

Omeka Guide

Omeka is a digital archive presentation tool meant to provide scholars, librarians, and archivists an easy and efficient way to provide access to the digital content in their research materials, library collections, and archives. The application was primarily for archives and so the basic functionality of Omeka is built on archivist needs and practices.

Omeka allows the users to add metadata (information about an object – ie, the object's title, creator, date of creation, etc.) about items, then provide various means of access to those items. The main modes of presentation are collections, exhibits, and tags, but Omeka can be extended through the use of plugins to display items in timelines, maps, and custom webpages. See the [list of Omeka plugins](#) for more information.

NOTE: One can use a content management tool like WordPress or Drupal or a website builder like Wix or Squarespace to create a digital collection presentation tool, but that would take deep knowledge of how to configure these platforms or a bunch of time creating web pages of items. Omeka is meant to organize items in collections and exhibits without much configuration or manual intervention, so is a popular tool in the academic community where time and resources for digital projects is limited.

Planning for using Omeka

https://omeka.org/classic/docs/GettingStarted/Site_Planning_Tips/

Creating the Digital Archive

Items

Items are the building blocks of an Omeka site. Each object gets its own record in which you will decide what information to add about the object (ie, the object's title, creator, date of creation, etc.) and how you want to standardize the content entry (ie, having a single format for type or lowercasing and making singular all tags).

As you add items to the archive, Omeka will automatically create a page that allows users to see these items. In order to allow public viewers of your site to see the items, one must check the public box when creating the item. If the public box is unchecked, only users with the ability to login to the Omeka site can see the objects. To certain items, check the featured box when you are creating the item.

Once you have items in your archive you can begin presenting them in new ways.

See this [tutorial](#) and [video](#) for how to add items.

Collections

One of the standard ways of presenting items in Omeka is through [Collections](#). Because Omeka is built for archives, a collection is based on how an archivist might organize items in one's archive. Oftentimes, archivists receive a donation from a person or store the contents of a collection in a certain box for discovery by a researcher. Thus, collections in Omeka allow items to be added to ONLY ONE collection because an archivist would only put an item in the collection that represents the donor or the box that the physical item is stored in.

Typically, a user will create one's collections before they add items so that when one adds an item they can associate it with a preexisting collection. But Omeka does allow a user to batch edit items to add them to a collection so one can create collections after items have been added. See this [tutorial](#) and [video](#) for more information about batch editing.

See this [tutorial](#) for how to add collections.

Exhibits

Another standard way to present items in Omeka is through [Exhibits](#). In order to create exhibits one first must add and configure the [Exhibit Builder](#) plugin. Exhibits in Omeka are the digital equivalents of the physical exhibits museums and archives create all the time. They contain a landing page, which is like the room that contains the whole exhibit, and exhibit pages, which are equivalent to the different walls and cases one explores inside that exhibit room.

See this [tutorial](#) and video for how to add items.

Tags

The final standard way to present items in Omeka is through [Tags](#). Tags are keywords or phrases that describe the item that one can add in the Tags tab while creating the item. When a user adds a tag, Omeka will automatically create a link that directs visitors to a web page that will contain all the items in the archive that have the same tag. For this reason it is important to decide what keywords and phrases will be used as tags, as well as standardize how those keywords and phrases appear (ie, as a lowercase and in the singular form). Otherwise, too many tags will be created in too many different ways to make the tags feature useful.

Using Omeka Plugins

Just like other content management systems, like WordPress and Drupal, Omeka can be extended to do more things and have their look changed through the use of [Plugins](#) and [Themes](#). Below is a list of plugins that can present items in an archive in new ways:

[SimplePages](#) – allows a user to create custom web pages and use [shortcode](#) to add items, collections, and other plugins to these pages.

[ShortcodeCarousel](#) – allows a user to add an item carousel to a SimplePage through shortcode.

[Geolocation](#) – allow a user to display item records on a browsable map

[Neatline](#) – allows a user to display item records on a map and add polygons and annotations to that map (kind of like Google My Maps for Omeka).

[Neatline Time](#) – allows a user to display items from the archive into a timeline.