Introduction to Omeka

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WHY USE OMEKA?

• Create a digital exhibit or collection
  https://connollymusiccollection.bc.edu/

• Share research, teaching materials, and sources
  http://coloredconventions.org/

• Create a public history project
  https://clevelandhistorical.org/

• Student coursework, working with primary sources
  https://goinnorth.org/

• Set up a participatory archive or collection
  https://baltimoreuprising2015.org/

More examples: https://omeka.org/classic/directory/
Go to omeka.net and create an account or login if you want to follow along.
OVERVIEW OF OMEKA DASHBOARD

Walk through:

https://vandydisctestsire.omeka.net/admin/

If you ever can’t find the Admin Panel, go to the public page and add /admin at the end of the url.
• Add and configure plugins for more functionality
• Change the appearance using themes
• Add and configure user privileges
• Change settings
  Site description, copyright
  Element Sets – rearrange order of elements to display and give input instructions
• Add items
• Create exhibits and/or collections
• Add pages
• Browse tags
• Add or customize item types
• Any installed plugins
ADDING ITEMS AND METADATA
THE ITEM

• Basic building block of Omeka
  • Collections and exhibits are optional

• Can be any major digital file type for documents, images, audio, and video (pdf, jpeg, mpeg, YouTube embed, etc.)

• Allows you to contextualize the item by adding description and metadata
**COLLECTIONS VS. EXHIBITS**

**Collections**
- An item can only be in one collection (1:1)
- Items in the same collection are typically from the same source (or *fonds*)
- Link to items in other collections using tags or exhibits

**Exhibits**
- Items can be in more than one exhibit (1:1+)
- Guided tour through items, typically organized thematically rather than by source

*If not using, remove from navigation menu via Appearance – Navigation.*
METADATA

Metadata commonly defined as “data about data”

“Metadata is...

...constructed... (Metadata is wholly artificial, created by human beings.)

... for a purpose ... (There is no universal metadata. For metadata to be useful it has to serve a purpose.)

... to facilitate an activity... (There's something that you do with metadata.)”

DUBLIN CORE METADATA

• Represent the 15 most-commonly used generic metadata elements used in the cultural heritage community.

• Very flexible and intended to describe a variety of cultural heritage resources.

Let’s look at the handout of built-in Dublin Core terms and how they are typically applied in Omeka
ADD ITEM

Walk through Add Item:

https://vandydisctestsite.omeka.net/admin/
• Choose an item from your own research or grab an image from Wikipedia
• Have a digital exhibit or thesis in mind
• Write down in the final column how you would complete the Dublin Core metadata elements for your item
• Don’t enter your item in Omeka just yet
DISCUSS WITH PARTNER

• What choices did you make about metadata?
• What Dublin Core elements worked for you? Which ones did not?
• What was your organizing principle?
• Did you have an audience in mind?
• Were you describing the object or the representation of the object?
ADD NEW ITEM

• Add your new item

• Make sure to set to public so we can all see
CREATE EXHIBITS

• Requires Exhibit Builder and Simple Pages plugins (standard, but must activate first)
• Take time to plan your argument or theme
• Can use multiple exhibits to organize by theme, style, time period
• Add pages to contextualize your items
  • Pages are where you add items to your exhibit using various layouts
FINDING & ADDING PLUGINS
LANGUAGE SETTINGS

• Locale Plugin
  • Standard with Omeka.net
  • Changes the language in the admin panel and the site

• Options for bilingual sites
  • Use the ‘Add Input’ button to add multiple entries in a given metadata field
  • Make separate Exhibits – one in each language
MORE SAMPLE SITES

• New Roots: Voices from Carolina del Norte!
  https://newroots.lib.unc.edu/

• Shoebox of Norwegian Letters
  http://huginn.net/shoebox/letters/

• German Heritage in Letters
  https://www.germanletters.org/
POPULAR PLUGINS

• Add map (Geolocation plugin)
• Batch upload your items and metadata (CSV Import)
• Crowdsource transcriptions or translations (Scripto)
• Solicit contributions from the public (Contributions)
• Define your own controlled vocabulary for metadata (Simple Vocab)
• Allow users to annotate text or images (Text Annotation, Exhibit Image Annotation)
OMEKA ALTERNATIVES

1. Scalar
   • Also built with academia and cultural heritage in mind
   • Emphasis on long-form writing with accompanying media
   • Good for multiple, non-linear alternative paths through the collection
   • Fewer add-ons, smaller user community

2. WordPress
   • Good for more simple sites, not ideal for uploading and organizing media items

3. Drupal
   • More flexible, but more sophisticated
   • Good for more complex querying of your collection
FINDING PLUGINS

• Registered Plugins: https://omeka.org/classic/plugins/
  • These typically have the most instructions and users
  • Supported in the Omeka help forum

• More unregistered plugins can be found by searching Github
  • May require additional configuration
  • Less likely to keep up with updates
  • But can still be pretty useful
    • CSV Import Plus combines CSV Import with Geolocation data
OMEKA EXTENSIONS

• Neatline from UVA Scholars Lab  https://neatline.org/
  • Add interactive timeline
  • Add historical map overlays

• Curatescape  https://curatescape.org/
  Good for public history and mobile apps

(can’t use these on Omeka.net)
WHICH OMEKA? PART 1

Omeka.org

• Free, but requires you to self-host (VU can help?)
• All plugins and themes available
• More customization options
• Can develop additional plugins or themes, if desired
• Omeka Classic or Omeka S

Omeka.net

• No server required
• Free basic plan has limited plugins
• Additional plugins, themes, and storage space for a fee
• Omeka Classic only
• Good for students
WHICH OMEKA?

**Omeka Classic**
- One site per installation
- Easier to use and has most plugins and themes
- Today’s workshop
- Omeka.net uses Classic

**Omeka S**
- Can have multiple sites per single installation
- Designed for institutions, but can be used in classroom setting
- More sophisticated administrative side, not as intuitive
- Try sandbox: [https://omeka.org/s/download/#sandbox](https://omeka.org/s/download/#sandbox)
IF YOU NEED HELP

Omeka User Manual: https://omeka.org/classic/docs/

Omeka Forum: https://forum.omeka.org/c/omeka-classic

Omeka Gym: https://omekagym.omeka.net/

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