Archon Tutorial

Archon is a searchable database that contains the finding aids for our archive collections. A finding aid is a document that summarizing information about a collection’s provenance and contents, including a folder/item level inventory.

To access Archon, use the link under the “Finding Aids” tab on the left-hand side of the RBSC website or go directly to http://archon.lib.niu.edu.

There is the option to enter keywords, subject terms, corporate or family names, dates, etc. in the search box on the homepage. Subject terms for archives are not as tightly controlled as they are for cataloging, and as a result archivist may use different terms to identify the same thing. Using a variety of similar terms will get you better results (e.g., automobile, car, vehicle, van, motor, etc.).

Searching for the term “automobile” resulted in 18 hits (as of September 2019).
Results will be listed by collection and keyword hits will be highlighted at the folder level within each collection.

Search Results for "automobile" | Northern Illinois University

You searched for "automobile".

Take special note of the repository where the collection is held as collections from Rare Books and Special Collections and from the Regional History Center share the same database.

Clicking on the title of the collection will provide a scope and contents note for the collection along with an abbreviated version of the box list.
Clicking on “Administrative/Biographical History” on the left-hand side of the page will provide a history of the organization/business/family/individual to which the collection pertains.

Clicking on “Detail Description” will produce the finding aid, which includes information about the collection arrangement, restrictions (rare), date range of the materials within the collection, and the box/folder level inventory that details folder/item level titles and dates. The only information that cannot be access from the “finding aid” page is the administrative/biographical history [go back to the collection home page for this].

Limit your search to the current finding aid being displayed by using the search box on the left-hand side of the page.
If you are unsure about where to begin your research, the subject index is a great option. The index is a list of the subject terms used across all finding aids. Some terms are very specific and used only once, while others are more general and used several times. The subject index is by no means a comprehensive list of all the terms that could be used to highlight people/places/things in the collections. Instead, the terms in the subject index pertain to the significant terms or to the terms that classify a large group of material contained within the respective collection where it is indexed. Like when performing a keyword search, you will want to also search synonyms.
Another place to start is by simply browsing the collections. To do this, you will need to click “Record Groups” at the top of the page.

Select “Rare Books and Special Collections”

Collections are grouped by subject. Those that do not fall within one of the listings on this page can be found under “Special Collections.” [Note: Collections in Archon are only those that have been processed and are available to researchers.]
Records Relating to Rare Books & Special Collections | Northern Illinois University

Collections belonging to the Rare Books and Special Collections, Founders Memorial Library, Room 402.

Subgroups under Rare Books & Special Collections

- RBSC APL American Popular Literature Collection
- RBSC GS Gender Studies Collection
- RBSC MS Manuscripts
- RBSC SFWA Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America
- RBSC SPX Special Collections