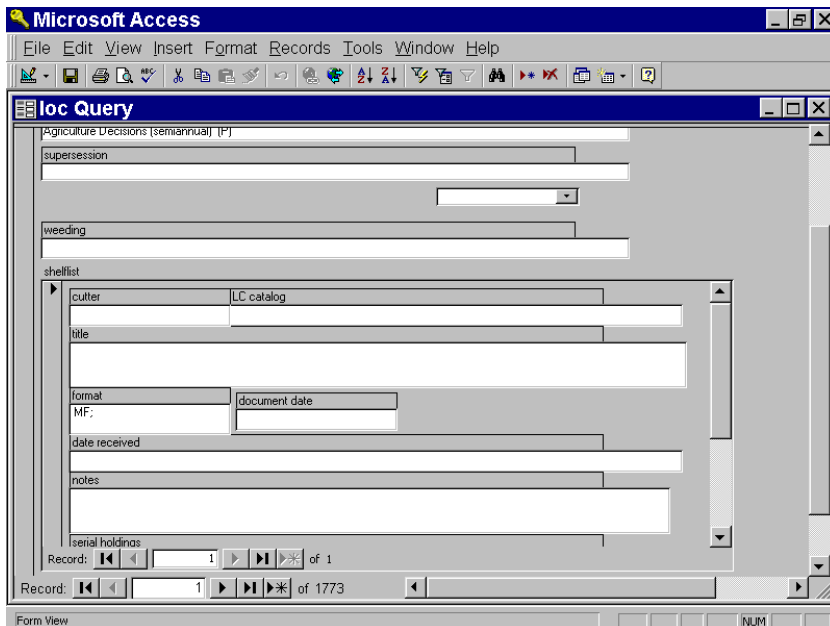
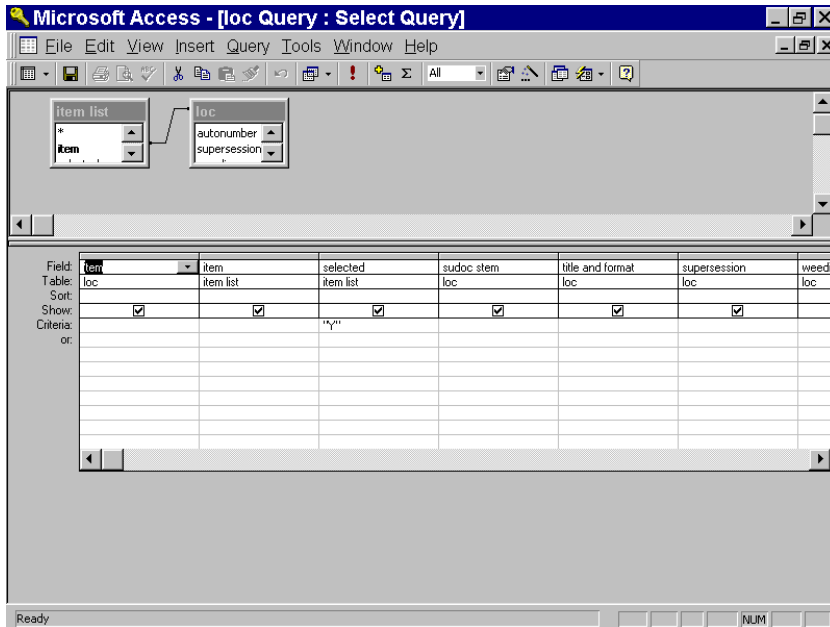
match my "Y" selections in the item list table. This creates a sub-table just for my selections called LOC Query.

autonumber	Sudoc stem	cutter	LC catalog	title	format	date received	notes	serial holdings	document date
550	C 21.14/2:	AP 5		About the PTO.	Paper	4/10/98	a	a	February 1998
772	C 21.14/2:	T 68/SUPP		Changes to Pat	Paper	5/6/98	a	a	February 1998
1092	C 21.14/2:	UT 4		A Guide to Filin	Paper	8/13/98	a	a	March 1998
17	C 21.2:	:IN 3/4		Information cont	MF	3/24/98			June, 1995
62	C 21.2:	:IN 8/3		The inventive thi	MF	3/24/98			
742	C 21.2:	F 15		The Conference	MF	5/4/98	a	a	December 1996
1517	C 21.2:	F 15/008	none	The Conference	MF	9/24/98	none	none	September 1997
559	C 21.2:	IN 3/3/998		PTO strategic ir	Paper	3/24/98	a	a	a
1951	C 21.2:	T 73/2	none	Project A3. Ma	Paper	1/20/99	none	none	Aug. 17-21, 1997
1938	C 21.2:	T 73/997	none	Trilateral Statist	Paper	1/13/99	none	none	1997
71	C 21.28/2:	996/3			MF	3/24/98		996/3	july, 1996
741	C 21.28/2:	997/3		Information Dire	MF	5/4/98	a	a	July 1997
1658	C 21.28/2:	998	none	Information Dire	MF	10/28/98	none	quarterly	July 1998
15	C 21.3/2:				MF	3/24/98		Revision no. 1	(June 1997
542	C 21.5/4:		T 223 .V1	Official Gazette	MF	3/24/98	Checked		
1008	C 21.5:		T 223 .A2	Official Gazette	MF				October 1997
66	C 21.5:	1204			MF	3/24/98		1204/1, 2	November 4, 1997
1559	C 3.134/5:	997-998	none	State and Metrc	Paper	10/7/98	none	none	none
18	C 3.266/3:	996/4		Information Dire	MF	3/24/98			October, 1996
343	C 55.1/2:	991, 992, 993			MF	3/24/98	cataloged	1991, 1992, 1993	
1618	C 55.209:	85/38	none	Earth System In	Paper	10/21/98	none	quarterly, V. 9 f	September 1996
19	C 55.327:				MF	3/24/98	Checked	1995	to Dec, 1995
543	C 55.54:	F 52/CD	GK 62 .T3	Time Series of C	CD	3/24/98	sent to c:	April 1985 to Dec	January, 1998
1845	C 55.54:	G 51/CD		Global Precipita	CD-R	12/2/98	none	none	none
238	C 55.54:	H33/CD	GE 5010	Alabama Coast:	CD	3/24/98	Sent to c		1997

