A Conservation Records Network (ACORN): Conservation Documentation at the Weissman Preservation Center, Harvard University

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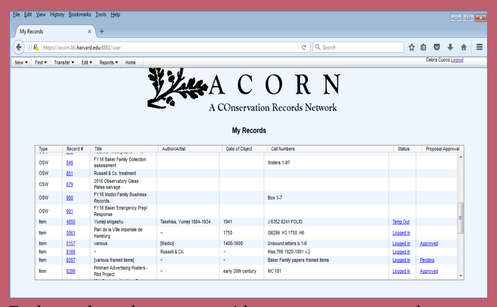
INTRODUCTION

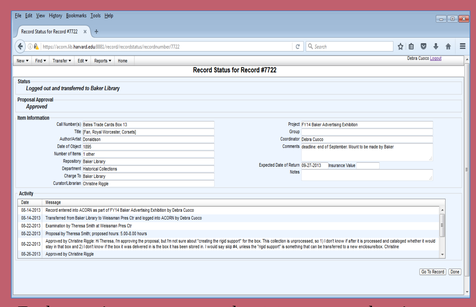
Conservation labs have struggled to design the best method possible to document their work and make it accessible for future generations. The Weissman Preservation Center (WPC) created a database to facilitate treatment documentation for the conservation lab. WPC treats special collections library and archive materials from the 70+ libraries that are part of Harvard University and includes millions of rare books, manuscripts, photographs, and objects. ACORN (A Conservation Records Network) runs on a LAMP stack, using Linux as the operating system, Apache as the web server that allows the PHP to run, and PHP which communicates with MySQL to get its data. ACORN was designed for two main purposes; as a registrarial tool to track object's movement in and out of the lab, and as a repository for all treatment documentation. It has since evolved to meet other preservation needs. An email communication system stores treatment approvals and conversations between conservators and collections staff. Non-treatment activities can be recorded in a separate module. This can include exhibit prep, consultations, and environmental monitoring. The database structure is simple to use and versatile with changes to field values easy to implement. A built-in search engine makes information retrieval simple and can facilitate the gathering of statistics, including treatment hours for a specific object, the completed work for a project with multiple objects or activities, or how much time was spent consulting on the environmental needs in a given year. As a web-based system, ACORN allows Harvard Library users to access the data at various locations and is a sustainable paperless system. This poster will illuminate how the Weissman Preservation Center has developed a system of documenting preservation work that allows for documentation ranging from simple to highly complex; making it suitable for all types of conservation labs and activities.

PRESERVATION TRACKING

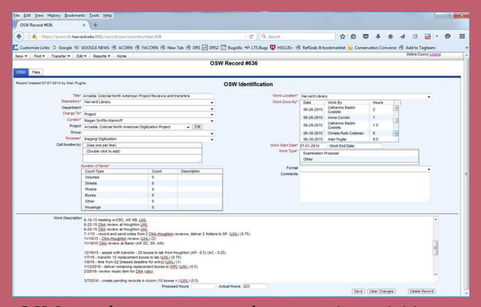
Preservation and Repository users can keep track of their current treatment and work records.



Each user has a home page with current treatment and preservation projects with hyperlinks to full records.



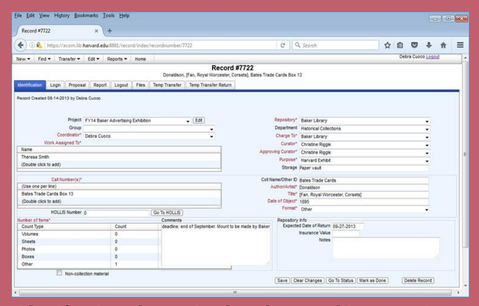
Each repository can access the status screen, showing identifying information, location, and treatment information.



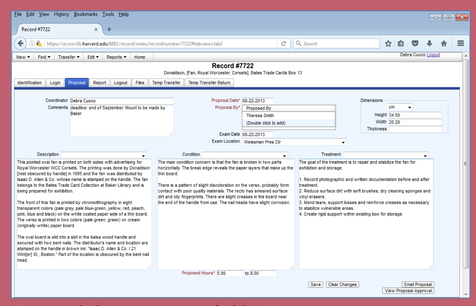
OSW records are a way to track preservation activities that may not be associated with a particular object.

CONSERVATION DOCUMENTATION

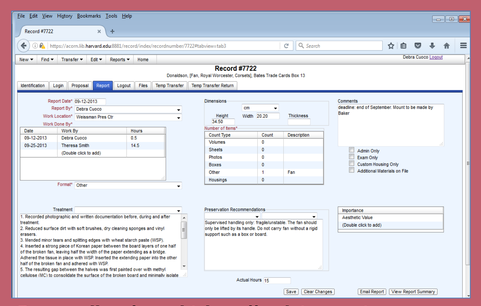
Proposals, reports, images, and supplemental documentation are linked together. ACORN saves all curatorial correspondence, including proposal approvals.



