

Introduction to Omeka

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Northeastern University
NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks

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during the presentation!*

Workshop Agenda

- Introduction: what is Omeka and what are digital archives?
- Review and Discussion of digital projects built with Omeka
- Working with Omeka: navigation, metadata, organization
- Demonstration: Omeka.net
- Omeka Project best practices and assignment

Slides and handout available at

<http://bit.ly/sp23-parr-hist7250-omeka>



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.



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



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.



Group Activity: Omeka Projects



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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.



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.



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/>

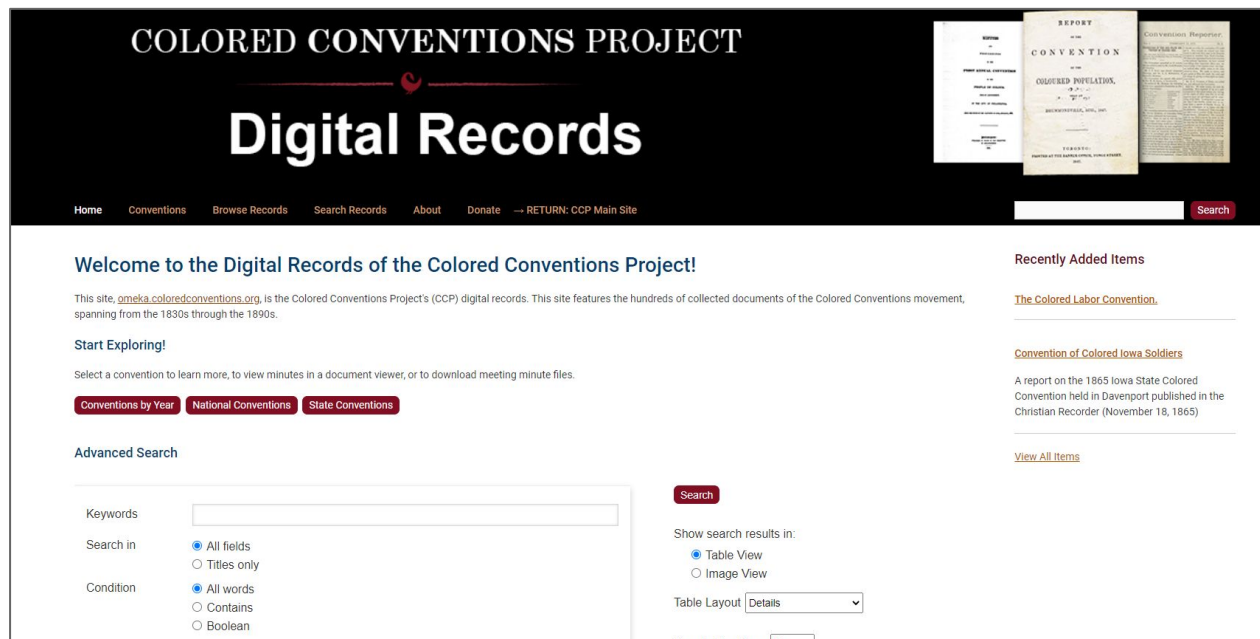
Other Omeka projects to explore:

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



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.



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.



Dublin Core Specifics

- Dublin Core was created to reject siloed cultural memory and enable radically 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)



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:** a description “marker” added to items that is used in web-based approaches for managing information across collections and exhibits in Omeka.



Tool Demonstration: Omeka S Sandbox



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Omeka Demonstration: Sandbox

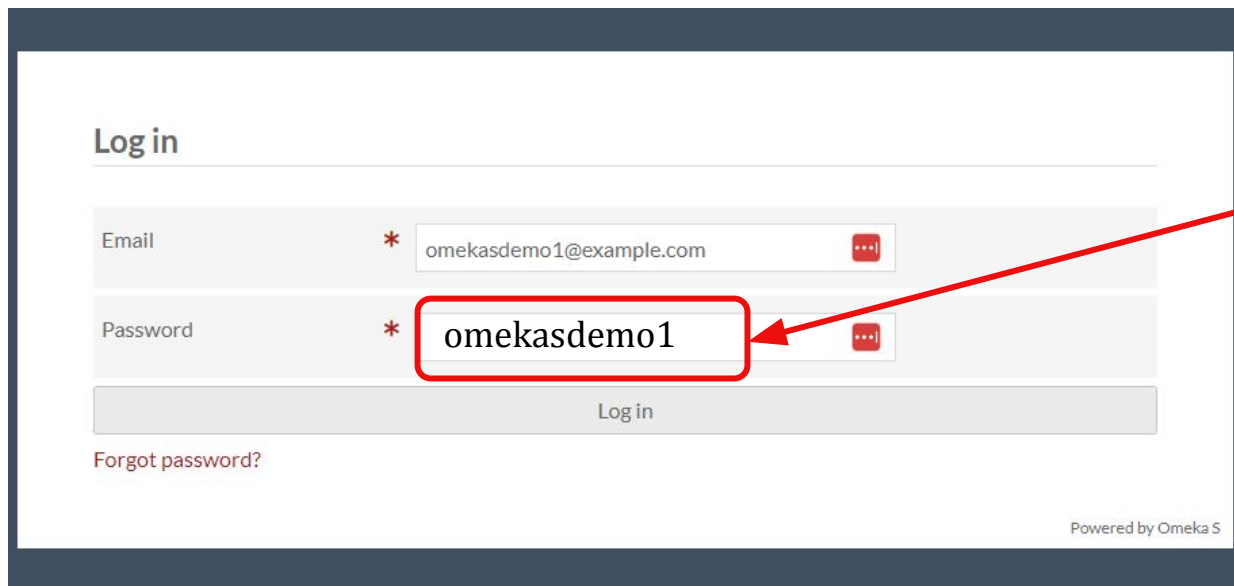
To get a feeling for Omeka, we will be using the Omeka S sandbox, a free platform that Omeka provides to explore the tool: <http://dev.omeka.org/omeka-s-sandbox/login>

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



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:



Log in

Email * omekaskdemo1@example.com

Password * omekaskdemo1

Log in

[Forgot password?](#)

