BRINGING YOUR COLLECTION TO THE DIGITAL AGE

Software and Concepts for Digital Collections
ENDORSEMENTS & QUALIFICATIONS

• I make no money from any mention of any software or hardware and I have nothing to gain from any companies or software I mention.

• I am not an IT Professional and I make no claims to be one, I merely researched what I could find and present it as a solution of interest.

• If you ask for help, I will do what’s reasonable and in the best interest for both of us to try to help, but I will not become your sole source for support questions and issues beyond the scope of reasonable help (as I see it).
WHERE TO START

http://www.epopnaweb.com.br/serie-fotografica-mostra-colecoes-especiais-de-pessoas-comuns/
DIGITIZING A COLLECTION

What are the Moving Parts that are Essential?

- Easy Access to a Device
  - The Physical Hardware

- Metadata
  - The Data about every Item

- Photography
  - A Visual Representation
  - Hardware that takes a Digital Picture

- Interface Design
  - An intuitive way to understand the Information
  - Software Design (User Interface)
SIX STEPS IN THE SAND

Steps to Consider in the Whole Process…

1. Finding a Good Reason

2. Picking the Tools: Computer (Hardware)

3. Picking the Software Platform
   • Decide on the Features you Need to Have (Interface)
   • Be Inspired by the Solution

4. Documenting the Items of the Collection (Metadata)

5. Having a Photography Plan

6. Backing up your Files
How To Decide to Bring Your Collection to a Computer

- Interested in learning how to do it
- Have a strong interest to organize/document it better
  - For my family
  - For posterity (Nobody will ever figure it out...)
  - To teach other people about collecting
- Additional records in case of emergency/insurance
  - Tracking the value
- To help monetize the collection
  - Dealer
  - Looking to Sell / Adding Value
- Organization for Knowledge
  - Organization to keep track of what you have and keep it in your head when travelling and collecting more
STEP 2: PICKING HARDWARE

Use What you Have or You Know

• Computer Hardware and Software are a Partnership

  • Windows OS (Many Choices – Learning Curve)
  • Apple Macintosh OSX (Many Choices – Learning Curve)
  • Linux (Few Choices – Big Learning Curve)
  • iOS (Mobile NUI) (Few Choices – Short Learning Curve)
  • Android (Mobile NUI) (Few Choices – Short Learning Curve)

• Use What You Have - Learn as You Go
  • Hardware is usually the biggest investment
Step 3: WHAT SOFTWARE TO USE

Software Considerations

• Types of Collection Software
  • Spreadsheet/Office Software
  • Page Layout/Graphics Software
  • Professional Collecting Software

• Types of Platforms
  • Cloud based (Google/Social Media/Web-based)
  • Desktop Based (Mac/Windows/Linux)
  • Mobile Platforms (Android/iOS)

• Free vs. Pay vs. Must Have Features
  • Will you pay to get what you want or can you create something close for free
INTERFACE DESIGN

- Tagging to be able to set your favorite examples in your collection & track them
- Imports from your Digital Camera in still and movie formats
- Close up and Alternate Views in the same record
- Allows you to post out to Social Media like Facebook or Instagram
- Allows you to easily send out emails of a record for selling and sharing and prints labels for identification
- Tracks GPS coordinates and locations
- Keeps your wish lists and allows for placeholders in your collection
- Runs on Mobile Devices and in the Cloud
- Runs on the Desktop and creates Web Content or exports out HTML
- Has a gallery or slideshow viewer
- Let you create custom tagging fields and lets you annotate your collecting the way you want
- Ability to create and share collections of selected specimens.
- Allows you to add in voice based notes or reads back to you
- Powerful and Responsive Programming and Easy Interface
Options for Spreadsheets

• Leading contenders
  • Microsoft Excel – Pay Option in most cases
  • Google Docs – Free (cloud based)
  • Open Office/Libre Office – Free (desktop)

• **Pros** – You can make it be what you need
  • Exports can be imported into most databases
  • Easy to share

• **Cons** – You have to make it be what you need
  • You are the creator and it's on you to figure it out
**SPREADSHEET EXAMPLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Collection of</th>
<th>Your Name here</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mineral Family</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mineral Group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartz</td>
<td>Silicon Oxides</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Available at https://www.michmin.org/collection-software
Options for Building Your Own Collection Design

- **Leading contenders**
  - Microsoft Word
  - Adobe InDesign/Creative Cloud
  - Open Office/Libre Office – Free (desktop)

- **Pros** – You can make it be what you need
  - You can make it look and document anything
  - Easy to Export to PDF standards

- **Cons** – You have to make it be what you need
  - Longer Learning Curve
  - Few automation tools
  - Not always a long term solution
PAGE LAYOUT EXAMPLES

