Working with Field Collections

Who here is familiar with the term "CCK"?

Who here has added custom fields to a content type? Did you let users add additional items (using the "unlimited" option)?

What kind of fields did you create? Anything for, say, people info? Or maybe a product description? Something where you needed groups of fields together to describe a particular type of entity (yes, I said entity)! And did you use the "unlimited" option? Or did you offer only a fixed amount, because how do you offer the ability to add unspecified additional amounts without your node/edit form looking mighty unwieldy? (Not to mention, how would you theme it so the appropriate fields are rendered with each other…)

Field Collections, that's how!

Who here has used the Field Groups module?
Ever wish you could offer users the ability to add additional field groups, add multiple fields in one shot?

**Guess what: Field Collections!**

The Field Collection module is kind of like using an entity reference, in that your node incorporates content collected in another type of entity. But it's a simpler version, and one that by default lets your users create these referred-to entities without having to leave the node/*/edit form.

You can even nest field collections!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIELD NAME</th>
<th>USED IN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>field_agenda_item</td>
<td>Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>field_agenda_item_moderator</td>
<td>Field collection field_agenda_item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>field_agenda_item_speaker</td>
<td>Event, Field collection field_agenda_item</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice how _moderator and _speaker fields are used in _agenda item.

**Field collections and Views**

When using Views to present nodes with field collections in them, you need to establish a relationship to the field collection in order for Views to reach inside and find the various sub-fields inside the collection. You also need to turn on aggregation.

It's not perfect; hinkiness (sp?) is presented when you go to create views listing nodes with field collections in them. I found that additional Field Collection items weren't displayed unless the view was sorted by one of the fields in the collection. And then it used separate rows, not ideal.
Default view sort, no repeating rows, but no additional values for Field Collection items.

Notice how “First event to test” shows up twice when the view is sorted by e-mail.

But, if you want users to be able to filter a view using a value specified for one of the collection’s fields (exposing a filter), well, that worked for me.

Exposed filters will find those buried fields.
Displaying field collections

Out of the box, the way Field Collections fields are displayed on a node is, well, it’s okay. But hey, if “okay” was good enough for us, we wouldn’t be Drupal developers, would we?

Fortunately, as is often the case with things Drupal, there’s a module to fix that: Field Collection Views. This lets you create a view to determine how the Field Collection fields will be displayed on your nodes.

At right: Field Collection items formatted in a table with Field Collection Views.
Links

Module, documentation, tutorials:
• https://drupal.org/project/field_collection
• https://drupal.org/node/1353926
• http://codekarate.com/daily-dose-of-drupal/drupal-7-field-collection-module
• http://codekarate.com/daily-dose-of-drupal/drupal-7-field-collection-views-module
• http://nodeone.se/en/the-aggregation-setting-the-emmajane-episode

Related modules:
• https://drupal.org/project/field_collection_views
• https://drupal.org/project/field_collection_fieldset
• https://drupal.org/project/quicktabs_field_collection
• https://drupal.org/project/field_collection_tabs
• https://drupal.org/project/field_collection_table
• https://drupal.org/project/field_collection_modals
• https://drupal.org/project/apachesolr_field_collection

Pertinent issues:
• https://drupal.org/node/1171012
• https://drupal.org/node/2008468
• https://drupal.org/node/1936620
• http://drupal.stackexchange.com/questions/5101/how-to-integrate-field-collection-module-in-views
• https://drupal.org/node/1276258
• https://drupal.org/node/1788222
• https://drupal.org/node/1239946
• https://drupal.org/node/1157794