

Lesson Plan:
Using Omeka to Make Connections Between Collections

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IST 605
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October 27, 2013

Narrative

In our current Information Age, many libraries, archives, and museums are sharing their collections online as digital resources. However, as consumers of such collections, many of us take them for granted, unaware of intellectual property or authorship issues, or of how to read and attribute materials that aren't text, such as images, artifacts, audio, and video. Students, faculty, and administrators who are careful to cite text to avoid plagiarism are not nearly as careful of attributing multi-media works. The workshop described in this lesson plan, "Using Omeka to Make Connections Between Collections," provides an opportunity for students to participate in the production of an online database and digital exhibition. Once the steps of production for such a resource are made visible to students, they are able to better appreciate such resources as consumers, and are more able to view such resources critically.

While the structure of the workshop will be geared to the cognitive needs of undergraduate students at a liberal arts college (provided at an academic library), it could also be taught as a combined lesson that includes graduate students, faculty, and administrators, or could be adapted for each of those individual groups. Unfortunately, many faculty members are as unskilled at working with visual materials, artifacts, and digital resources as their students, compared to their skill at approaching text-based materials, so they could benefit equally from this workshop.

This kind of lesson is most appropriate in relation to classes that examine historical materials prior to the early 20th century, as it relies on sharing materials that are either in the public domain or are available with open licenses. Although more

institutions are making digital collections of cultural heritage materials available through open licenses such as Creative Commons, such materials are more rare for the 20th and 21st centuries. Where appropriate materials are available, digital tools such as Omeka can provide better understanding of a subject by uniting digitized materials from diverse collections.

The goal of this workshop is to help students, faculty, and administrators be more aware of their own information literacy as both consumers and producers of information, by showing them how databases and digital exhibits are constructed with human labor and decision making, including respect for intellectual property. Participants will learn how to use Omeka, a digital publishing platform, to share new and existing content, how to evaluate if resources from other digital collections have rights permissions allowing for re-use, and how to cite such resources.

Full Lesson Plan

Lesson Plan Title

Using Omeka to Make Connections Between Collections

Concept / Topic to Teach

This workshop will highlight several aspects of information literacy by showing the ways that digital exhibition tools such as Omeka are constructed, and how they can provide better understanding of a subject by uniting digitized materials from diverse collections, as long as those collections have made their materials available for re-use, and their materials are properly attributed.

Standards Addressed

This lesson supports standards from the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, 2000). In the Step-by-Step Procedure section below, relevant standards are noted by number for each part of the lesson. Each standard addressed is listed in full at the end.

General Goal(s)

To help undergraduate students, faculty, and administrators be more aware of their own information literacy as both consumers and producers of information, by showing them how databases and digital exhibits are constructed with human labor and decision making, including respect for intellectual property.

Specific Objectives

1. Participants will upload files and metadata to Omeka for a primary source item that has not previously been made available digitally.
2. Participants will follow standards from Dublin Core and Cataloging Cultural Objects to provide information about the files they have uploaded to Omeka.
3. Participants will evaluate whether they are permitted to re-use related resources they find online.
4. Participants will find related resources that are available for re-use from a provided list of repositories with openly licensed materials.
5. Participants will upload files and metadata to Omeka for an item that already exists in another digital collection.
6. Participants will edit existing entries in Omeka.
7. Participants will cite their sources for files and information being re-used in Omeka.
8. Participants will begin to organize files and information into a curated digital exhibit in Omeka.

Required Materials

- computer lab - one computer or device for each participant
projection screen or large screen monitor for instructor to demonstrate to the entire group
- internet access
- an Omeka installation -
 - either on an institutional server
 - or through Omeka.net (which includes free basic sites)
 - this must be prepared by the instructor in advance
 - installation, themes, plugins set up
 - example items entered and partially filled out (for students to finish)
 - skeleton of exhibition set up (for students to add to)
- handouts (for distance participants, encourage printing as hard copies)
 - agenda for entire lesson, vocab terms for each module, links to suggested repositories, step by step instructions with screenshots
 - tip sheet from Omeka, from <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B20qFi2IJujUN0IpZ3laWkN6Mjg/edit> (Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, 2013)
 - a hard copy of a digitized image for a primary source item (can be text, image, artifact, etc.), with the filename for the digital file on the page
 - worksheet for creating the catalog entries for items in the lesson, with filled in examples for the digital images already provided
- paper, pens for note-taking

