NO, WE CAN’T JUST SCRIPT IT
and other refrains from (tired) archival data migrators

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TOPICS

1. HOW’D WE GET HERE, ANYWAY?
A little bit about archival data and a brief history of archival description tech.

2. WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE ON THE GROUND?
A real-world example of migrating archival data.
ARCHIVES AREN’T LIBRARIES
and archival data isn’t like library data.
All of our descriptions are original work.

There's no copy cataloguing in the archives.
Archival records are organic and interrelated.

All archival collections are made of star-stuff, or whatever.
There’s never enough time to describe everything.

Item-level description is for the 1%.
Standards adoption has been slow and uneven.
RAD
The Canadian Rules for Archival Description are released

DATABASES
Some institutions start adopting database solutions to take the place of paper records

Mid-90s

1990

1995

HYPER-RAD
A hyperlinked, easier-to-use version of RAD is released

BETTER DATABASES
Specialized archival management software becomes available

Late 90s/00s
1998  EAD  Encoded Archival Description brings XML to the archives

2001  ICA OSARIS REPORT  Recommends a standardized open source tool for encoding archival finding aids

2008  ICA-ATOM 1.0-BETA  The beta version of ICA-AtoM is released

2008  ICA-ATOM 1.0.4-BETA  ICA-AtoM now has support for RAD
Just to mention the words “computer” or “automation” in some circles is to invite cold suspicious stares of hostility, making one feel as though he had said something dirty.

FILE MIGRATION

CASE STUDY
Photographic negatives are incredible and daunting.

All fun and games until you want them accessible online.
What type of images would you expect to see in an envelope from 1953 titled “St. Agatha Orphanage”?
Envelope titles and images don’t always compute.

Doggy doggy what now?!
One stone, multiple projects and end goals.

Or efficiently making something out of nothing.
### St. Agatha Orphanage [Unpublished]

**Title:** St. Agatha Orphanage

**Abstract:** Photo caption from missing photo [see 53-5235_003 for closest version]: "The men make short work of working up the carcasses into cuts and sausage meat."

**Date:** 1953-12-09/1953-12-10

**Identifier:** 53-5235_003

**General note:** Title supplied by Kitchener-Waterloo Record staff. 53-5235_006, 53-5235_007, 53-5235_009 and a photo missing from envelope appeared on Page 23 of the Wednesday, December 16, 1953 edition of the newspaper as part of the article: "Butchering Bee Provides Orphanage's Winter Meat."

Butchering bee took place December 9 and 10, 1953.

### Butchers, Knives

**Country:** Canada

**Province:** Ontario

**Region:** Waterloo (Ont.: Regional municipality)

**City:** St. Agatha (Ont.)

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**Preferred citation:** University of Waterloo Library. Special Collections & Archives. Kitchener-Waterloo Record Photographic Negative Collection. [Title]. [Identifier].
Fin.