Workshop: Digital Tools for Cultural Heritage

A presentation by Noah Lenstra, PhD student at Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

@ 2012 eChicago, April 20 - 21
eChicago.illinois.edu

More information @ http://manual.eBlackCU.net
Outline of the Presentation

• Opening Video - Community Digitization
• Contextual Overview
  - The Big Picture
  - Community Informatics
• eBlackCU Case Study
• Community and Family History Digitization Manual
  - Getting organized
  - Getting the information
  - Getting it digitized
  - Sharing it with others
  - Building a digital library
  - Building collaboration & sustainability
• Conclusions
A. The Big Picture

- People all around the world are using digital technologies to share local and family histories

- Examples:
  - localwiki.org
  - 1000memories.com
  - ancestry.com
  - worldgenweb.org
  - shutterfly.com
  - facebook.com
  - omeka.net
**A. The Big Picture - Rural Libraries**

San Juan Story Collection

**FREE** on-the-spot scans of your pictures, mementos or objects which represent the essence of life on San Juan Island.

**YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS!**

**LOCAL SPONSORS**
- San Juan Island Library
- San Juan Historical Museum
- Town of Friday Harbor
- San Juan National Historical Park

This grant was awarded by the Office of the Secretary of State, Washington State Library Division, funded by the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

To make an appointment or if you have questions, contact the San Juan Historical Museum
378-3949
museum_admin@sjmuseum.org

**FEBRUARY 28th**
**MARCH 21st**
**APRIL 18th**

10:00am - 2:00 pm

Friday Harbor
High School Library
San Juan
Historical Museum

**Preserve your story at one of these three events and receive a FREE take-home gift.**

**Here is your opportunity to share items that help tell the story of what it means to live on our island from the turn of the century to the recent past. Your pictures, mementos, and objects will become part of an online collection for all to see and learn from. Your items will help us tell our story and strengthen our community by preserving our unique island history for current and future generations.**

**Walk-ins encouraged. Appointments available.**

Robb, “Gleaning Local History: Community-based Digitization Experiences in Rural Washington”, Microform & Imaging Review, 2010
A. The Big Picture - Urban Libraries

INTRODUCING CREATING YOUR COMMUNITY

Colorado’s Social Archive

An Initiative of Denver Public Library:
http://creatingcommunities.denverlibrary.org/
A. The Big Picture - Genealogy

- Genealogy - blending online and off-line interactions with cultural heritage
- Online industry that generates $1.5 billion dollars annually in the U.S. alone
- Plus related ancestral, genealogy, roots tourism and family reunions: “defined as traveling to an ancestral homeland in order to connect on some level to a familial past.”
Are County Historical Societies Dinosaurs?

http://uncatalogedmuseum.blogspot.com/2010/09/are-county-historical-societies.html
A. New Vocabulary: “New Heritage”
“Networked Cultural Heritage,” etc.
The themes of this presentation:

- Digital technology enables new ways to share, produce and preserve local and family history.

- Everyone can do something now to contribute to the construction of universal designs for sharing local and family histories online.
Community Informatics: A way forward

• What is **needed** to develop universal designs digital local and family history?
  – Democratic access to:
    • Equipment
    • Software
    • Training
    • Servers
  – Everyone feels included and empowered to participate
  – Everyone feels connected to history

• There is a lot to learn

• The best way to learn is to jump in and get started trying things out
B. Community Informatics

“an emerging field ... navigating the interaction between

transformation

as expressed in information technology and

continuity

as expressed in a local, historical community”

SOURCE: (Williams and Durrance, 2009).
B. eBlackCU Case Study

Introduction for eBlackCU
eBlackCU is a collaborative portal on African-American history and culture in Champaign-Urbana which ALL are welcome to use and add to. Visit this Introduction on eBlackCU, to find out what eBlackCU is trying to do, and how it can be used to find information on local African-American history and culture.

URL: http://www.eBlackCU.net
B. eBlackCU Case Study
B. eBlackCU Case Study
B. eBlackCU Case Study

Digitizing yearbooks and newsletters @ Urbana High School

2010 Difference Makers
B. eBlackCU Case Study

- **Reception** = accessing networked cultural heritage
- **Participation** = actively contributing to networked cultural heritage
- **Ownership** = perceived community control over networked cultural heritage
Reception

Figure 1: Number of unique visitors to eBlackCU website, from March 1, 2010, to September 1, 2011. Data points plotted by week with smoothing between. Source: eBlackCU.net Google Analytics.
Reception

eBlackCU: A Collaborative Portal on African-American History and Culture

Happy MLK Day!!! New post on and about this great man.
http://jasonpatterson.wordpress.com/2012/01/16/american-heritage-v/

American Heritage V
jasonpatterson.wordpress.com
This portrait was recently acquired by The University of Illinois to be displayed in remembrance of Kris Campbell, the former Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs and a founder of the University’s Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Community Celebration.