Anticipatory Set

I will show examples of digital exhibitions created using Omeka, to show how digital exhibitions can bring together materials that are physically in different places.

examples:

Grateful Dead Archive Online - <http://www.gdao.org/>

Square Dance History Project - <http://squaredancehistory.org/>

Martha Washington: A Life - <http://marthawashington.us/>

Making the History of 1989 - <http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/>

Step-By-Step Procedures

This lesson has been broken down into a series of modules, so they can be spread out over time, or done all in one session. The combined length of all the modules is two hours, which could be covered in one longer class period or two shorter ones. With this modular format, faculty and students can pick and choose which are relevant for a particular project, and adapt a workshop accordingly. If modules are made available digitally as videos, students are especially able to adapt the workshop to their specific needs, with the added advantage of being able to rewind and replay sections that are particularly helpful.

While this lesson focuses on Omeka as the provided tool, it could be adapted to apply the same concepts to projects in Wordpress, or to other content management systems, or to manually created digital projects.

Total length: 2 hours

1. Introduction (5 minutes)
 - 1.1. Module 1 - For this module, I will show examples of digital exhibitions created using Omeka, and how digital exhibitions can bring together materials that are physically in different places. Examples will include the Grateful Dead Archive Online (<http://www.gdao.org/>), Square Dance History Project (<http://squaredancehistory.org/>), Martha Washington: A Life (<http://marthawashington.us/>), and Making the History of 1989 (<http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/>). Then I will go over the agenda for the entire workshop.
2. Adding a new primary source item (40 minutes)
 - 2.1. Module 2.1 - Observation (10 minutes)
 - 2.1.1. This module will begin with an **exercise**, for which I will group students into pairs, provide each student pair with a hard copy of a digitized image for a primary source item (can be text, image, artifact, etc.), with the filename for the digital file on the page, and ask each student pair to take notes on the side of the page to describe what they're looking at, thinking in terms of who, what, when, where, why, and how.
 - 2.1.2. When I bring the group back together to discuss the exercise, I will point out that what they are viewing is not the "real thing" (1.2.c) and I will define the term "surrogate," that the digitized file is one kind of surrogate, and a paper copy is another. I will discuss whether any of them said they were looking at a piece of paper, showing how current information systems can make it easy to forget the separation from the real thing.
 - 2.1.3. We will also discuss primary vs. secondary sources (1.2.e) and the fact that artifacts can be primary sources
 - 2.2. Module 2.2 - Working with Omeka (5 minutes)
 - 2.2.1. While I demonstrate on a central projector or large monitor, students can follow along on their own computers. Using examples, I will define some terms: Content Management System (Omeka, Wordpress, Drupal); in Omeka: admin, public, item, collection, item type, browse, search. I will demonstrate how to navigate the public view of an Omeka site: items, collections, browsing, tags, logging in (5.2.b), public vs. admin view, and exhibits vs. database.
 - 2.3. Module 2.3 - Entering an item in Omeka (1.2.f, 2.5.e) (10 minutes)
 - 2.3.1. I will begin by introducing the concept of metadata. Then I will explain the main core elements of the Dublin Core metadata schema as presented in the Dublin Core User Guide (Ruhle, Baker, and Johnston, 2011). I will provide a handout with Dublin Core elements already filled in for the digital images provided in the exercise in part 2.1, and mapped to the "who, what,