Next, I created a shelflist table that was linked to the List of Classes table by the SuDocs stem. This shelflist table has the SuDocs stem, a Cutter field, and then fields for the LC number, the title of the piece, format, date received, notes, serial records, and the date of the document.

The way it works is that each SuDocs stem has one record in the List of Classes table and as many shelflist records as I need to record each piece.

Field:	Table:	Sort:	Show:	Criteria:
item	item		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
loc	loc		<input type="checkbox"/>	
selected	item list		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
sudoc stem	loc		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
title and format	loc		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
supersession	loc		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
weed	loc		<input type="checkbox"/>	
				Y



The toughest part for me was setting up a form that displayed these two tables. I will set forth how I did it, since it is not easy and is not usually explained in the manuals.

I created a form for each of the tables--the List of Classes table and the shelflist table. Then I embedded the form for the shelflist table into the form for the List of Classes table using the sub-form button from the toolbox. Another way to do it is to establish a "permanent relationship" between the two tables using the tools,

and save it. The Wizard in Microsoft Access will list both tables so just select the field in both tables for your form.

The screenshot shows the 'Shelves V2' application window. It has a menu bar with 'Add-Ins' and 'About'. The window is divided into two main sections: 'Search By' and 'Add'.

Search By:

- Radio buttons: Loc. Item, SuDoc. Stem
- Search input: T 22.2/12: [Search]
- Item: 0956
- SuDoc. Stem: T 22.2/12:
- Supersession: [Empty]
- Title: "Package X, Informational"

Add:

- SuDoc Stem: T 22.2/12:
- Cutter: [Empty]
- Title: "Package X, Informational"
- Serial Holdings: [Empty]
- LC Number: [Empty]
- Notes: [Empty]
- Format: MicroFiche, Paper, CD
- Date: 2/11/99
- Document Date: [Empty]
- [Add New]

[Quit]

The screenshot shows the 'Shelves V2' application window. It has a menu bar with 'Add-Ins' and 'About'. The window is divided into two main sections: 'Search By' and 'Add'.

Search By:

- Radio buttons: Loc. Item, SuDoc. Stem
- Search input: [Empty] [Search]
- Item: 0001
- SuDoc. Stem: A 1.47:
- Supersession: [Empty]
- Title: Agricultural Statistics (P)

Add:

- SuDoc Stem: [Empty]
- Cutter: [Empty]
- Title: [Empty]
- Serial Holdings: None
- LC Number: [Empty]
- Notes: None
- Format: MicroFiche, Paper, CD
- Date: [Empty]
- Document Date: Unkown
- [Add New]

[Quit]

I quickly realized that the form I had created in Microsoft Access would confuse my assistant. So I asked our technician to write me a Visual Basic interface that would allow her to check in material without having to look at a confusing amount of data. He has created a version 2 for us now, incorporating improvements we learned about through using the database. As the assistant becomes more familiar with the system, she does work with the raw database for certain items and is increasingly comfortable in doing so. And I knew she

would grow into it, I just didn't want to confuse her on the front end. I include some examples of the interface searching by SuDocs stem. We also found that we had to locate items we had entered from time to time, so he set up a search function for that.

So the elements of my system are the List of Classes table, which includes agency and supersession data, as well as any other information that applies to the entire SuDocs stem. A query is run using the Item Lister table and a subset of the List of Classes table displays that contains only those items I select, a much smaller table. Thirdly, a shelflist table is linked to the List of Classes data by SuDocs stem and contains all the data that applies only to that piece.

My system is not the best for serials. Nevertheless, I have set up a serials field and do use it for some of them. Many are still checked in manually. Like I always say, do what works: If the manual system works better (and we think it does) keep it. I think ultimately that I would like to have all my serials checked in to our Innopac system. They already have figured out the whole serials problem and I feel that I would be reinventing the wheel to redo that work. On the other hand, I do not have all my serials checked in to the Innopac and I may never have that.

One little problem I had early on was with the dates. I had Microsoft Access put in today's date for the check in date. What I didn't realize is that that date would update itself each time the record was visited. One other trick is that sometimes my assistant has trouble with items where the SuDocs stem ends other than at the colon. The best thing to do is to keep a paper List of Classes handy and check what the SuDocs stem is for an item that doesn't come up. We will always need paper no matter how automated we get.

So how is it working? My assistant is delighted with the system and has been able to keep up with checking in all items in roughly the same amount of time it took her to maintain the card shelflist for paper items only. (Admittedly, I have trimmed our selections). The time I save her is: rolling the card into the typewriter and filing the cards once they are done. But in addition she does not have to re-key the agency name, the title from the List of Classes, the item number, etc. All that information is automatically part of the record. All she has to add is the information pertinent to the particular piece she is checking in, such as date, title of the piece, the Cutter, etc.

I think this can be a low cost alternative for automating documents. I am hoping it will be useful to smaller public libraries that want to automate but can't afford or justify Marcive or Autographics. I hope this idea will stimulate each of you to think about ways that current free GPO resources can be used to lighten your load and that of your staff.