Introduction to Omeka & Dublin Core

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HIST 7251: Topics in Public History

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Workshop Agenda

- Introduction: what is Omeka and what are digital archives?
- Review and discussion of digital projects built with Omeka
- Introduction: Dublin Core
- Demonstration: Omeka S Sandbox
- Omeka best practices and assignment

Slides and handout available at

http://bit.ly/sp24-parr-hist7251-omeka

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Introduction to Omeka

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Introduction to Omeka

- Developed by the [Corporation for Digital Scholarship](#) (CDS), a non-profit started in 2009 at the [Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media](#) at George Mason University.
- CDS maintains and funds a host of open access tools for researchers and cultural heritage institutions including: [Zotero](#), Trophy, PressForward, Sourcery, and Omeka.

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What is Omeka?

- Omeka is a **web publishing platform** for **items**, **exhibits**, and **collections**

- Designed with scholars, librarians, educators and archivists in mind, Omeka emphasizes the role of **metadata** in **archiving** and **curation**

- Omeka offers the ability to contextualize items & bring them into conversation with one another

- Omeka makes it easy to create and update metadata using **Dublin Core** standards

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Versions of Omeka

There are three different versions of Omeka, each with their own benefits for different types of audiences, institutions, and users.

Omeka.net: version of Omeka that includes a free and priced plan options, including support *and* hosting by Omeka (CDS).

Omeka Classic: version of Omeka built for individuals or educators where each site requires a different installation, including separate hosting (domain/URL).

Omeka S: version of Omeka for institutions managing a sharable resource pool across multiple sites or other collections and resources.

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Properties of Omeka

Like other web-publishing platforms (like Wix or WordPress), different versions of Omeka come with customization features, like **plugins** and **themes**.

- **Plugins**: pieces of software that add new features or functionality to existing applications.
- **Themes**: foundational design of a website, including typography, color palettes, layout, header and footers, backgrounds, etc.

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Digital Archive Vocabulary

- **Collections:** a group of items arranged around a particular subject.
- **Exhibits**: pages created to showcase archival items or collections around subjects, to tell a story or narrative, or convey a specific message. Materials are accompanied by interpretive text.
- **Metadata**: fields or types of data that provides information about or describes data, like the fields "author," "title," and "place of publication" for a book in a library catalog system.

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Group Activity: Explore and Discuss Omeka Projects

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Example Omeka Projects

Many projects use Omeka to organize, describe, and exhibit archival materials. Here are a few examples we will be looking at today:

- Colored Conventions Project: https://omeka.coloredconventions.org/
- Texts of Taste: http://www.textsoftaste.com/

Other Omeka projects to explore:

- The Pattern Maker's Vice: https://patternmaker.omeka.net/
- Round the Globe: Travel Routes of Children's Literature: https://roundtheglobe.omeka.net/

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Colored Conventions Project

The [Colored Conventions Project](#) (CCP) is a digital humanities project led by students, faculty, and librarians featuring a digital archive of the Colored Conventions meeting notes, but also exhibits, curriculum, and more.
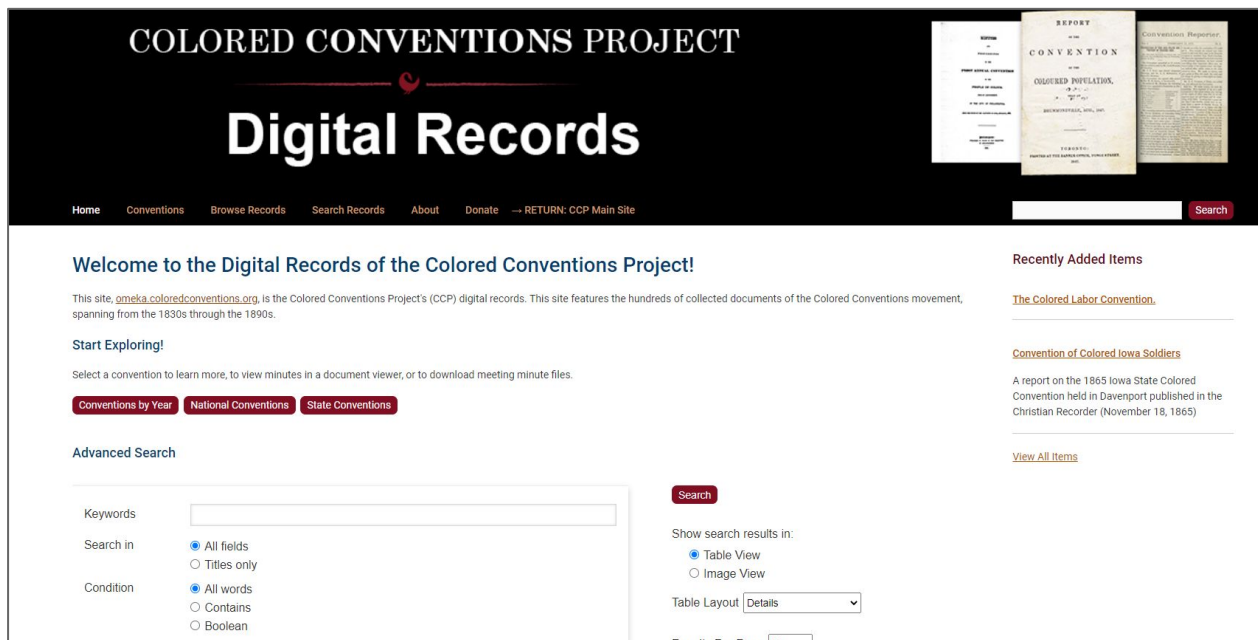
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Texts of Taste