Powered by Omeka S

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

omekaskdemo2@example.com

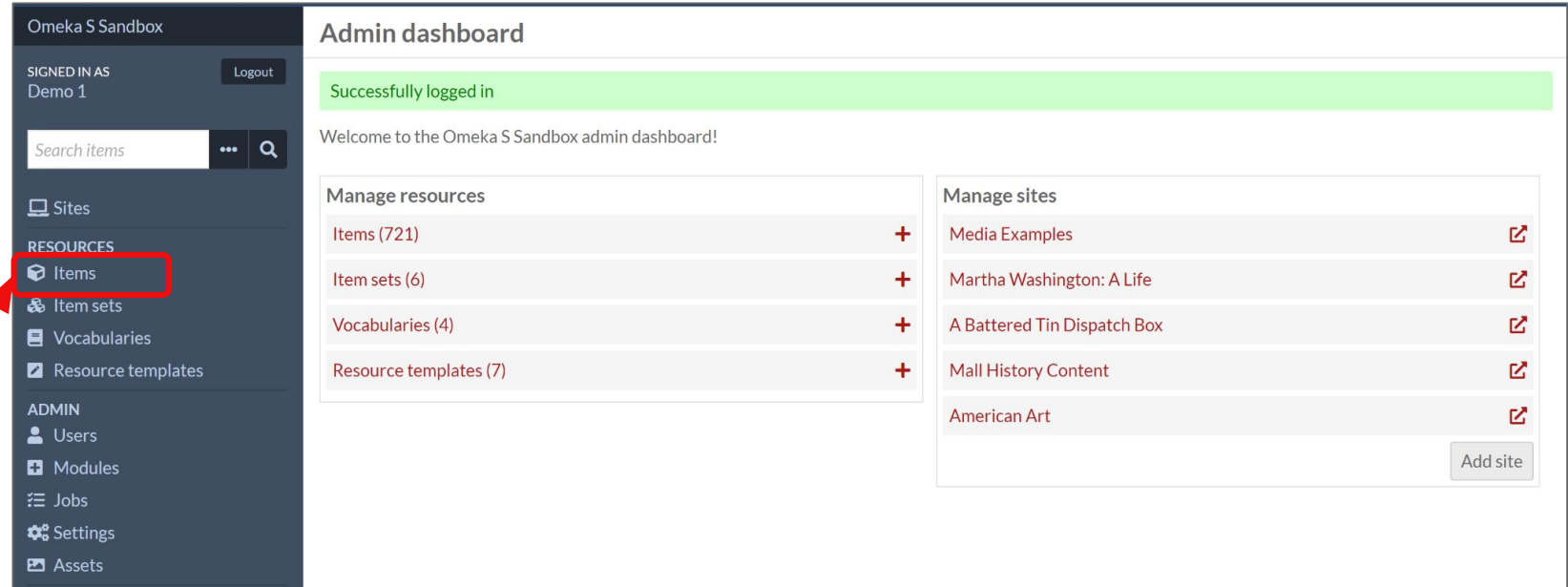
Password: omekaskdemo2

omekaskdemo3@example.com

Password: omekaskdemo3



Navigating Omeka S



The screenshot shows the Omeka S Admin dashboard. On the left is a dark sidebar with the following sections:

- Omeka S Sandbox**
- SIGNED IN AS Demo 1** with a **Logout** button.
- A **Search items** input field with a search icon.
- Sites** (with a site icon)
- RESOURCES** (with a folder icon)
 - Items** (with a document icon, highlighted by a red box and a red arrow pointing to it)
 - Item sets (with a folder icon)
 - Vocabularies (with a list icon)
 - Resource templates (with a checkmark icon)
- ADMIN** (with a gear icon)
 - Users (with a person icon)
 - Modules (with a plus icon)
 - Jobs (with a list icon)
 - Settings (with a gear icon)
 - Assets (with a folder icon)

The main content area is titled **Admin dashboard** and includes:

- A green banner: **Successfully logged in**
- A welcome message: **Welcome to the Omeka S Sandbox admin dashboard!**
- Manage resources** section:
 - Items (721) with a red plus icon
 - Item sets (6) with a red plus icon
 - Vocabularies (4) with a red plus icon
 - Resource templates (7) with a red plus icon
- Manage sites** section:
 - Media Examples with an external link icon
 - Martha Washington: A Life with an external link icon
 - A Battered Tin Dispatch Box with an external link icon
 - Mall History Content with an external link icon
 - American Art with an external link icon
 - An **Add site** button at the bottom right.