Macedonia 2015 10 Denars Set
Mint: Republic of Macedonia 2014-2015
Material: 925 Silver
Number in Set: 12
Dimensions: 38 x 38 mm oval, 21.00 grams (3/4 ounce)
Zodiac Type: Western-Solar
Number Minted: 5000
Condition: Proof with gold printing and a cobalt glass insert
Denomination: 10 Denars
Designer: Unknown
Sample: Below

Tourmaline
Location: Serra Mine, Ferradura, Castilheiro, Pena, Doce valley, Minas Gerais, Brazil
Tourmaline is a crystalline boron silicate mineral compounded with elements such as aluminium, iron, magnesium, sodium, lithium, or potassium. Tourmaline is classified as a semi-precious stone and the gemstone comes in a wide variety of colors. The word Tourmaline comes from Sri Lanka for stone of mixed colors
Hardness: 7 Luster: Vitreous
Retail Value: $1700
Purchase Price: $1200
Index # 00100-01

Available at https://www.michmin.org/collection-software
Cross-Platform Collection Software Options

- Leading contenders
  - Mineraldesk
  - Trilobase
  - NM Collector
  - Recollector

- **Pros** – Designed by Collectors for Collectors
  - Optimized to be Collection Grade Software
  - Easy to Export data and save to the cloud

- **Cons** – Interfaces are pre-designed and limited flexibility
  - Varying degrees of documentation
  - Unknown longevity
  - Purchase to Use them (some have trial periods)
COLLECTION SOFTWARE

mineraldesk

Website: www.mineraldesk.com
Mineral Desk features a drag and drop interface that is fairly intuitive and powerful. It allows you to add pictures, movies and documents to your records of any given specimen. It is a very visual program and is designed to look modern and has the feel of many photo sharing websites.

- It offers beautiful gallery, card and spreadsheet view and is able to integrate with camera hardware for great still images or 360° views of your specimens.

- It currently runs on Mac OS and Windows 10 and is very new at this point. We downloaded a copy of the program that offers a 30 day trial period and lets you use it for free after that in a "personal" use copy. If you want to fork out the money, it offers a tiered pricing structure but looks to offer museum curator level features if your willing to pay for it.

- It is really two programs in one, the mineral gallery and the Designer view where labels and images can be edited.
TRILOBASE COLLECTOR

Website: http://www.trilobase.com

Core Idea
- Designed for Fossils, Minerals or Artifacts
- Tagging dependent on specimen type
- Strong location tools with GPS mapping
- Does custom labels
- Cost: $16.00
TRILOBASE COLLECTOR

Website: http://www.trilobase.com

How it Works
1. Categories
2. List of Entries in the category
3. Specific Record of Specimen
4. Picture of the specimen for reference
5. Actions to perform (like printing, deleting or adding)
This software is written in Java and is designed to be portable, meaning you can run it from anywhere, it does not install like traditional programs do. You can keep it on a USB stick and move it around from computer to computer (provided that the java versions are comparable).

One purchase entitles you to use this collecting software for all of your collections on all of your computers. There is also an option to run the software from the cloud as well by running it from one of your personal cloud drives.

The software has a 30-day trial period and only costs $29.95 and is 100% Satisfaction Guaranteed.

Under the engine of nmCollector is a very compact relational database built on open source software from Apache. The developer has used this to build upon the java commands to create a powerful cross platform modular collector's database.

The software is easily downloaded and the trial period makes testing it quite easy. There is very good help online at the website and a quick start guide and owners manual are easily found and downloaded if you get into trouble. The developer has been in business long enough that he has anticipated known issues and helps you stay out of trouble.
Recollector

Website: http://www.collectingcatalog.com

Professional quality collection management for personal collections.

A Brief Introduction
This software is mature and seems to have a large user base. It has been reviewed and recommended by many people. Like nmCollector, it is not designed primarily just for collecting Minerals or Fossils, it is set up to manage multiple types of collections through multiple templates and screens. It’s easy to upload existing spreadsheets, attach image files to your item records and export your collections to spreadsheets and custom reports.

Input your collection on your Mac or PC, then download the free Recollector App for iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, Android phone or tablet and view it on-the-go.

The Online User's Guide provides in-depth information on how to use the software. Learn how to define a new collection, import or export a collection, add information to an existing collection, upload images and more. In addition they offer multiple video tutorials. Several users have commented that the developers are responsive and a new version is scheduled to be released about every 18 months.

Recollector seems to have enough power to manage collections for the beginners through to advanced professionals and its database is responsive and easy to back up. It is very flexible and will allow you to make it what you want for a collection database.

