

Object location tracking in the Malacology Collection at the Museum of Comparative Zoology

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Triomote cat illustration by Prof. Mitsuru Moriguchi, Okinawa

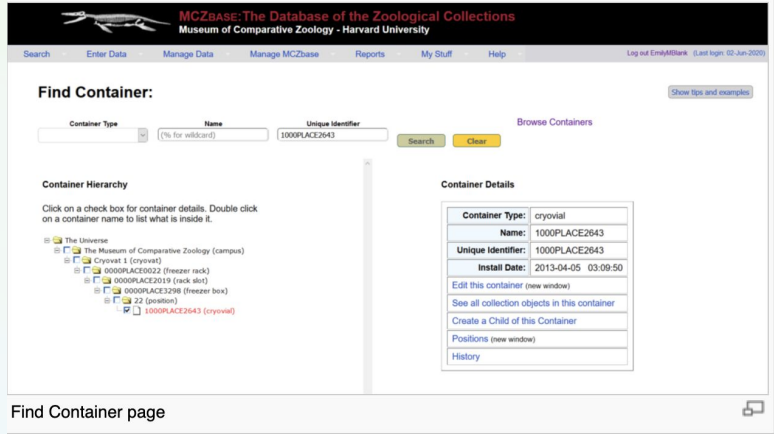


Abstract

How do museums keep track of the things that we have? A report based on the 78 largest museums and herbaria worldwide estimates that they house over 1.1 billion objects. Museum collections are an important repository for historical and current research specimens. Therefore, the tools used to store, track, and document object movement, have long-lasting implications. The Malacology Collection at Harvard University's MCZ has digitized just under 400,000 cataloged lots on MCZbase, a museumwide online database, and estimates that another 300,000 uncataloged lots, including dry and fluid material, microscope slides, and bulk samples remain. With ongoing digitization, physical rearrangement, and loans, object containers allow for specimen tracking and bulk inventories. The MCZ utilizes several methods of specimen/lot tracking, including specimen object containers, physical placeholders, and barcodes. With the development of robust collection databases, and bulk object tracking, best practices continue to be developed. The ability to locate objects within a museum collection is paramount in keeping order when curating large collections and will continue to evolve with the addition of new technologies.



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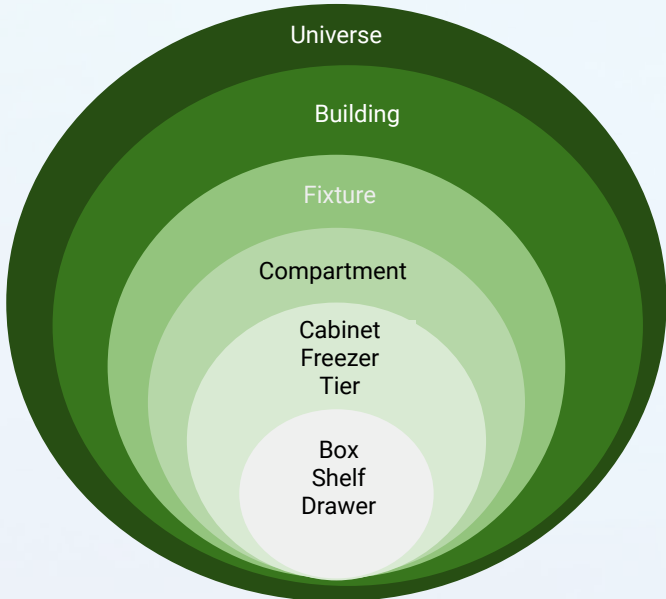


Core Benefits of object tracking using location codes

- ❖ Improved Accessibility and Retrieval
- ❖ Condition Monitoring
- ❖ Access Control
- ❖ Exhibition Planning
- ❖ Loans
- ❖ Deaccessions
- ❖ Research and Documentation

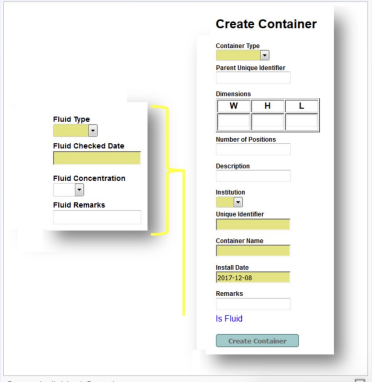


Browse our collection!



Container Types and uses

- ❖ Barcodes- Slides
- ❖ Drawer code- Cataloged lot
- ❖ Loan placeholder- Loaned lot or partial lot
- ❖ Cryo Barcode- Frozen Tissue
- ❖ Freezer shelf- whole frozen lot



384,033 records on MCZbase

43,222 records with location codes

