

# Developing Malleable Finding Aids with Wikis

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**Abstract:** We describe an initial step toward developing an Archival Commons. We use wikis, a common interactive and collaborative technology, which allows users to actively contribute to the shaping and interpretation of an archival collection. Specific implementations of standard wiki interactive functionalities include (a) establishing new relationships between the content represented by the finding aid and other collections, commentary or scholarship through linking, (b) alternative arrangements / interpretations within the finding aid itself, (c) including discursive options for users, and (d) annotation. Working references to the ideas of including tagging, visualization, and mechanisms for tracking changes and making attributions within the wiki itself will also be utilized. Building on the idea of the archival commons and the three concepts of Anthony Giddens' Theory of Structuration, the presentation will outline both theoretical and practical ways that low-barrier wiki technology can be applied to a malleable version of a finding aid to assemble disparate knowledge and information about a collection over time. The theoretical concepts of signification, domination, and legitimation will be addressed through practical implementations of specific functionalities of the commons idea.

## **About the author:**

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