Noah Lenstra
http://readbuzz.com/arts/2012/keeping-the-voice-alive

read buzz | Keeping the voice alive
readbuzz.com
The dimly lit Palette Cafe in the Krannert Art Museum at the University of Illinois was standing room only, […]

Sponsored Story

Who else should be in this group?

Add Friends to Group

Sponsored
Participation

eBlackCU Community Technology Workshop, Summer 2010. Photo by Patricia Lewis.
Participation

Community contributors of cultural heritage information to eBlackCU outside of formal workshops.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Digital Contributors</th>
<th>Analog Contributors</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participation

Salem Baptist Church Computer Lab with high school interns
Ownership

• Every community, and every family, can have their own digital history project.
• How can all these projects link together?

Community History Digitization: How-To Manual and Exercises

(Redirected from Main Page)

This wiki features a manual to support community groups, institutions and individuals wishing to launch, build and sustain community history digitization projects.

Community history digitization projects are focused on representing community memory online. They could include projects to digitize school yearbooks, cherished recipes, family histories, oral histories, information on historic buildings, church histories, the history of local government, and much, much more! In community history digitization everyone's stories can be included. These projects could be small, such as digitizing the story of a single family, or huge, such as digitizing all the yearbooks of a given high school.

We hope this manual will be of use to any individual or institution wishing to launch such a project. Public librarians, historical societies, genealogical societies, universities, colleges, teachers of all types, community groups, churches, city governments, historic preservation groups, families, local historians, and others are all welcome to use this manual to represent their community history online.
Outline of Steps to Take in Digital Local & Family History
(more information @ manual.eBlackCU.net)

- Step 1: Getting organized
- Step 2: Getting the information
- Step 3: Getting it digitized
- Step 4: Sharing it with others
- Step 5: Building a digital library
- Step 6: Building collaboration and sustainability
Preface : Why bother?

• Some benefits of digital local and family history (from Spring 2012 workshop series)
  – Inter-generational transfer of knowledge
  – Strengthen community ties
  – Holistic mental health
    (everyone's history is valued and appreciated)
  – Bridging the digital divide
  – Staying connected to one's past & a sense of roots
  – Strengthen community, family and personal identity
  – Education and lifelong learning
  – Storytelling in new ways for new audiences
  – Fascination with finding out where we have been
  – Your ideas!!
Step 1: Getting Organized
Step 1: Who are we, what resources do we have, and how can we get organized?

- Every community has resources. Its most important resources are its citizens.

- Take stock of your community's resources:
  - Technical
  - Human
  - Financial
  - Social

- Then get these resources organized through:
  - Meetings, small and large
  - Workshops, like this one today
  - Partnerships with other groups
Step 1: Who's already doing this work online

• To start a project you need to know the base-line - what's already happening?
• Who's doing things with digital technology in your community - These are the people you need to know
• They may not be well-funded organizations, maybe just a “You Know You Grew Up In...” group on Facebook
• Digital local and family history is about organizing existing resources to do old things in new ways
Step 1: Who's already doing this work online

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Album</th>
<th>Number / % of Albums</th>
<th>Number / % of Images</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>62 / 26.3%</td>
<td>3608 / 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>48 / 20.4%</td>
<td>904 / 10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>37 / 15.7%</td>
<td>1001 / 11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funeral</td>
<td>31 / 13.2%</td>
<td>1239 / 14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>27 / 11.9%</td>
<td>1181 / 13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>18 / 7.7%</td>
<td>586 / 6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community History</td>
<td>12 / 5.1%</td>
<td>72 / 0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>235</strong></td>
<td><strong>8591</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 2: What’s the information? Who has it? Where is it?
Step 2: What’s the information? Who has it? Where is it?

- Local and family history information is **Everywhere!**

- Common sources include:
  - Local history collections in public libraries
  - County courthouses
  - Family collections of scrapbooks, albums and records
  - Regional archives centers
  - Historical Society and local history museums
  - The memory of every single citizen

- Local and family history is not held by one person or institution – everyone has a piece of it and everyone can be included in digital local and family history
Step 2: What would we like to do?