Free Trial Period to test it with a $49.00 price tag.
VIRTUAL TO THE PHYSICAL

Connecting Your Records to your Collection

• Description Fields (STEP 4) [ - Metadata - ]
  • Labeling your Collection
• Photography (STEP 5)
• Backing up Your Records (STEP 6)
**STEP 4: METADATA FIELDS**

**Document the Data About Each Piece, Lot or Group**

- Some Ideas on What to Track
  - ID Number (why do this??)
  - Mineral Family(s)
  - Variety/Formation
  - Chemical Makeup
  - Location Found
  - Purchase Information
  - Location in Your Home
  - Description
  - Value
  - History (Custody Chain)

- Treatments (Heating, Synthetic)
- Weight
- Physical Dimensions
- Fluorescent
- **Picture** of the Item (Representation)
- **Meteorites** – Strike Information
- **Fossils/Shells** – Age/Dates, Species, Type, Anatomy Info
Tying your Data to Your Collection

**Ref. ID**
USCA142

**Location**
402.0 Marker, 1000 Level (Lucky Friday Pocket)
Planbeau Mine
Rusk County, Wisconsin
USA

**Chemical Data**
Dana: 2 . . 4 . . 7 . . 1 (Sulfide and Selenide and Telluride)
String: II/B .01 - 10
Formula: Cu²⁺ $ S
Crystallography: 2/m [Prismatic]

**Comments/Description**
Size Class: Thumbnail
Overall Size: 4.7 cm
Main Crystal: Calcocite

**Value Information**
Acquisition Info: Purchased
Date: 05/15/1990
From: Geoprise Minerals
Price: 275.00

**Appraisal**
Date: 05/15/1990
Appraiser: Geoprise Minerals
Estimated Value: 625.00

**History**
Provenance: Collected by Casey Jones in late 1996
Comments: Pictured in Mineralogical Record, No. 87, page 16
Pictured in L.A. County Museum of Natural History of Minerals CD-ROM
Displays in 2009 in Tucson in the American Treasures of Planbeau Mine case

Last Updated: 03/26/2008
Tying your Data to Your Items

All those Labels that you keep might not really do much good if they get separated from the minerals!

How do you fix this?
Labeling with a “Breadcrumb…” to Your Specimen

Proper Labels

• Index (I.D.) Number
• Specimen Name
• Collection Name
• History of Ownership
• **Remember** - you have two sides on a Label
Labeling on Your Specimens

Encapsulation Method

Pros: Easy to do, room for information, non-destructive, protective

Cons: Can be separated from case, Large Items are difficult
Labeling Your Specimens

Stand Method

Pros: Very Professional, - Non-destructive - Customizable

Cons: Can be separated from stand - Large Items are Difficult - Expensive
Labeling Your Specimens

Stand Method

https://stone-throne.com
Labeling Your Specimens

Signage Method

**Pros:** Easy and Cheap

**Cons:** Easy to Separate
I.D. YOUR COLLECTION

Steps to Add an ID to your Collection Items
- Use Mineral Tack or Mineral Glues
APPRAISAL STATEMENTS

• Don’t forget to make electronic backups of these too…
REMEMBER

Do Nothing to a Specimen that's Not Reversible

- Do nothing that cannot be undone in the future
- Do not use paint
- Do not use finger nail polish, India ink, sharpie pens or other markers
- Do not use epoxies or other glues besides Elmer’s or recommended glues.

- Do print out ID numbers from your database and affix them using Mineral Tack or Elmer’s glue.

You are only the temporary caretaker of your specimens. You should not alter them in any way that will take away from the future study of them.
STEP 5: PHOTOGRAPHY

Sources for Representing Your Collection

- Online Purchases
  - Use the online pictures if they are good
- Self-Collected
  - Document Locations and Discovery + Final Specimens
- Purchased from Dealers & Trades
  - Ask if they have Pictures

- Tips: Size, Lighting, Focus & Labels
  - Use Natural Light (5000°K Lighting)
  - Clean the Specimen
  - Use Back lighting for transparency effects
  - Add in the labels for the photography
  - Use a ruler or measurement grid for size information
  - Take several shots and experiment on focus/exposure
Always make a Backup!

- One is None
  - Computer crashes
  - Natural disaster
  - Upgrades and lack of support break your archive

- Create another “standardized” copy as a backup
  - Print out a hard copy of the collection
  - Save out to PDF format and store in the cloud or keep on a thumb drive at your bank or give to a trusted relative

- Export out to an excel (spreadsheet) format
  - Ability to import back into another database and keep in a safe location away from your home
OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

• Security
  • Who has access, who needs access, protect your info.

• Encryption
  • Using an encrypted drive is a good idea.

• Keeping Copies of Labels
  • Keep copies of labels in a safe place.

• Theft of Your Computer
  • Password protect and encrypt your computer.
  • Keep a record of the serial# and engrave the case.

• Mobile Access
  • Do you need access on the road?

• Selling Items
  • Is your main reason in setting this up to sell?
WALK AWAY INFO

- **Our Website:** For More Information
  - [https://www.michmin.org/collection-software](https://www.michmin.org/collection-software)
THANK YOU

• Thank you to all who came and asked questions!
• Thank you to the CIS for the ability to use this facility after dark, and thanks to John Zawiskie for being a friend of MMS.
• The only bad question is the one left unanswered