Texts of Taste is a digital archive created by Avery Blankenship, a PhD Student at Northeastern (English Department). The archive hosts annotated, marked-up, and otherwise notated 19th-century American recipes and cookbooks.

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Discussion Questions

- What metadata fields did these projects use?
  - Are any surprising to you?
- How did the metadata fields differ across the projects?
- How the projects use of Omeka differ?

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Dublin Core

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Metadata Standards: Dublin Core

Metadata Standards: a shared system used by projects and institutions to structure and understand data, including principles and rules for implementing the description and categorization of data.

Dublin Core: first created in 1995, this standard includes elements to describe items in information systems and is used by many groups.

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Dublin Core Specifics

- Dublin Core was created to support open cultural heritage data.

- It is designed to be simple and flexible, which has both advantages and disadvantages.

- Fields include: title, contributor, creator, date, subject, description, format, identifier, language, publisher, relation, rights, source, and type.

Dublin Core Best Practices

- All the fields are optional, so you can choose which you want to use to describe the items in your archive; be strategic about which fields you select!

- It is essential to have consistency in metadata fields across your items: both in which you select and in how you fill those in (for instance, you don't want to have "Firstname Lastname" in half your "creator" fields and "Lastname, Firstname" in the other half)

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Tool Demonstration: Omeka S Sandbox

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Key Omeka Terms

- **Items:** the different individual files, artifacts, books, or discrete pieces of data added to Omeka.
- **Item Types**: different categorizations given to items in Omeka that can include things like text, still image, person, email, building, etc.
- **Exhibits**: pages created to showcase archival items or collections around subjects, to tell a story or narrative, or convey a specific message in interpretive text.
- **Exhibit Pages:** website pages on Omeka for different exhibits, complete with different formats including gallery, text, file, etc.
- **Tags (Omeka Classic):** a description "marker" added to items that is used in web-based approaches for managing information across collections and exhibits in Omeka.

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Omeka Demonstration: Sandbox
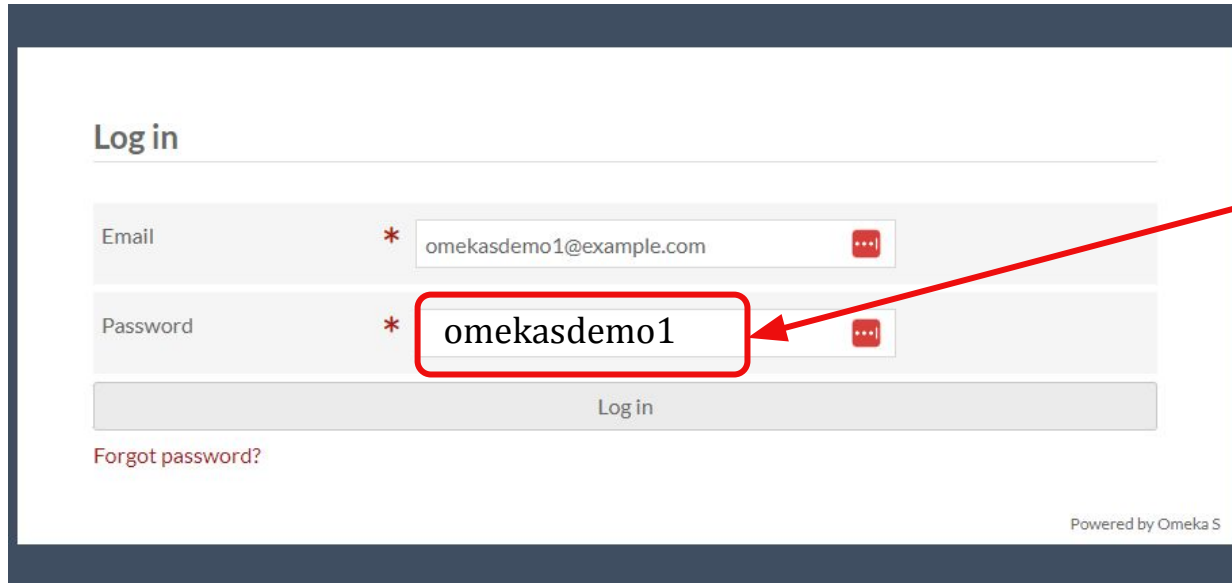
To get a feeling for Omeka, we will be using the Omeka S sandbox, a free platform that Omeka provides to explore the tool: http://dev.omeka.org/omeka-s-sandbox/login

