Collaboration with CONTENTdm: Building Local History Collections

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Building Local History Collections

Upper Midwest CONTENTdm User Group
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What is Wisconsin Heritage Online?

• A statewide collaborative of public libraries, academic libraries, archives, museums and historical societies.

• A resource network providing training and support to cultural heritage institutions engaged in digital projects and a shared set of guidelines and standards for digitization.

• A public research portal (wisconsinheritage.org) providing access to digital collections of Wisconsin history and culture.
How does it work?

- We harvest digital collection metadata from servers around the state into a single search interface (wisconsinheritage.org)
- To harvest, collection has to be OAI-PMH compliant. Many but not all of the collections we harvest are in CONTENTdm
- Milwaukee Public Library hosts collections on its CONTENTdm server for participants who can’t maintain their own OAI-compliant content management system
Getting online with WHO: an overview

- After discussion with Outreach Specialist, organization signs on as WHO member and fills out Collection Hosting Application
- MPL sets up CONTENTdm collection with basic customizations
- WHO establishes collection fields; provides training in metadata and the use of CONTENTdm Project Client
- Collection is harvested for WHO portal, generally while still in progress; is then picked up in regular monthly refresh harvest
Collection Hosting Application

- Estimated number of single items and compound objects
- Timeline for project completion
- Custom URL for hosted collection (e.g. http://content.mpl.org/wfb)
- Website home page and contact info
- Text for “About” page
Milwaukee Public Library’s part

- Kevin Cingatura, Senior Network Analyst in Technical Services/Automation
- Rose Fortier, Digital Projects Librarian
- Cathy Markwiese, Metadata & Cataloging Librarian

Richland County History Room
Cathy’s role

• Cathy involved with WHO board
  – Was a part of having MPL take on hosting after budget crisis meant that Wisconsin Historical Society couldn’t take on additional hosted collections
  – Helped look for grant funding, though she couldn’t approach any organization that the MPL Foundation might consider approaching
Kevin’s role

- Works most closely with WHO
  - Emily acts as go-between for Kevin and institutions being hosted
  - Creates new projects for local history organizations brought in by WHO
New collection creation

- Creates user account in Users and Computers on CONTENTdm server
- Creates folder where items will be stored and applies permission to the folder for the user that was just created and the CONTENTdm Administrator Group
  - Within the CONTENTdm Administrator, creates the new collection
  - Creates a username and password similar to the Users and Computers profile.
    - Used for the FTP process and to approve and index the new collection.

Milwaukee Public Library/Milwaukee Historic Photos
New collection creation

- Opens Internet Information Service (IIS) and creates the Virtual Directory for direct URL access – this step is not mandatory.
  - Also allows creation of more direct URLs for hosted collections
    - [http://content.mpl.org/wfb](http://content.mpl.org/wfb)

Milwaukee Public Library/Milwaukee Historic Photos
Collection customization

- Came on gradually when it was requested that in-house collections get some customization
- Started with PHP code supplied from Carroll College (now Carroll University)
  - Amended their code so it didn’t look completely the same
- Adds banner (supplied by Rose) and matches colors to that banner
What Rose does

- Created custom banners for hosted collections
  - Use Photoshop
  - Start with image provided by Emily (ideally)
  - Check out websites of organizations providing collections for color schemes (if it exists)
Banner creation

- Banners are created at 300 DPI as TIFF files
  - Dimensions 10” x 0.973” (720 x 70 pixels)
  - Once banner is finished, a copy is downsized to 72 DPI JPEG file
  - That is the copy that ends up on the collection itself
  - 300 DPI master is kept in case changes need to be made
    - Pending approval from Emily and the institution creating the new collection
Banner parts

- Each banner has four parts:
  - Background image
  - Institution’s name
  - WHO logo
  - Hosting statement by MPL
Banner parts

• Most important part is to leave the far right end of the banner one continuous color from top to bottom so Kevin can match colors
  – Allows banners to display well on computer screens of varying sizes and resolutions
How does Kevin keep it straight?

- Has created a step by step check list for the entire process
  - Creates collections
  - Creates user groups
  - Makes folder on server
  - Assigns security rights to the folder
  - Creates users in CONTENTdm
  - Creates collection base pieces
    - Index, About, Banner, Header, Footer

Milwaukee Public Library/Horace Seaman
Wisconsin Infantry
How does Kevin keep it straight?

- Matches custom banner colors for collection
  - Looks for pleasing color combinations for entire collection look, including hover over colors
  - Checks institution website to create as seamless a transition as possible from their site to the hosted collection
  - Color matching takes the longest time of any part of the collections creation process
PHP that needs modifying

- Customizes PHP files for color blend, banner display, and menu redirection
  - Collectionname_menu.php
  - Collectionname_header.php
  - Collectionname_footer.php
  - Index_Collectionname.php
  - STY_Collectionname_style.php
- Still on 5.4, upgrade to 6.1 will reduce necessity of modifying PHP manually
Hosted collections: what you get

- Up to 3,000 items free; after that a “large collection hosting fee” is negotiated
- Use of Project Client on up to two workstations (may be home computer/shared laptop)
- Pre-set collection fields based on required and recommended WHO metadata elements
Hosted collections: what you get

• One collection for all content
  – Use Relation.IsPartOf to define sub-collections
  – Add links from home website to individual sub-collections

• Direct links to participant’s own website and contact page or email address

• Visual match between home website and CONTENTdm collection

• Value of customization: local branding a high priority for founding WHO partners

Iowa County Historical Society
Project Client training

- Use of metadata template
- Adding single items via Project Client
- Adding multiple items and/or compound objects via tab-delimited text files
- Approving and indexing
- Working with controlled vocabularies
- Editing and deleting

New Berlin Historical Society
Project Client training

- Time on-site varies significantly depending on experience and advance preparation
- After in-person training, available for followup support by phone or email
- Challenge with volunteer-run or minimally-staffed organizations: regular progress (often a gap between training and moving forward)
Special situations

• WHO might upload content to CONTENTdm for participant (participant enters metadata in Excel spreadsheet template)
  – Small, finite first project
  – Working with students/interns
  – OCR is needed
Richland County History Room
Brewer Public Library, Richland Center

• 1,000+ photographs of local people and places
• History students at UW-Richland were already scanning and doing basic metadata entry in Excel
• Trained staff in use of CONTENTdm Acquisition Station (later Project Client) after we performed first upload
• Staff developed controlled vocabularies for Township (Civil Town), Donor, Photographer, and local place names
First project: 150 photographs by local photojournalist Lawrence Oliver, ca. 1948-1952
Had already scanned photos, but no metadata
Cataloged in PastPerfect and exported to Excel; then uploaded tab-delimited file using Project Client
Assigning subject headings was a challenge for staff
Ongoing support

• Minimal quality control—review for missing fields, organizational oddities, etc.
• WHO submits collection to CONTENTdm Collection of Collections
• WHO acts as liaison for MPL tech support (Kevin)
Thank you!

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