Add New Items

Omeka S Sandbox

SIGNED IN AS Demo 1 Logout

Search items

Sites

RESOURCES

- Items
 - Media
- Item sets
- Vocabularies
- Resource templates








ADMIN

- Users
- Modules
- Jobs
- Settings
- Assets

Items

1 of 19 1-40 of 721 Advanced search Created Descending Sort

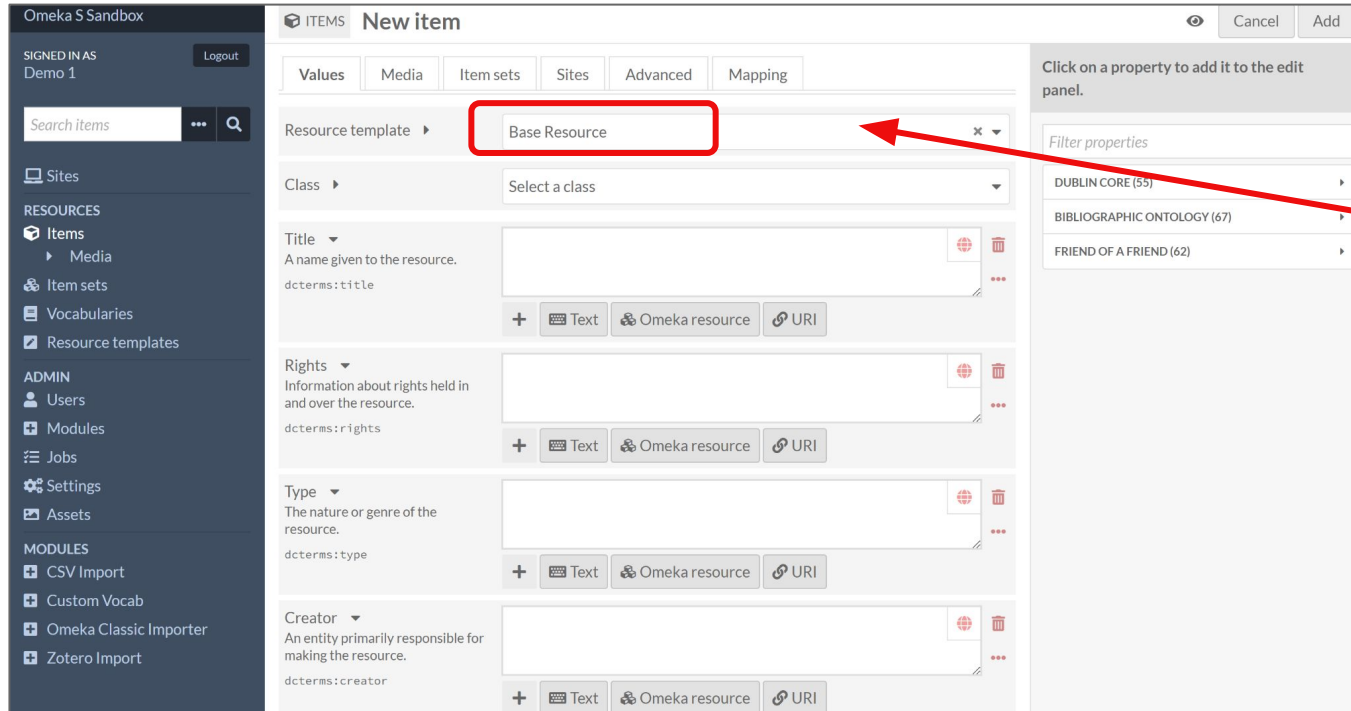
Batch actions Go

<input type="checkbox"/>	Title	Resource class	Owner	Created
<input type="checkbox"/>	test		Demo 1	Jan 20, 2023
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Rejected design for the Statue of Freedom	Still Image		Jun 5, 2017
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Statue of Freedom			Jun 5, 2017
<input type="checkbox"/>	 The Wedding	Event		Jun 5, 2017
<input type="checkbox"/>	 White House Weddings	Event		Jun 5, 2017
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Mall Weddings	Event		Jun 5, 2017
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Smithsonian grounds neglected	Still Image		Jun 5, 2017
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Smithsonian Garden Shed	Still Image		Jun 5, 2017

Add new item



New Item Interface



Omeka S Sandbox

SIGNED IN AS Demo 1 Logout

Search items

Sites

RESOURCES

- Items
- Media
- Item sets
- Vocabularies
- Resource templates

ADMIN

- Users
- Modules
- Jobs
- Settings
- Assets

MODULES

- CSV Import
- Custom Vocab
- Omeka Classic Importer
- Zotero Import

ITEMS New item

Values Media Item sets Sites Advanced Mapping

Resource template ▾ Base Resource

Class ▾ Select a class

Title ▾
A name given to the resource.
dcterms:title

+ Text Omeka resource URI

Rights ▾
Information about rights held in and over the resource.
dcterms:rights

+ Text Omeka resource URI

Type ▾
The nature or genre of the resource.
dcterms:type

+ Text Omeka resource URI

Creator ▾
An entity primarily responsible for making the resource.
dcterms:creator

+ Text Omeka resource URI

Click on a property to add it to the edit panel.

Filter properties

- DUBLIN CORE (55)
- BIBLIOGRAPHIC ONTOLOGY (67)
- FRIEND OF A FRIEND (62)

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.



Your Turn!

Log into to the Omeka Sandbox:

<http://dev.omeka.org/omeka-s-sandbox/login>.

Use one of the following logins:

Email: omekasmemo1@example.com

Password: omekasmemo1

Email: omekasmemo2@example.com

Password: omekasmemo2

Email: omekasmemo3@example.com

Password: omekasmemo3

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 kind of tags do you see people using? What kinds of tags would you use to describe buildings and architecture?
- What are some interesting observations you had in working with this tool?



Versions of Omeka

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Omeka.net Step-by-Step Tutorial