- when, where, why, how" concepts, following guidelines from Cataloging Cultural Objects (Baca, Harpring, Lanzi, McRae, and Whiteside, 2006). I'll demonstrate entering metadata for my example (5 minutes).
- 2.3.2. Then students will have an **exercise**, to find an existing entry for their item, already started, and fill in remaining data for the Dublin Core elements, using the provided information (or, for a video module, where students are not using a shared installation of Omeka, they can take more time to add entries from scratch independently in the Omeka site they are using) (5 minutes).
 - 2.4. Module 2.4 - Entering an item in Omeka, part 2 (1.2.f, 2.5.e) (10 minutes)
 - 2.4.1. Next I will show how to enter Item type metadata, Files, Tags, and Collections, and will save my item. I will also show how to edit an existing item (5 minutes).
 - 2.4.2. Then students will continue their **exercise**, working with an existing entry for their item, already started, and filling in remaining data for the Item type metadata, Files, Tags, and Collections areas, using the provided information (5 minutes).
 - 2.5. Module 2.5 - (5 minutes)
 3. Having gone through these steps, we will discuss the constructed nature of databases and online collections (3.2.a): how dependent they are on human input and organization, how simple mistakes can impact on user searches, and how they can be biased to a discipline or to a philosophy. Re-using an existing primary source item from another collection (35 minutes)
 - 3.1. **Module 3.1** - Evaluating related resources (15 minutes)
 - 3.1.1. This module will begin with an **exercise** to find 2 resources from other collections, using any search tools students are familiar with. I will have search terms prepared for given items, if students need them, that I know will have successful results.
 - 3.1.2. I will demonstrate how to determine if items are appropriate (1.2.d, 3.2.1, 3.2.c, 3.2.d, 3.4.e), for example if sources are popular vs. scholarly, or current vs. historical. Then I will show how to determine the rights and permissions of materials from other sites (5.2.e), by looking at terms and conditions, and suggesting ways of asking for permission when in doubt.
 - 3.1.3. Students will have an **exercise** to evaluate permissions of the materials from the last exercise (2.4.a, 2.4.b).
 - 3.1.4. A 5 minute break (bathroom, drinks, etc.) will fit best here, if it is needed.
 - 3.2. Module 3.2 - Finding openly licensed materials (10 minutes)
 - 3.2.1. After defining some terms (public domain, Creative Commons License, Repository) I will share some helpful resources: Wikimedia commons (<http://commons.wikimedia.org/>), Creative commons search (<http://search.creativecommons.org/>), Getty (<http://search.getty.edu/gateway/landing>), and the OpenGLAM guide to other museums/collections (<http://openglam.org/open-collections/>). I will mention ways of improving search strategy through different keywords, etc. (2.2.b, 2.2.e). Another **exercise** will follow, to look for 3-5 more resources, from the suggested sites above (2.4.c).

- 3.3. Module 3.3 - How to cite materials from other sites (2.5.c, 2.5.d) (10 minutes)
 - 3.3.1. I will demonstrate how to collect the necessary information for a citation, including author, title, date, publisher, URL, etc. Then we will enter that information into Omeka, highlighting the Rights element under Dublin Core (5.3.b). We will also examine the automated citation created in Omeka for the item they entered in a previous exercise.
 - 3.3.2. In the next **exercise**, they will generate citations for 1-2 resources they found (5.3.a), and enter them into Omeka.
4. Beginning to build an exhibit (30 minutes)
 - 4.1. Module 4.1 - We will briefly look at examples of existing exhibits. (5 minutes)
 - 4.2. Module 4.2 - How to build an exhibit in Omeka - 4.3.b (15 minutes)
 - 4.2.1. I will show students the structure of sections, pages, items, text, and captions in exhibits, along with page layouts, and how to add items and make it public.
 - 4.2.2. **Exercise** - using a provided skeleton exhibit, students will add 2 items.
 - 4.3. Module 4.3 - Explain continuation of assignment on their own - 3.4.f (10 minutes)
 - 4.3.1. I will explain how they will continue their independent exhibition project, by finding more items, adding them to Omeka, adding them to the exhibit, incorporating primary and secondary source text to support their ideas (3.1.a, 3.1.c, 3.4.c), evaluating when they have enough evidence to support their ideas (3.4.a, 3.4.g), and refining their text and design of the exhibit to support their main ideas (3.1.b, 4.1.c, 4.1.d, 4.3.c, 4.3.d).
5. Conclusion (10 minutes)
 - 5.1. I will briefly restate the information literacy goals we have achieved in this lesson: sharing information using digital exhibition tools, respecting intellectual property with proper attribution, and understanding the constructed nature of databases for their future use of databases as consumers.
 - 5.2. Questions and feedback
 - 5.2.1. I will hand out a worksheet for them to write their feedback as a final **exercise**, including one thing that surprised them from this lesson, one other thing they learned, and one thing they still don't understand or wish they had learned. After we discuss their feedback out loud, as a group, I will answer any additional questions they have, and share information about how they can reach me for follow up questions. I will also remind them of the Omeka tip sheet handout, which has many useful links for more information (Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, 2013).