This sandbox allows users to test the functionality of Omeka before creating an account. It is reset three times a week.

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Omeka Sandbox Login

To access the Omeka Sandbox login, you will need to login with one of the three accounts listed. Here is the sample login information:

NOTE: The password for the demo sites is the same text as the email without the "@example.com." See:

omekasdemo2@example.com
Password: omekasdemo2
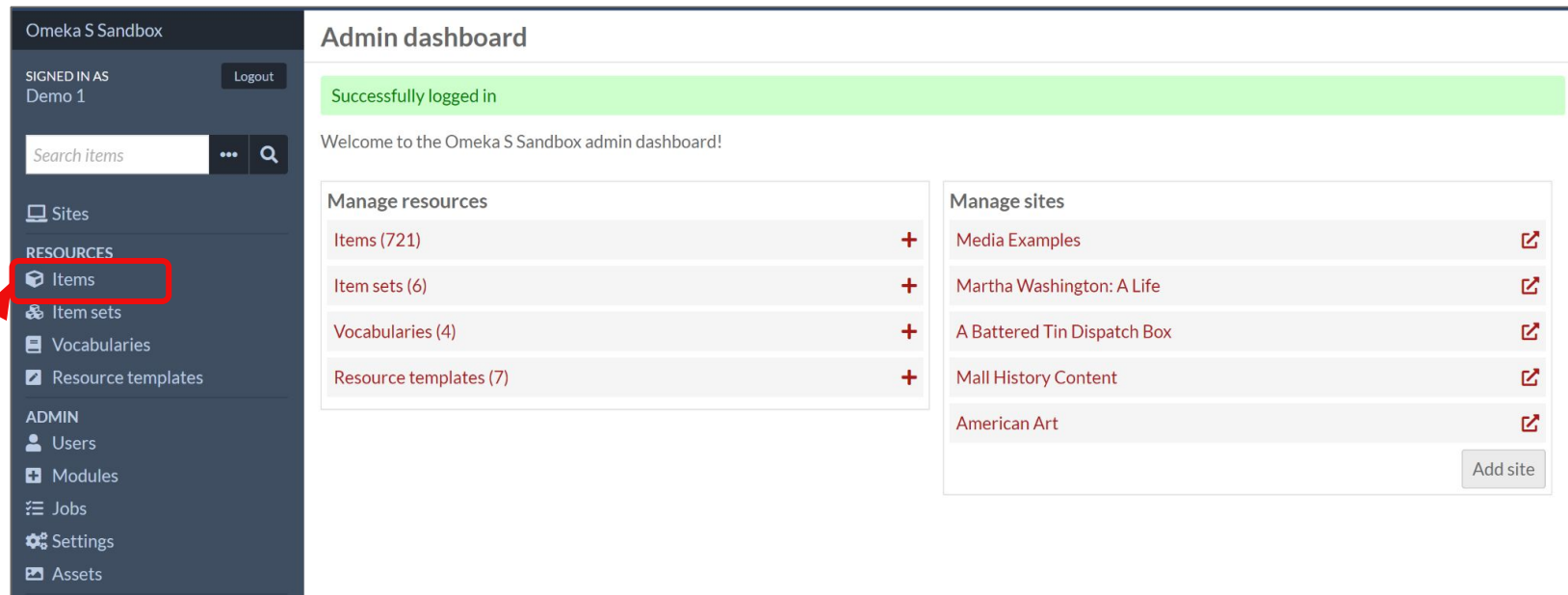
omekasdemo3@example.com
Password: omekasdemo3

Feel free to ask questions at any point during the presentation!