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Creating Your Omeka Account

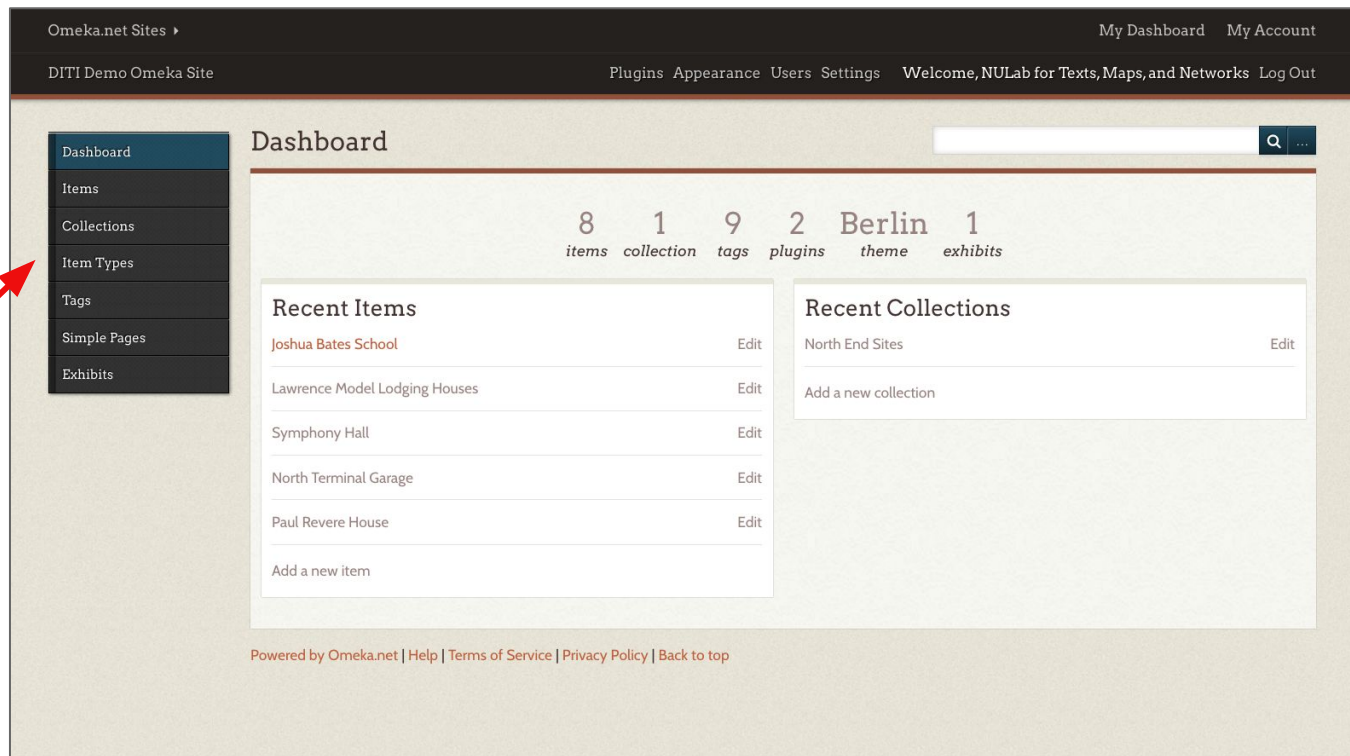
- Go to: <https://www.omeka.net/signup>
- Choose a trial plan
- Click on the activation link sent to your email
- Then, under “Add a Site,” enter a subdomain name (for the URL), site title, and site description
- Once you create the site (with the trial on Omeka.net) you can't set it to private. **But** you can control whether individual items, exhibits, or pages are private. We will learn how to do that soon!

Add a Site

Subdomain Name *	DITIdemo .omeka.net
Site Title *	DITI Demo Omeka Site
Site Description	An <u>Omeka</u> demonstration site created for use in classes visited by Northeastern's Digital Integration Teaching Initiative.



Omeka Dashboard



The screenshot shows the Omeka Dashboard interface. At the top, there is a dark header bar with "Omeka.net Sites" on the left and "My Dashboard" and "My Account" on the right. Below this, a secondary bar shows "DITI Demo Omeka Site" on the left and "Plugins Appearance Users Settings Welcome, NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks Log Out" on the right. The main content area has a left-hand navigation menu with the following items: Dashboard (highlighted), Items, Collections, Item Types, Tags, Simple Pages, and Exhibits. A red arrow points from the word "Navigation" to this menu. The main dashboard area is titled "Dashboard" and features a summary row with statistics: 8 items, 1 collection, 9 tags, 2 plugins, Berlin theme, and 1 exhibit. Below this, there are two main sections: "Recent Items" and "Recent Collections". The "Recent Items" section lists: Joshua Bates School, Lawrence Model Lodging Houses, Symphony Hall, North Terminal Garage, and Paul Revere House, each with an "Edit" link. The "Recent Collections" section lists: North End Sites with an "Edit" link, and a button to "Add a new collection". At the bottom of the dashboard, there is a footer with the text "Powered by Omeka.net | Help | Terms of Service | Privacy Policy | Back to top".

Navigation

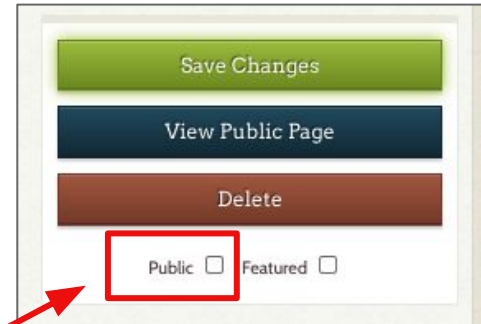
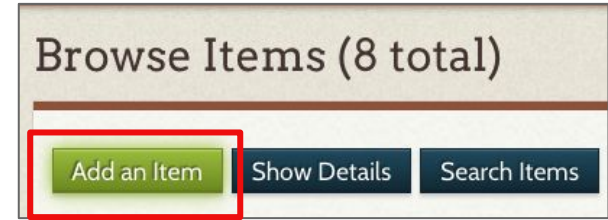


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Adding Items

- Under the “Items” tab, click “Add an Item”
 - You can upload multiple files for one item
 - You can choose whether to make an item public or not
 - You can edit items once they are added
- Then, add metadata!



Adding Metadata

- 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)
- Formatting text in metadata fields
 - If you click "Use HTML" you will get more formatting options
 - You can also enter basic HTML to make formatting edits that are not available in the default editor; for more information on the HTML editor, visit [this page](#).



The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Add an Item". Below the title is a horizontal row of four tabs: "Dublin Core", "Item Type Metadata", "Files", and "Tags". The "Dublin Core" and "Item Type Metadata" tabs are highlighted with red rectangular boxes, indicating they are the primary focus of the presentation.



Adding Files to Items

- You can add multiple files to an item
- If you have more than one file, you can drag the order of files to change which one appears as the key image



Add files here



File-Specific Metadata

- You can add metadata for the **files** that you attach to your **items**
 - In this instance, the item is Old North Church, the building, and the file attached to the item is the image of it
- **File metadata does not appear automatically.** Once you upload an image, you need to click “edit” to get to the metadata.

Edit file-specific metadata here

The screenshot shows a web interface for a digital archive. At the top, the file is identified as 'File #5: "Old North Church fr...'. Below this is a large image of the Old North Church. To the right of the image are three buttons: 'Edit' (highlighted with a red box and an arrow from the text 'Edit file-specific metadata here'), 'View Public Page', and 'Delete'. Below the image is a section titled 'Dublin Core' containing a table of metadata. To the right of this is a section titled 'Format Metadata' containing file details. A red arrow points from the text 'File-specific metadata' to the 'Dublin Core' section.

