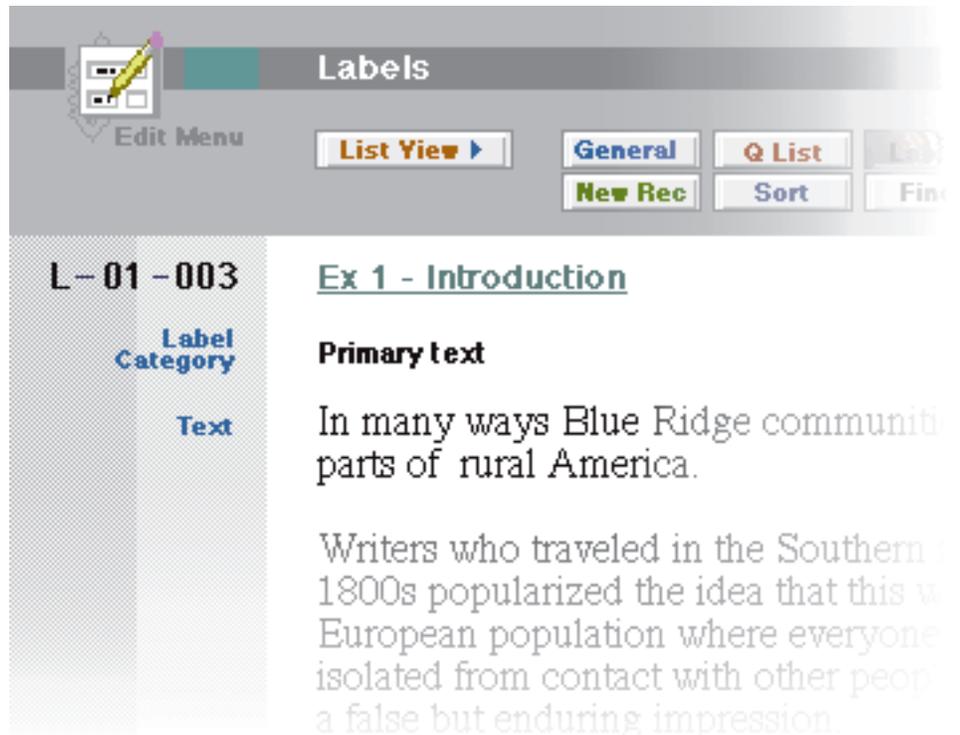


National Park Service

Exhibit Numbering System

Guidelines

Division of Exhibits
Harpers Ferry Center



The screenshot shows a web application interface for managing exhibit labels. The title bar reads "Labels". On the left, there is an "Edit Menu" icon. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains the label number "L-01-003" and two sub-sections: "Label Category" and "Text". The right column contains the exhibit title "Ex 1 - Introduction" and two paragraphs of text. The first paragraph is labeled "Primary text" and the second is labeled "Text".

L-01-003

Label Category

Text

Ex 1 - Introduction

Primary text

In many ways Blue Ridge communities are the heart of rural America.

Writers who traveled in the Southern United States in the 1800s popularized the idea that this was a European population where everyone was isolated from contact with other people, creating a false but enduring impression.

Background

A simple, logical, and consistent exhibit numbering system is essential to managing the many elements that go into any exhibition. Every single artifact, graphic, and label needs to have its own unique number to facilitate effective identification and communication of all elements throughout the planning, design, and fabrication stages of a project. Artifact schedules, graphic lists, text reviews – all depend on having an organized numbering system so team members can focus on content instead of spending extra time sorting out the hundreds of elements that make up an exhibition.

Moreover, the many simultaneous projects underway in the National Park Service by various project teams, both within the NPS and by contractors, necessitates having a consistently applied numbering system so that all team members are speaking the same organizational language. The benefits of having a standardized exhibit numbering system are fully realized when project teams use the *Museum Exhibit Planner*, a database planning tool created by the National Park Service to keep all exhibit elements organized during the life of a project. The organizational underpinning of this tool is the NPS standardized exhibit numbering system.

Numbering System

An individual number is called the Exhibit Identification Number, or Ex ID No. for short. Every Ex ID No. has three parts, separated by hyphens, as follows:

element category - exhibit number - item number

The first part of the Ex ID No. is the element category; it occupies one character space. There are five types of element categories: Label (L), Graphic (G), Artifact (A), Digital layout (D), and Exhibit element (E). A Label is any discrete piece of text, including titles, graphic and artifact identifications, explanatory text, and quotations. A Graphic includes any photographs, artwork, or maps. An Artifact includes historic artifacts, replicas, reproductions, props, as well as natural history specimens and models. Digital layouts are composite graphics that are to be produced as direct digital printouts. An Exhibit element is a general category for three-dimensional parts of exhibits that are not in the Artifact category; these include video units, computer touch-screen interactive units, mannequins, microscopes, and physical interactive devices.

The second part of the Ex ID No. is the exhibit number; it occupies two character spaces (single-digit numbers are preceded by a zero, such as "02"). The exhibit number refers to a specific exhibit area within the exhibition. It is strongly recommended that exhibit numbers be assigned in such a way as to limit the number of items in any one exhibit to less than 100. In most cases it is better to have 25 smaller exhibits instead of six very large ones. It is useful to think of a numbered exhibit as a discrete physical structure that will be fabricated and installed as a unit, such as a 4'x8' graphic panel or a pedestal with a vitrine. The efficiency of the numbering system, and the planning database program, is defeated when broad theme areas of an exhibition are considered single exhibits for numbering purposes. The time to assign exhibit numbers is at the end of Concept Planning, before any final drawings are completed.

The third part of the Ex ID No. is the item number; it occupies three character spaces (single-digit and two-digit numbers are preceded by zeroes or a zero, as in "003" or "024"). It is best to have item numbers reflect some logical order in the exhibit, such as from top to bottom, or from left to right. Using this method, "L-09-001" would likely be the title of Exhibit 9. Item numbers do not repeat within an exhibit; for example, there would not be "L-09-001" and "G-09-001" in the same exhibit plan, but rather "L-09-001" followed by "G-09-02."