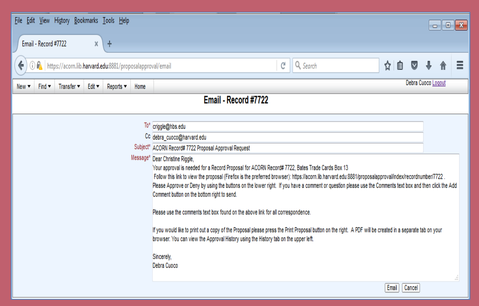
Identification tab contains data about an object, repository, project, and staff. Multiple objects may exist in one record.



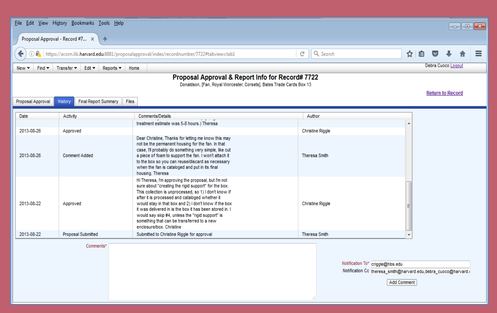
Proposals have open text fields. Users can save commonly used text within their individual profile.



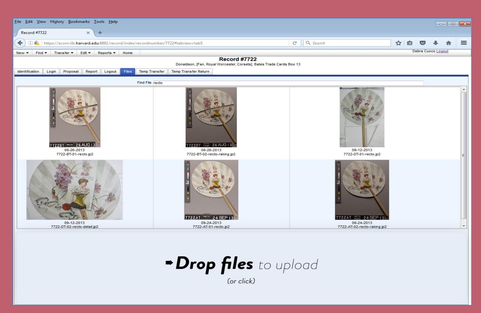
Reports allow for multiple staff and time entries.



Proposals and reports are emailed to curators through ACORN and electronically approved.



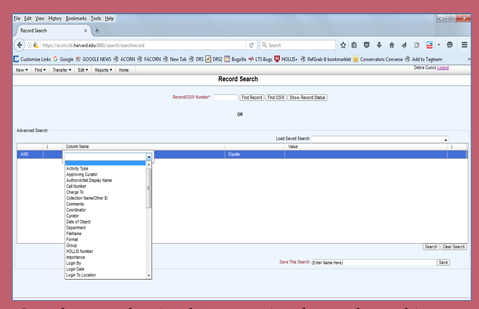
History of approval and correspondence is saved in ACORN.



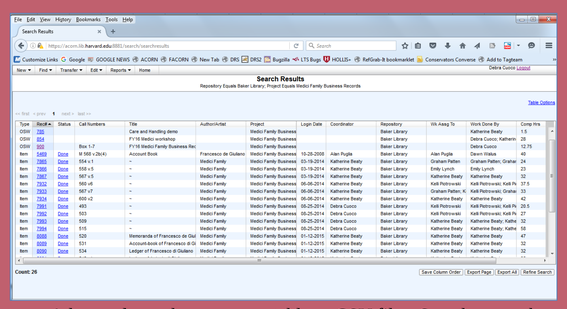
Images are easily dragged and dropped into the record.

SEARCHING, STATISTICS, and REPORTS

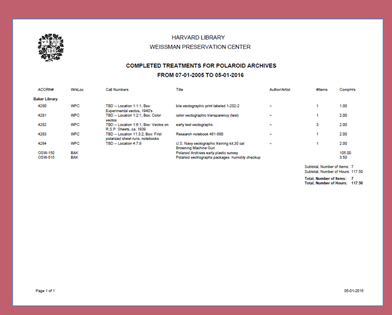
Simple and advanced searching is available.



Searches may be simple or contain advanced searching parameters.



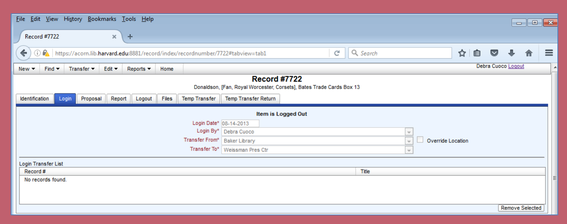
Advanced searches are exportable as CSV files. Searches may be saved to individual profiles.



Some statistics are available as custom PDF reports..

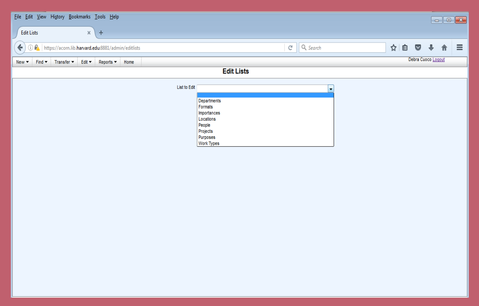
REGISTRARIAL FUNCTIONS

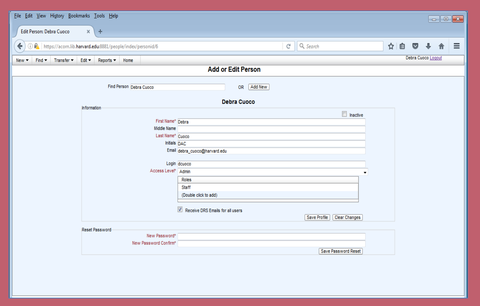
Items are logged in and out from repositories or other locations.



ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

Users, drop down lists, and vocabulary are editable.





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