



UNCONVENTIONAL MATERIALS: RESCUING AIR AND SPACE HISTORY

Technical File System Design

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Sponsor: Museum of Flight, Head Librarian Meredith Lowe

The Problem

"I think for a long time it was, as most vertical files become at some point, a **dumping ground**. People didn't want to throw things away, and so they erred on the side of caution." - Senior Curator Dan Hagedorn

18 cabinets containing roughly **356 cubic feet** of material



The Collection

"When we actually started taking a very close look ... **we realized that they really transcended the common definition of vertical files because the content was phenomenal**; and it was largely technical, far more so than newspaper clippings and the like that you would normally find in a vertical file."

- Senior Curator Dan Hagedorn



Our Approach

- **Assessed** the collection and the needs of its users
- Prepared a **budget** for required supplies
- Made **recommendations** for the reorganization
- Adapted the National Air and Space Museum's *Directory of Airplanes: Their Designers and Manufacturers* to represent the Museum of Flight's unique collection
- Wrote a **procedures manual** for maintaining the collection
- Began **implementation** of the recommended changes

Sample of the revised classification system:

02 Matter and Energy
Use for naturally occurring phenomena including celestial bodies, magnetic fields, and radiation.

- Asteroids
- Atmospheric Radiation
- Aurora Borealis: Use Atmospheric Radiation
- Comets
- Elementary Particles
- Use for quarks and other subatomic particles.
- Extraterrestrial Matter
- Use for interstellar dust, gas, and plasma clouds.
- Extraterrestrial Radiation
- Galaxies
- Gravitation
- Magnetic Fields
- Meteorites
- Nebulae
- Northern Lights: Use Atmospheric Radiation
- Novae: Use Stars—Variable Stars
- Planets

The Impact

Our project brings renewed attention to an irreplaceable collection of historic documents, giving the Museum a strategy to help researchers find what they need for years to come.

Future Steps:

- Moving the collection to legal-sized cabinets
- Continuing the reorganization
- A great future project for MLIS students!



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