Dublin Core	
Title	Old North Church from Paul Revere Mall
Creator	Rhododendrites
Source	Wikimedia Commons
Rights	CC BY-SA 4.0

Format Metadata

Filename: 1b101deef1d2542ceef731a9545fe43.jpg

Original Filename: Old_North_Church_from_Paul_Revere_Mall_(36201).jpg

File Size: 11052425 bytes

File-specific metadata



Organizing Items: Tags and Collections

- Items can have **multiple** tags, but they can only have **one** collection
- Origin: Tagging is more of a web-focused approach to managing information, whereas collections are from physical archiving, where every item needs a single collection



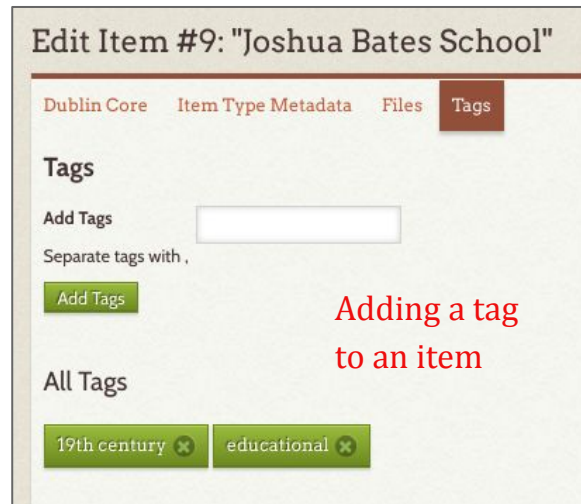
Adding and Editing Tags

- You **tag items** through editing an item
- You **edit tags** through the “tags” tab



The screenshot shows the 'Browse Tags' interface with a sidebar on the left containing links to Dashboard, Items, Collections, Item Types, Tags (highlighted), Simple Pages, and Exhibits. The main area is titled 'Browse Tags (9 total)' and includes a search bar and a 'Search tags' button. Below this is the 'Editing Tags' section, which displays a list of tags in a grid. Each tag is represented by a green box with a number, the tag name, and a close icon (X). The tags are: 1 united states, 1 17th century, 2 18th century, 3 19th century, 2 20th century, 1 commercial, 1 educational, 2 entertainment, 3 private residence, and 1 religious. To the left of the 'united states' tag is a diagram showing a timeline with three points labeled 1, 2, and 3. Below the tag list, there are three numbered instructions: 1. To view all items with a tag, click the number. 2. To edit the tag name, click the name and begin editing, and hit "enter" to save. To cancel an edit, click the ESC key or click away from the tag. 3. To delete a tag, click the X. Deleting a tag will not delete the tagged items.

Editing tags



The screenshot shows the 'Edit Item #9: Joshua Bates School' interface. At the top, there are tabs for Dublin Core, Item Type Metadata, Files, and Tags (highlighted). Below the tabs is the 'Tags' section, which includes an 'Add Tags' input field and a green 'Add Tags' button. Below this is the 'All Tags' section, which displays a list of tags in green boxes: 19th century and educational. To the right of the 'Add Tags' button, there is a red text overlay that reads 'Adding a tag to an item'.

Adding a tag to an item



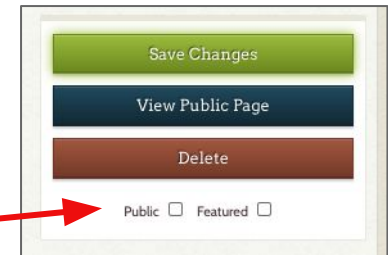
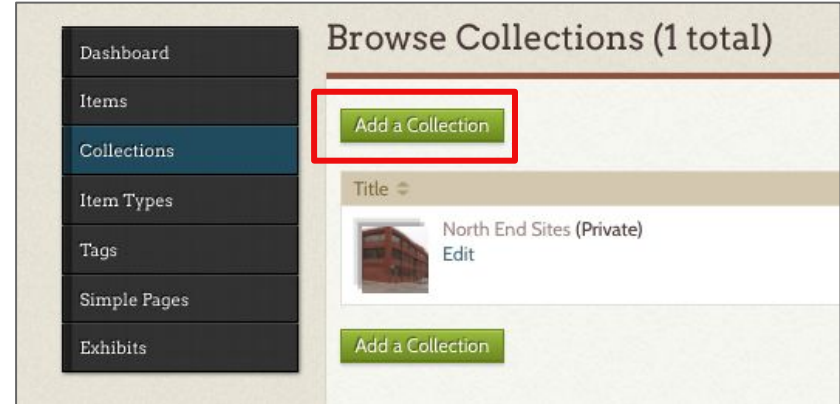
Editing Tags, continued

Make sure your tags are consistent!

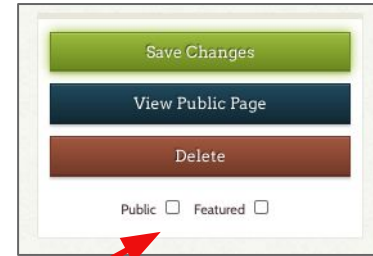
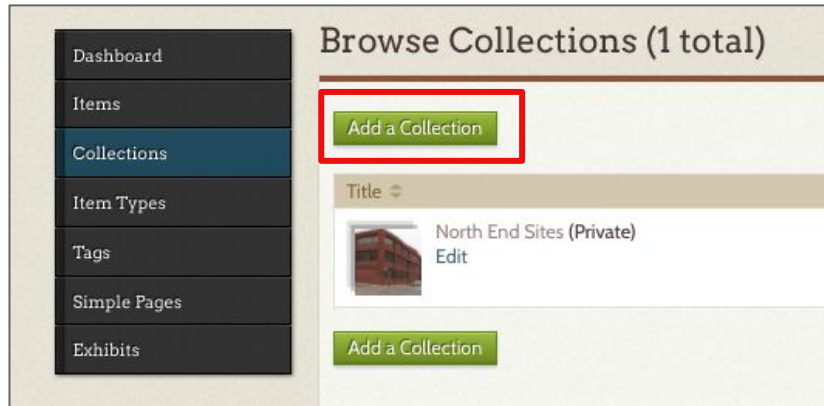