Example Mission Statement:
“eBlackCU is a community-based collaborative portal on African-American history and culture in Champaign-Urbana Illinois. The goals of eBlackCU are to:
1) **Centralize** information on local African-American history and culture and create new knowledge through this centralization;
2) **Involve** past and present community residents in the production of digital community memory by soliciting their contributions and knowledge; and
3) **Contribute** to the networks of scholars, activists and citizens interested in learning more about various aspects of local African-American history and culture.”
Step 2: What would we like to do?

- Every project needs a beginning
- Think about the communities you know, and the institutions within them
- Examples: Churches, Families, Schools, Neighborhoods, Businesses, Families, etc.
- Are their stories online?
- Think about how you would recruit people in these community institutions as leaders to contribute to digital local and family history
- Goal is consensus among all stakeholders
Step 3: How can we digitize it?
Step 3: How can we digitize it?

• The following steps can be taken to digitize local and family history:
  
  – Identify the equipment you may need (e.g. flat-bed scanner, photocopier/scanner, video camera, audio recorder, VHS-Digital converter, etc.)
  
  – Identify the software you may need (e.g. Audacity, GIMP, Adobe Acrobat Pro, etc.)
  
  – Visit http://manual.eBlackCU.net for more information

• You can either:

  – Purchase the equipment or
  
  – Find someone or some institution in your local community willing to let you use their resources for free (such as schools, colleges, libraries, churches)
Step 3: Software that supports digital local and family history

Some tools used in the eBlackCU project

- Adobe Reader - for opening pdf files
- Audacity - for recording & editing audio files
- Camstudio - for recording screencasts
- Filezilla - for using File Transfer Protocol
- GIMP - for editing photographs
- HTTrack - for preserving websites
- Omeka - for making digital libraries
- OpenOffice - open-source office program
- PDFEditor - for editing & creating pdf files
- Skype - for free audio-video collaborations
- VLC Video Player - for opening up video files
- Windows Movie Maker - for making movies
- WinFF - for converting video files
- ZipGenius - for opening & creating zip files

Need more support?

- Visit http://sourceforge.net/ to find free software for almost any computer task you can think of

What tools do you use that could be picked up by members of the general public?
Step 3: Where can we go for support?
Step 3: Where can I go for support?

- There are many local, state and national institutions that can provide support for digital local and family history projects

- Local orgs include:
  - Public libraries
  - Local history museums
  - Regional archives
  - Tourism boards & Arts Councils
  - Colleges and Universities
  - School districts
  - City Governments
  - Churches
  - Historic Preservation council
  - Chambers of Commerce

- Non-local orgs include:
  - State Archives
  - State Library
  - Library Associations
  - Museum Associations
  - State Humanities Council
  - State Arts Council
  - Regional granting bodies
  - And more!
Step 3: Support Networks

- Stay up-to-date with best practices:
  - Museum Computer Network - http://www.mcn.edu/
  - Museums and the Web http://www.museumsandtheweb.com/
  - George Mason U Center for History in New Media http://chnm.gmu.edu/
  - Digital Humanities HASTAC Group - http://hastac.org
  - Midwest Archives Council
  - Association of Midwest Museums
  - State Library, Archives, Museum and Genealogy groups
  - Your networks
Digitization Guidelines: DPI and Resolution

Resolution = 5 DPI (dots per inch)
Digitization Guidelines

- To create full-text searchable documents you need to run Optical Character Recognition (OCR)
- To run OCR you need:
  - Software (Adobe Acrobat Pro or similar)
  - High quality scans! (600 dpi or above)
  - DIY resources: uiuc.libguides.com/techives
  - http://www.diybookscanner.org/
  - Please refer to guidelines from University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center for advice
  uwdcc.library.wisc.edu/documents/Reformatting_Guidelines.pdf
Step 4: How do I share the history?
Step 4: How do I share the history?

- The simplest way to share your digital local and family history is to place the files on CD-R or DVD-R and distribute the disc at:
  - Family Reunions
  - School Reunions
  - Church celebrations
  - Public Libraries
  - School Libraries
  - Local Media Outlets
  - Civic holidays

- DVD-R and CD-R are CHEAP & easy to use! You can get them up for as low as 100 for $10-$20
Step 4: How do we share the history online?
Step 4: Case study - 1000Memories

- [http://1000memories.com/](http://1000memories.com/)
- Created to ensure that your online content stays accessible forever
- Partner with Internet Archive: [http://www.archive.org/](http://www.archive.org/)
- Free to use for basic account
- You have to pay for some advanced features
Step 4: How do we share the history online?

