Lessons Learned in Customizing Hosted CONTENTdm 6

M Ryan Hess, DePaul University
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M Ryan Hess
Web Services Coordinator
DePaul University Library
The Lesson

The CONTENTdm 6 Web Configuration Tool can get you in trouble.

Robust but stable customizations must occur outside CONTENTdm.
Why Customize CONTENTdm?

• Default UI is plain*
• Bugs
  – Broken Carousels
  – Text Search issues
  – Sluggish page load (v. 6.0)
  – jQuery conflicts with Advanced Search
• No means to organize collections into larger sections
• Non-responsive UI
I <3 UNLV
Context

Staff

- Web Services
  - Web Services Coordinator
  - Web Apps Librarian
  - ½ time student developers
- Digital Projects Team

Hosted CONTENTdm 6

No Servers (officially)
Our First Try: Hacking CONTENTdm

July 2011, DePaul updated to 6.0

Jim LeFager

_Hacking ContentDM 6 with Jquery_

2011 Midwest CONTENTdm User Meeting

http://prezi.com/oyye-u5kmow_/hacking-contentdm-with-jquery/
2011 Customizations

• jQuery Tabs
• jQuery Slideshows

+ 

• Replacing menus
• Accordion features for facets
Problems with Customization

• CDM CMS
  – No file views*
  – Complicated file directories

• Zombie Code
  – Overwriting v. Deleting*
  – Conflicts?

* Fixed in CONTENTdm 6.8
Mission Impossible

2013 DePaul Heritage Project

“Organize four DePaul collections under a single Heritage section to promote DePaul and the Library’s Special Collections.”
Coping Mechanisms

- Breaking Up with ContentDM – Code4Lib
  - http://journal.code4lib.org/articles/8327

- Cheating – Drupal or Wordpress

- Sticking with “For better or for worse...”
Diagnosis

“Reassess the impulse to fix the User Interface”

Custom code
- Zap everything
- New rules

Customizations
- Host externally
- Accept some limits
Recovery

1. Launch BlueHost account
2. Redesign
3. Zap Request – Thanks Taylor!
4. Reconfigure “limited” customizations in Web Config
Technical Rundown

- PHP site
- Templates
- Bootstrap Framework
Web Configuration Tool

- Header – image that duplicates look of custom banner
- Nav – Use Web Config + reference to external CSS
- Footer – Web Config
Integrating Everything

- Collection Landing Pages: using built-in Web Config tool
- Homepage: using page with meta tag redirect uploaded to Web Config
- Search – global and custom collection search forms
- Browser checks (FF & IE)
Still a Little Messy

- SEO & redirects
- Two Domains
- Two CMS
- Search & Image Viewer woes
Going forward

WordPress + OAI + Omeka + OAI + OAI
Contact

M Ryan Hess
Web Services Coordinator
DePaul University Library
mhess8@depaul.edu

More info: faillab.wordpress.com/2013/10/18/separate-beds-for-contentdm