Adding Collections

- Unlike tags, you create a collection before adding items to it
- Adding a collection is a lot like adding an item
 - Under the collections tab, click “Add Collection”
- Remember: items can only belong to one collection
- You can choose whether to make a collection public or not with these boxes

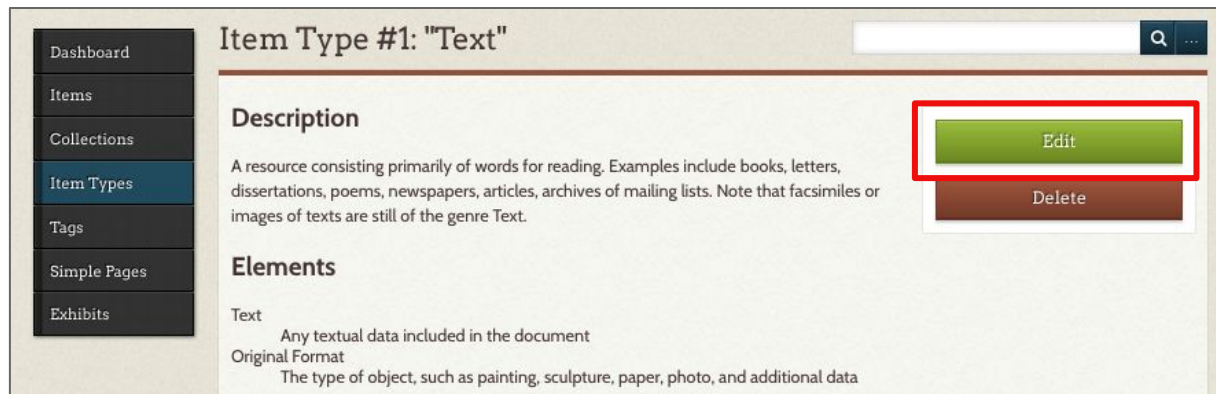


Adding Collections



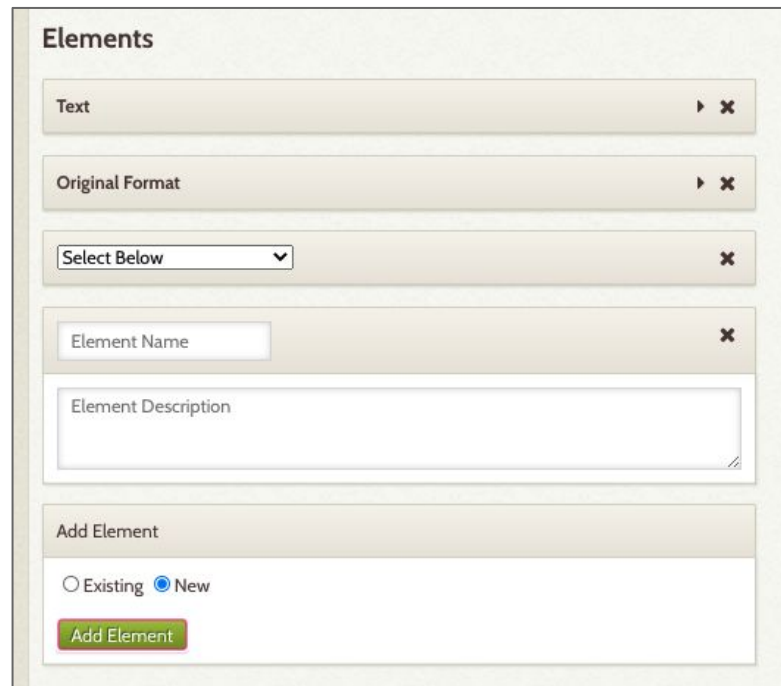
Item Types

- **Item types** are the different categorizations you can assign to an item. These include text, still image, person, email, etc.
- You can edit item types by clicking on “edit,” under the Item Types tab.
- There, you can edit the **description** of an item type and its elements.
- **Elements** are the different attributes of an item type.



Editing Elements for Item Types

- You can add **existing elements** from a list or **create new ones**
- You can also remove the default elements for an item type (but make sure you think carefully before doing this!)



The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Elements" for editing item types. It contains several sections:

- Text**: A text input field with a right arrow and a close (X) button.
- Original Format**: A text input field with a right arrow and a close (X) button.
- Select Below**: A dropdown menu with a downward arrow and a close (X) button.
- Element Name**: A text input field with a close (X) button.
- Element Description**: A larger text input field with a close (X) button.
- Add Element**: A section with two radio buttons, "Existing" and "New" (which is selected), and a green "Add Element" button.



Adding New Item Types

You can add completely new item types by clicking the “Add an Item Type” button, giving the new item type a name and description, and adding elements to it (either existing or new).

Browse Item Types (17 total)

Add an Item Type

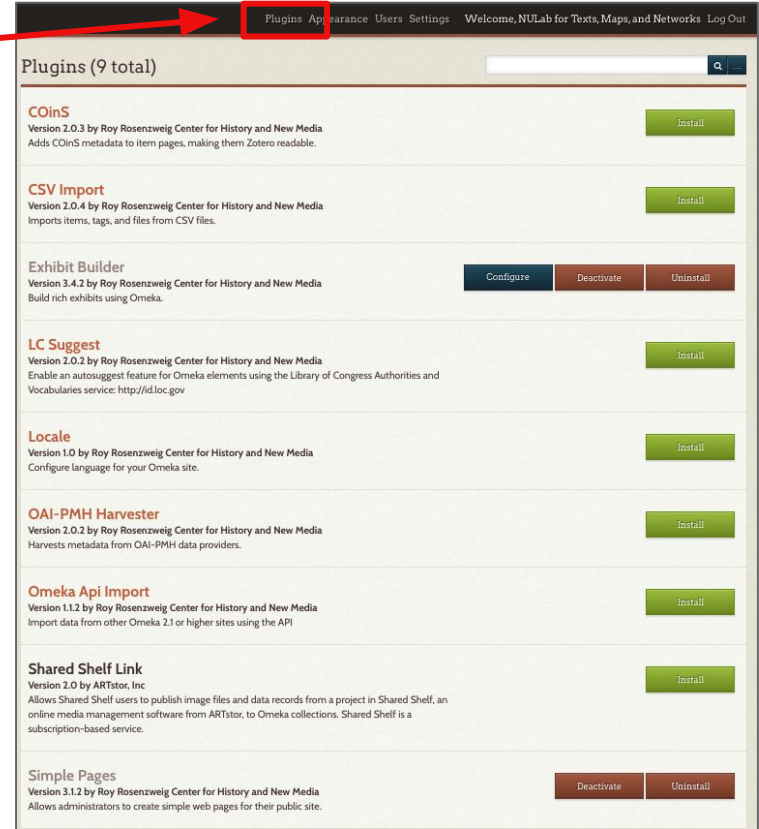
All items have a type.

