

Building of Collection

Our group utilized Omeka.net (Omeka) as the hosting platform and collection management tool for our project. Because it's self-hosted, it allowed us to quickly get up and running as we uploaded files and described our objects. "Seasons" is the name of the template or theme used for the site and is a visual style shared by all of the collections in our class. Omeka comes preconfigured to use Dublin Core (DC)'s 15 elements and allows for further description of each object based on its "Item Type."

Beginning with the DC fields, we each input the corresponding information and formatted them according to our Metadata Application Profile (MAP). In accordance with our MAP and project plan, we used the following controlled vocabularies and syntax schemes: LCSH, DCMI Type Vocabulary, IANA Internet Media Types, Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names, Getty Art and Architecture Terms, RightsStatements.org statements, Getty Union List of Artist Names, ISO 693-3, ISO 8601-1, and W3CDTF. A helpful Omeka feature that supported our input efforts was the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) auto-complete feature. We would simply begin to type in a subject related to the item we were describing and a list of matching or closely related terms would appear. This not only helped us maintain consistency across our records but also ensure we were describing our objects according to the LCSH standard without much effort on our part. We also used the HTML option for several fields which gave us the flexibility to link to artist portfolios, longer object descriptions, and even official National Parks pages – all in an effort to provide as much helpful information to users as possible. After completing the fields, we moved on to the Item Type Metadata tab to add additional information, where applicable, such as transcripts, lists of materials, links to sound

recordings, and other important information that didn't neatly fit into one of the 15 DC elements. We next uploaded any files and lastly, as our collection is directly tied to geographic locations, we added a point on the map for the national park associated with the object.

After crafting our project plan, setting up workflows, and designing our MAP, the process of actually selecting, describing, and displaying our objects is where we witnessed the seeds of previous efforts begin to bloom. About mid-way through the project, we realized that we could find even higher resolution versions of many of our digital objects in a National Parks Service gallery archive that wasn't publicly advertised. Although not something we knew about at the start of the project, it allowed us to either reupload or upload from the start the very best images available to us. Thankfully, accessing and downloading all of our objects – with the exception of one sound recording – was straight-forward and ensured we could easily upload and display it in our collection.

Once all of the objects were added to the collection, our group's Omeka Manager reviewed each record and assessed them according to the MAP. They checked primarily for consistency in subject headings, syntax, tags, and that all applicable fields were completed. As a final touch, they also added HTML buttons to each object's Rights field so users could see an object's copyright status at a glance.

With many aspects of the collection creation process running smoothly, it was inevitable we'd hit a few bumps. The simplicity of the DC elements, while helpful, was also somewhat restrictive. DC Terms expands on the original 15 and if we could have implemented them, we would have been able to drill down a little further in specificity for fields like Relation and Format. Another challenge, also related to Omeka, was the shared class site because any

customization implemented for one collection would be implemented site wide. We considered using the “Simple Vocab” plugin early on in the project to help standardize certain fields and speed up our input, but doing so would lock every other group into using the same constraints which we wouldn’t want to do. Overall, our early investments in creating a solid MAP and a narrowly focused collection made the process of uploading and describing our objects smoother, efficient, and more consistent than it might have otherwise been.