Plan for Independent Practice

- As noted above, independent exercises are included throughout the lesson, in sections 2.3.2, 2.4.2, 3.1.1, 3.1.4, 3.2.4, 3.3.3, 4.2.2, and 5.2.1.
- Also, a pair (or group) exercise is included as the first exercise, in section 2.1.1.
- The final assignment will be completed independently as a larger project.

Closure

- At the end of the lesson, I will briefly restate the information literacy goals we have achieved in this lesson, as discussed above.
- I will also seek the following feedback from them, written independently as a handout:
 - One thing that surprised them from this lesson
 - One other thing they learned
 - One thing they still don't understand or wish they had learned
- Finally, we will discuss their feedback as a group, and I will answer remaining questions and point out how they can contact me for any follow-up questions.

Assessment/Evaluation

- I will conduct on-the-fly assessment of each student's work on the exercises, providing additional help as needed.
- I will create rubrics for evaluating their work on the following, based on the objectives identified previously:
 - cataloging entries in Omeka
 - citations for found resources
 - first steps in creating exhibition
 - completed exhibition

Possible Adaptations

To assist students with different physical and cognitive needs, it will help to provide:

- screenshots in handouts
- large print handouts
- video format of lessons, for rewinding and replaying as needed
- screencasts indicating mouse actions, etc.
- captions for videos

Standards Applied in this Lesson

(from the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, 2000))

1.2.c - Identifies the value and differences of potential resources in a variety of formats (e.g., multimedia, database, website, data set, audio/visual, book)

1.2.d - Identifies the purpose and audience of potential resources (e.g., popular vs. scholarly, current vs. historical)

1.2.e - Differentiates between primary and secondary sources, recognizing how their use and importance vary with each discipline

1.2.f - Realizes that information may need to be constructed with raw data from primary sources

- 2.2.b - Identifies keywords, synonyms and related terms for the information needed
- 2.2.e - Implements the search strategy in various information retrieval systems using different user interfaces and search engines, with different command languages, protocols, and search parameters
- 2.4.a - Assesses the quantity, quality, and relevance of the search results to determine whether alternative information retrieval systems or investigative methods should be utilized
- 2.4.b - Identifies gaps in the information retrieved and determines if the search strategy should be revised
- 2.4.c - Repeats the search using the revised strategy as necessary
- 2.5.c - Differentiates between the types of sources cited and understands the elements and correct syntax of a citation for a wide range of resources
- 2.5.d - Records all pertinent citation information for future reference
- 2.5.e - Uses various technologies to manage the information selected and organized

- 3.1.a - Reads the text and selects main ideas
- 3.1.b - Restates textual concepts in his/her own words and selects data accurately
- 3.1.c - Identifies verbatim material that can be then appropriately quoted

- 3.2.a - Examines and compares information from various sources in order to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias
- 3.2.c - Recognizes prejudice, deception, or manipulation
- 3.2.d - Recognizes the cultural, physical, or other context within which the information was created and understands the impact of context on interpreting the information
- 3.4.a - Determines whether information satisfies the research or other information need
- 3.4.c - Draws conclusions based upon information gathered
- 3.4.e - Determines probable accuracy by questioning the source of the data, the limitations of the information gathering tools or strategies, and the reasonableness of the conclusions
- 3.4.f - Integrates new information with previous information or knowledge
- 3.4.g - Selects information that provides evidence for the topic

- 4.1.c - Integrates the new and prior information, including quotations and paraphrasings, in a manner that supports the purposes of the product or performance
- 4.1.d - Manipulates digital text, images, and data, as needed, transferring them from their original locations and formats to a new context
- 4.3.b - Uses a range of information technology applications in creating the product or performance
- 4.3.c - Incorporates principles of design and communication
- 4.3.d - Communicates clearly and with a style that supports the purposes of the intended audience

