SHARING BACK SKILLS THROUGH THE DIGITAL HUMANITIES LAB

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries

Anna Michelle Martinez-Montavon
Instructional Design Librarian, User Services

Ann Hanlon
Head, Digital Collections and Initiatives
The DH Lab at UWM Libraries

Established September 2013
The Library and DH

• Strategic planning: Campus and internal emphasis on "digital futures"

• Exploiting existing library skill sets to support digital scholarship
  • Building digital archives
  • Metadata support
  • Digital preservation
  • Visualizing and organizing information
Faculty and DH
- Convened informal interest group (DHIG)
- Need for interdisciplinary space in the Library
- Need for coordination of projects and ideas across campus
- Raise visibility for DH teaching and research on campus
Supporting infrastructure for digital projects

• MANY potential areas of focus
• Need to identify key needs
• ...in order to prioritize investment in resources
Supporting infrastructure for digital projects

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- ...in order to prioritize investment in resources

1. **Collaborative Research Grants Project**: Identified oral histories and digital archives as one key focus

2. **Special Collections Exhibits project**: Identified Omeka as key resource for development; helped prioritize server access
Special Collections Exhibits project (from the DH Lab angle)

- Facilitate development of environment to enable reuse of our digital collections
- Faculty interest in using Omeka as a teaching tool
- Collaborative research grants cohort interest in Omeka as a repository/delivery tool
- Making a case for server support for Linux/LAMP environment
  - Side benefit of better support for other Linux/LAMP friendly tools and applications
BUILDING SKILLS

Omeka for Special Collections
In the beginning...

The Classic Text, 1997
Updates!

The Classic Text, 2013
New Exhibit

Another Place, 2014

Welcome to Another Place

Use the map above to navigate or the signs on the left. You can also open a larger version of this map.
Big Changes

Switch to WordPress, 2014
The Challenges

- Large exhibits
- Non-linear exhibits
- Lack of cohesive design
- Content and code evaluation
- Not enough time!
The Challenges

• Large exhibits
• Non-linear exhibits
• Lack of cohesive design
Game plan

- Google Analytics to prioritize exhibits
- Researched library/museum platforms
- DH Lab input & Omeka sandbox
Web-publishing platform to display collections and exhibits, designed with libraries, museums, archives, and scholars in mind.

• Free
• Dublin Core
• Built-in flexibility
• Drag-and-drop editing
• Open source
• Active and supportive community
Infrastructure

- Work with Library Systems and Campus IT to set up production Linux server environment

- Multiple instances of Omeka with multiple users

  - So Anna can access the directory to make changes and customizations

  - Enable multiple sites – such as the *Stitching History from the Holocaust* collaborative exhibit
New Skills

- PHP
- JavaScript
- MySQL
- GitHub
New Skills

- PHP
- JavaScript
- MySQL
- GitHub
Remixing Themes

- **EmiglioRemix** (site)
  - Lightbox
  - Items link to exhibits
  - Snippets & tags

- **UWM SPL (exhibits)**
  - Banner & color options
  - Show/hide content
  - Link back to exhibit from item pages

- **Another Place Neatline Theme**
  - Custom citation
  - Lightbox
  - Link to Omeka record
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The Classic Text

Traditions and Interpretations

In what ways have such classic works as the Bible and the plays of William Shakespeare been presented to a loyal readership over the centuries? How have the works of the ancient Greeks and Romans been transmitted through the millenia, and why do they continue to hold such potency and relevance? How has the vivid imagery of Dante’s Divine Comedy been depicted and interpreted from the middle ages to the present? Would Milton’s Paradise Lost have entered the canon of western literature without the untiring promotional efforts of its principal publisher? Why do works such as Cooper’s The Last of the Mohicans and Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin continue to hold secure positions as American literary classics? Would James Joyce’s Ulysses have remained an obscure modernist novel without the censorship issues that surrounded it?

These are some of the questions addressed by a major exhibition entitled “The Classic Text: Traditions and Interpretations,” that was on view in the Fourth Floor Exhibition Gallery of the Golda Meir Library from May 1996 through March 1997. This exhibit was translated to the Web in 1997 and has now been redesigned for Omeka.
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Remixing Plugins

- **Lightbox Gallery**
  - Display exhibit images
  - Group images (or not!)

- **Add Subtitle**
  - Add new fields to database
SHARING BACK SKILLS

Fostering Peer-to-Peer Connections
Stitching History

- Collaboration with the Jewish Museum Milwaukee
- Led by UWM Adjunct faculty, Rachel Baum and built by History graduate student, Will Tchakirides
Stitching History

- Collaboration with the Jewish Museum Milwaukee
- Led by UWM Adjunct faculty, Rachel Baum and built by History graduate student, Will Tchakirides
- Incorporates customizations built by Anna
  - Carousel plug-in + Lightbox
Omeka Workshop, Nov. 12, 2015

• Led by Anna
• Broad interest from Library and from faculty
• Questions ranged from basic "how does Omeka work?" to questions about customization and hosting
• Surfaced need for more granular, in-depth workshops, and one-on-one consulting
Making Connections

Workshop → Archives → History Methods
NEXT STEPS
Special Collections

- Guide to our Omeka instance
- Pass on knowledge
- New exhibits

### Documentation

It is recommended that designers use GitHub as a way to document changes and create an accessible backup of theme files. The code for the Special Collections main Omeka theme is available at [https://github.com/annamichelle/EmiglioThemes/](https://github.com/annamichelle/EmiglioThemes/). This code is issued under the same GNU General Public License as the original “Emiglio” theme and is free for anyone to use, modify, and share. The exhibit theme is based off the Special Collections theme and is available at: [https://github.com/annamichelle/theme-swmsoap](https://github.com/annamichelle/theme-swmsoap)

Contributors should group related changes on a separate branch before committing them to the master files so that they can be fully tested before overwriting current files.

For help using GitHub, check out the [Help](https://github.com/help) or [Guides](https://github.com/guides) sections.

If you are having trouble with coding new functionality into Omeka, check out the [Omeka Developer Documentation](http://omeka.org/docs) and ask a question on the [Omeka Dev listserv](http://omeska.org/mailman/listinfo/omeka-developer)

If you have trouble with something that Anna coded, submit an issue to the appropriate repository on GitHub or send her an email: annamichellemm@gmail.com.
Skill-building

• DH Box sandbox
  • Garage sessions
  • Classroom integration
• Seeding skills among librarians and faculty
Maintaining and Scaling Up
QUESTIONS?

Anna – Omeka
marti448@uwm.edu

Ann – Digital Humanities Lab
hanlon@uwm.edu