Type Name	Description	Total Items
<div>Text</div> <div>Edit</div>	A resource consisting primarily of words for reading. Examples include books, letters, dissertations, poems, newspapers, articles, archives of mailing lists. Note that facsimiles or images of texts are still of the genre Text.	0
<div>Moving Image</div> <div>Edit</div>	A series of visual representations imparting an impression of motion when shown in succession. Examples include animations, movies, television programs, videos, zoetropes, or visual output from a simulation.	0



Plugins

- To create **simple pages** and **exhibits**, you first need to install these plugins
- Click “Plugins” in the top menu and install Simple Pages and Exhibit Builder



Creating Simple Pages

- **Simple pages** allow you to create web pages for your digital archive
- To add a page, click “Add a Page” under the “Simple Pages” tab. You can then add a title and edit the slug
- You choose items for your page by entering **Omeka shortcodes** into the text box (you can also use the text box just for text). A complete list of shortcodes can be found [on the Omeka website](#), but useful ones include:
 - [items collection=**1**]
 - [items item_type="**still image**"]
 - [items tags=**commercial,educational**]

You can choose whether to make the page public

Establish navigation by designating parent pages and page order

The screenshot shows the Omeka Simple Pages creation form. A red arrow points from the text 'You can choose whether to make the page public' to the 'Publish this page?' checkbox, which is currently unchecked. Another red arrow points from the text 'Establish navigation by designating parent pages and page order' to a red box highlighting the 'Parent' dropdown menu (set to 'Main Page (No Parent)') and the 'Order' input field (set to '0'). A third red arrow points from the text 'This shortcode indicates that we want all items in Collection 1 to be included on this page' to the text box containing the shortcode '[items collection=1]'.

This shortcode indicates that we want all items in Collection 1 to be included on this page



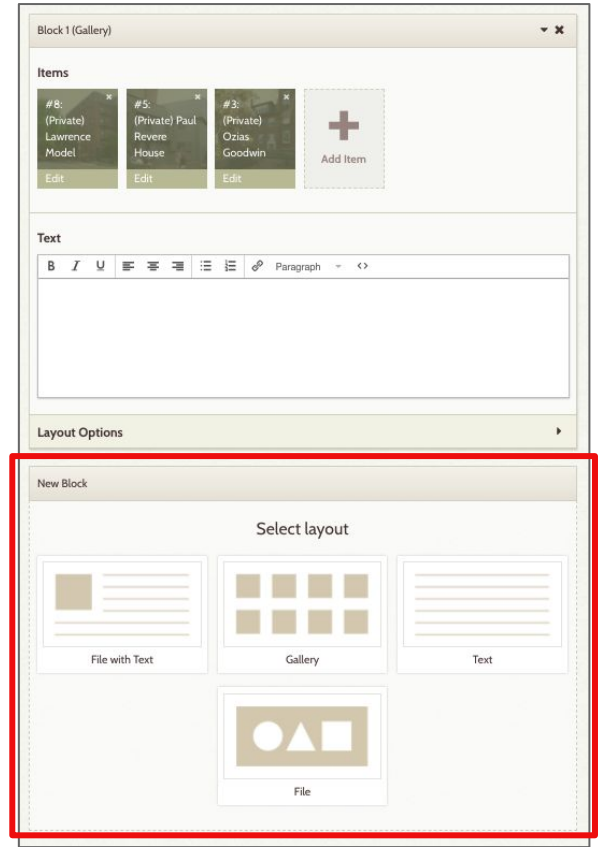
Creating Exhibits

- **Exhibits** are a more robust way to provide access to (and curate!) the contents of your archive. Exhibits are composed of pages (which in turn showcase items).
 - To add an exhibit, click “Add an Exhibit” under the Exhibits tab
 - From here, you can give the exhibit a title, a slug, a credit line, and a description. You can also apply tags and choose a theme and cover image, and decide what you want the starting page to be.
- **You can add existing pages to your exhibit or create new ones**
- Even when you are adding an existing page to your exhibit, you can only establish the **layout** of items on the page through the Exhibits tab