- 5.2.b - Uses approved passwords and other forms of ID for access to information resources
- 5.2.e - Legally obtains, stores, and disseminates text, data, images, or sounds

5.2.f - Demonstrates an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and does not represent work attributable to others as his/her own

5.3.a - Selects an appropriate documentation style and uses it consistently to cite sources

5.3.b - Posts permission granted notices, as needed, for copyrighted material

References

Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). (2000). *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*. Chicago, Ill: American Library Association. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency>

Baca, M., Harpring, P., Lanzi, E., McRae, L., & Whiteside, A. (Eds.). (2006). *Cataloging cultural objects: a guide to describing cultural works and their images*. Chicago: American Library Association.

Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media. (2013, September 12). Omeka Workshop Tip Sheet: Getting Started, Terms, and other Resources. Retrieved from <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B20qFi2IjUjUN0lpZ3laWkN6Mjg/edit>

Ruhle, S., Baker, T., & Johnston, P. (2011, September 6). User Guide - DCMI_MediaWiki. Retrieved October 20, 2013, from http://wiki.dublincore.org/index.php/User_Guide

Handout

Example of a catalog entry for an item, using Dublin Core

informal description type	Dublin Core element	definition	value for bustle example
who	contributor	An entity who helped with the creation of the item, but is not the main creator.	-
who	creator	The main entity who created the item.	Unknown American inventor
when	date	The date the item was created, in the format 2013-10-22, starting with the year, then adding the month and date (if known). If the date is uncertain, it can be expressed as a range from earliest year to latest (ex.1910-1919).	1871
what	description	Includes a brief physical description of the item, including inscriptions, and any important information about it.	Bustle (cage), of natural cotton muslin and twill tapes and metal wire bands: half-cylinder shape, with metal bands horizontally forming shape, suspended from vertical tapes; waistband of tape with adjustable buckle and hanging tabs; flat back of muslin, open down CB with grommets for laced closure; tape tabs hanging from lowest band of metal. A label is printed on the inside of the waistband. The first part is illegible, but the remainder reads: 1868. REISSUE, MAR. 28, 1871. PAT'D APR. 18, 1871.
what	extent	The size or duration of the item.	center back length=12 1/2 inches; width at bottom= 7 1/2 inches (13 1/3 when flat); waist= 21-29 inches; depth = 4 1/2 inches
what	identifier	A unique number or name for the item.	VC1992158
what	medium	The material or physical carrier of the item.	metal, cotton
who	publisher	An entity responsible for making the resource available.	
how	references	A related resource that is referenced by the described item.	
what	relation	The identifier and/or title of a related resource.	
how	rights	Information about rights held in and over the item.	Courtesy of the Vassar College Costume Collection. Images and metadata are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.

how	source	A related resource from which the described item is derived.	
where	spatial coverage	Locations or regions associated with the creation or lifespan of the item.	American
what	subject	The topic of the resource, ideally using Library of Congress subject headings.	Clothing and dress; underwear; fashion
when	temporal coverage	Time periods associated with the creation or lifespan of the item.	1870-1879
what	title	A name given to the item. If the item is not already known by a formal name, then a brief descriptive title can be constructed.	Wire Bustle Cage
what	type	The nature or genre of the item: usually Physical Object, Text, Still Image, Moving Image, or Sound.	Physical Object

Resources that can help you to construct your catalog entries:

Baca, M., Harpring, P., Lanzi, E., McRae, L., & Whiteside, A. (Eds.). (2006). *Cataloging cultural objects: a guide to describing cultural works and their images*. Chicago: American Library Association.

This is a guide, used widely in libraries, archives, and museums, for very specific details of how to describe artifacts in structured formats.

Ruhle, S., Baker, T., & Johnston, P. (2011, September 6). User Guide - DCMI_MediaWiki. Retrieved October 20, 2013, from http://wiki.dublincore.org/index.php/User_Guide

This is a wiki, created to help explain the usage of the different Dublin Core elements.