Navigating Omeka S Sandbox

Omeka S Sandbox

SIGNED IN AS
Demo 1   Logout

Search items   ...   🔍

💻 Sites

RESOURCES
📦 Items
🐝 Item sets
📄 Vocabularies
✏️ Resource templates

ADMIN
👤 Users
➕ Modules
☰ Jobs
⚙️ Settings
🖼 Assets

Admin dashboard

Successfully logged in

Welcome to the Omeka S Sandbox admin dashboard!

Manage resources

Items (721)   +

Item sets (6)   +

Vocabularies (4)   +

Resource templates (7)   +

Manage sites

Media Examples   ⬈

Martha Washington: A Life   ⬈

A Battered Tin Dispatch Box   ⬈

Mall History Content   ⬈

American Art   ⬈

Add site

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Add New Items

New Item Interface

NOTE: There are a lot of different template options for adding new items. For the purpose of today's exploration, please choose the **Base Resource** Template.

You can look through the different templates if you are interested, but we are primarily getting familiar with thinking about describing items with metadata as a introduction exercise.

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Your Turn!

Add items to your Omeka Sandbox and keep track of the metadata for each item. Consider:

- What metadata fields are surprising to you?
- What are the challenges in understanding metadata fields?
- What are some interesting observations you had in working with this tool?

Log into to the Omeka Sandbox:
http://dev.omeka.org/omeka-s-sandbox/login.

Use one of the following logins:

Email: omekasdemo1@example.com
Password: omekasdemo1

Email: omekasdemo2@example.com
Password: omekasdemo2

Email: omekasdemo3@example.com
Password: omekasdemo3

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Omeka + Archival Project Best Practices

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Website Hosting

- Paid versions of Omeka include **hosting** and support of maintenance on the CDS servers.
- **Omeka.net** includes a free "trial" account to build a single page with limited themes and plugins, but uses the same code as Omeka Classic without a time limit.
- Hosting is important because it is integral to site sustainability, maintenance, domain URL, project identity.
- **Reclaim Hosting**: an organization used by many academics for web hosting with domain registration. Plans are lower costs with high customer support to be accessible for students.

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Reclaim Hosting

[Reclaim Hosting](): founded in 2013, this organization provides educators and institutions an easy way for students to control and own their domains and web hosting for digital projects/identities. There is still a cost for hosting and paid plans, but it is specifically made to be accessible for students.

- Reclaim Hosting has a discord and very communicative customer support, working to empower educators and projects with public facing, open access projects to own and control their work.
- Supports popular applications including: WordPress, Omeka, Scalar, Drupal, phpBB, Canvas, and more. (Over 100+ applications!)

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Data Privacy and Maintenance on Omeka

- Omeka Services collects certain data about you, site visitors, and digital content stored on their platform. It is good practice to review the [Omeka privacy policy](#) to know how this data is used, stored, and managed.
- Omeka is *not* meant for long-term preservation without maintenance. Curators are responsible for updating materials on Omeka following version upgrades.

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Digital Accessibility

- Omeka S includes accessibility features for both the front end and back end. See their [Accessibility Statement](#) for more details
- Externally-developed themes and digital content may not be accessible for assistive tech users. Review the accessibility of your digital archive to make sure users can access archived materials.
- See our [DITI Handout on Accessibility in Digital Content](#) for resources and tips to make sure your digital archive meets web accessibility standards.

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Adding alt text

Alt text is a description of an image that conveys the image content, meaning, and context. This descriptive text is attached to the image file metadata. For more information see the [Northeastern Library Guidelines](#) for alt text.

People with low or no vision can use assistive technology like screen readers to hear the alt text description of digital images. When a screen reader reaches the image, it will read aloud the alt text description.

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Adding alt text

You can add alt text to the file metadata, such as the image file title or description.

Fill in the Title or Description field when you add an image, sound, or video file. Write a description of the image. For audio and video files, write a transcript of what is said, as well as describe the content, context, and purpose of the audio or video file.

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Questions?

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Thank you!

If you have any questions, contact DITI at nulab.info@gmail.com
DITI Office Hours: **https://calendly.com/diti-nu/**

We'd love your feedback! Please fill out a short survey here:
https://bit.ly/diti-feedback

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Omeka S Reference Slides

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Items

- Items are the building blocks of the Omeka system.
- In Omeka S, items can be made available to you from the system administrator, and you may add items to your own site.
- Items are listed in the Items tab (one box icon), found on the left-hand navigation of the administrative dashboard.