Exhibit Pages

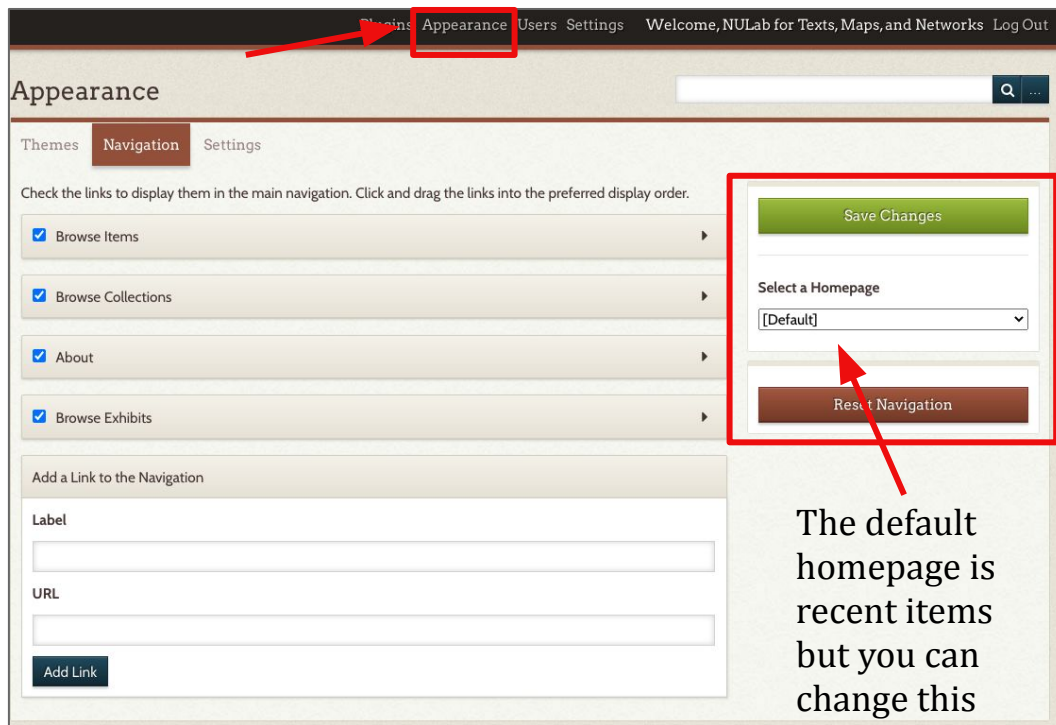
- The contents of exhibit pages are organized by **blocks**
- Layout options for blocks are: file with text, gallery, text, and file.
- Once you choose your layout option for a block, you can select the items to include
- Although some of the layout options display thumbnail images, you are curating the **item**, **not the attached file(s)**, in your exhibit



Themes and Site Appearance

Under the Appearance tab in the top menu:

- “Themes” allows you to choose a visual theme
- “Navigation” allows you to control the main menu bar
- “Settings” offers some display choices, including how metadata appears and how thumbnails work



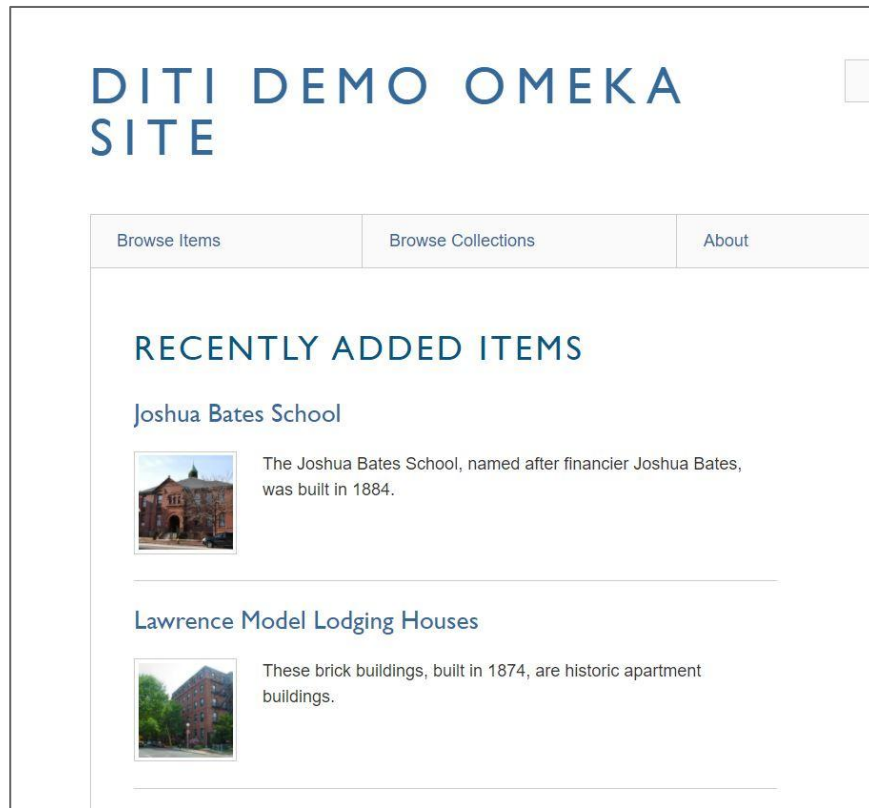
The screenshot shows the 'Appearance' settings page. At the top, a red box highlights the 'Appearance' tab in the navigation bar, with a red arrow pointing to it from the left. Below the navigation bar, the 'Appearance' section has three sub-tabs: 'Themes', 'Navigation', and 'Settings'. The 'Navigation' sub-tab is active. It contains a list of links to be displayed in the main navigation bar: 'Browse Items', 'Browse Collections', 'About', and 'Browse Exhibits', each with a checked checkbox and a right-pointing arrow. Below this list is a section titled 'Add a Link to the Navigation' with input fields for 'Label' and 'URL', and an 'Add Link' button. On the right side of the 'Navigation' sub-tab, there is a 'Save Changes' button at the top. Below it is a 'Select a Homepage' dropdown menu currently set to '[Default]'. At the bottom of this section is a 'Reset Navigation' button. A red box encloses the 'Save Changes', 'Select a Homepage', and 'Reset Navigation' buttons. A red arrow points from the text 'The default homepage is recent items but you can change this' to the 'Select a Homepage' dropdown menu.

The default homepage is recent items but you can change this



Demo

- *Boston from End to End: NHRP sites in Boston's North and South Ends*
- Note: this is a demo of Omeka basics, not an actual archive project!



Omeka + Archival Project Best Practices



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

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.



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!)



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. [Northeastern's Digital Scholarship Services](#) offers support for long-term curation.



Digital Accessibility

- Omeka.net is working on meeting web accessibility standards. Be aware that your digital archive on Omeka.net may not be fully accessible to all users.
- 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.



Adding alt-text

Alt-text is a detailed description of an image that conveys the image content, meaning, and context. This descriptive text is attached to the image file metadata.

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.



Adding alt-text

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

Fill in the Title or Description field on Omeka.net when you add an image, sound, or video file. Write a detailed 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.



Your Turn!

Set up your subdomain and Omeka site for your account. Then, try the following:

- Adding 2 or 3 items
- Creating a collection and adding items to that collection
- Tagging items
- Editing an existing item type
- Creating a new item type



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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Slides, handouts, and data available at <http://bit.ly/sp23-parr-hist7250-omeka>