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Adding Items

- Click the Item Sets tab from the left navigation of the dashboard. Then the "Add new item" set button on the right hand side of the screen.
- You can choose whether to make an item public or not
  - You can edit items once they are added
- Then, add metadata!

Add new item

Created ▲▼   Descending ▲▼   Sort

👁   Cancel   Add

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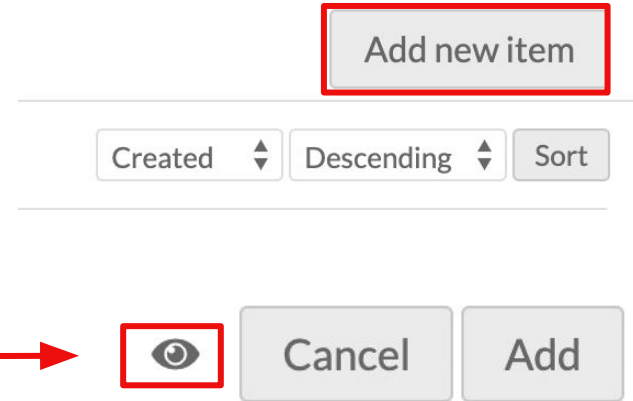
Adding Metadata

- You may add text, a resource from the installation, or an external link in each field.
- Dublin Core vs. Item Type Metadata
  - Dublin Core is the basic information that will be relevant **across items**
  - Item Type Metadata is additional information that is likely to be **relevant for specific item types** (e.g. duration for moving images, or subject line for emails)
- You can add additional input fields (for both types of metadata)

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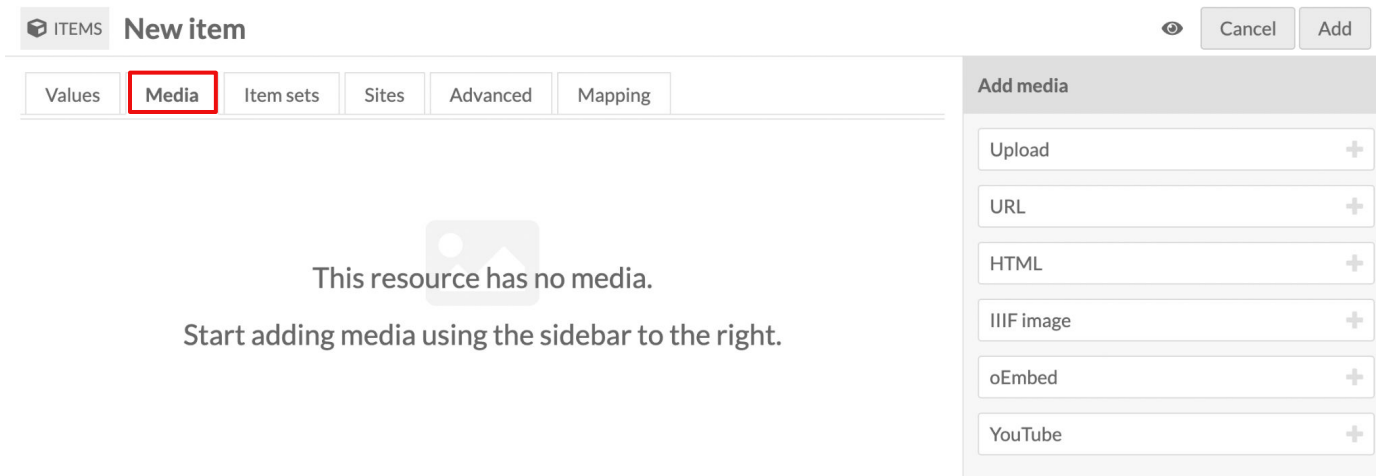
Adding Media

- Media can only be created by adding them to an Item. Media cannot exist independently.
- To add media includes uploading a file, or directly attaching content with oEmbed, YouTube URLs, IIIF URLs, or writing HTML.

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Resource templates

Resource Template: If you are working as part of a class, you may have a class template created for you. This template will provide the metadata items you're expected to fill out for your item. Choose that template under Resource template - select a template. If there is no template, you can still add metadata fields manually.

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Editing Items

- Start by clicking on the item's title and then clicking the Edit button in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.
- You can edit the item's **description** and its **attributes**.
- To cancel out of editing, click the Cancel button in the upper right corner.
- To delete an item, click the Delete button.

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