- There are no shortage of online sites you can use to share local and family history
- To create a locally-owned and controlled site open to all requires advanced training

**Ethics** to consider in sharing history online:
- Are all individuals represented in this history happy to see it online?
- Have all project participants given their consent?
- Have you included all sides in this history?
- More complicated than it may first appear
Step 5: How do we start building a digital library?
Step 5: Where do we start, technically speaking?

- Where to host the local project?
  - The cloud?
  - Web-hosting?
  - Local server?

- Explore all options and make informed decisions collaboratively

- You want to develop something that could be moved around & backed up easily for long-term preservation
Step 5: How to manage the content?

Getting Started
Before installing Omeka, find system requirements, installation instructions, and how others use Omeka for a variety of projects.

**Audience:** all users and potential users, designers, developers, server administrators, et al.

- What is Omeka (movie)
- Preparing to Install
- Installation
- Upgrading
- Hosting Suggestions
- Moving to Another Server
- Watch Screencasts
- Try Omeka Before Installing
- Feature List (PDF)
- Sites Using Omeka
- How Might You Use Omeka
- Site Planning Tips
- Project Planning Case Studies

Working with Omeka Admin
Find written tutorials for using Omeka’s basic functions or start with our Screencasts.

**Audience:** end users, content creators, project managers
Step 5: How to manage the content?

- Omeka is a Content Management System
- Easy-to-follow instructions at:
  - http://omeka.org/codex/Documentation
- To use Omeka you need Apache server space and MySQL database capability (web-hosting usually provides both)
- Install and update using FTP - free programs like FileZilla - http://filezilla-project.org/
- More options described at http://manual.eBlackCU.net/
Step 5: Too complicated? Try Omeka.net

- Omeka's cloud-based version
- http://www.omeka.net/
- Takes a few minutes to get your online library & museum set up
- You can invite other people to participate in building the online library & museum
- Free accounts limited to one site & 500 mega-bytes
- Other versions require payment to support the non-profit's operational costs
Omeka.net versus Omeka.org

- Cloud-version
- No servers required
- Get started right away
- Limited by the software
- Limited space online
- Limited design options
- Good to get started

- Web-hosting
- Requires you have server space
- Spend some time setting up
- Complete control of all aspects of site
- Unlimited space, accounts and design
- Good for long-term
Step 5: How do I use Omeka?

Dashboard

Getting Started with Omeka

Items

- Add a new item to your archive
- Browse your items

Collections

- Add a collection to group items
- Browse your collections

Manage items in your archive: add, edit, and delete items.

Manage collections in your archive: add, edit, and delete collections.

Site Overview

Sandbox contains 0 items, in 0 collections, tagged with 0 keywords. There are 2 users. This is Omeka version 1.4.1.

Recent Items

There are no items to display.

Recent Tags

No tags are available.
Step 5: How do I use Omeka?

- Watch me log-in
- Now you try it
- Go to http://eblackcu.net/sandbox/admin
- Enter for both username and password: “echicago”
Step 5: How do I use Omeka?

- Watch me add an item to the digital library
- Now you try it
- Work in small groups to add and describe an item online
- Use any file
- Some questions to think about
  - How much information can you get from this item?
  - What information is missing?
  - How could you work with community members to better describe these photographs?
Step 5: The Omeka users & open-source software

Add-Ons

Add-ons extend Omeka, letting you add functionality to your Omeka website and customize its look and feel. Browse, download, and install plugins and themes to get the most from your Omeka site.

Themes

**All Themes**  **Design a New Theme**

Most recently updated themes

**Griddy**
A theme using the baseline and 960 grids, and excessive Helvetica.

**Santa Fe**
Theme based on the Bracero History Archive.

Plugins

**All Plugins**  **Build a New Plugin**

Most recently updated plugins

**WikiCite**
Adds Wikipedia citations codes to each public item or collection.

**Tweetster for Omeka**
Automatically tweets out the title and link to a new public addition to the Omeka archive.

You can also browse plugins by category:

- Annotating and Displaying Files
- Batch Importing
- Copyright
- Data Sharing
- Metadata Input
- Search
Step 5: What can I do with Omeka?

- Simple Pages and Exhibit Builder – make webpages
- Simple Contact Form - to enable people to give feedback
- Contribution - to enable people to contribute contact to your digital library
- Social Bookmarks - to enable the digital library to connect to social networking services such as facebook
- More things to do with Omeka:
Step 6: How can I build collaboration around local & family history?
Step 6: How can I build collaboration around local & family history?

- Many sites allow commenting on images, photographs and videos
- Wikipedia/MediaWiki CMS allows collaborative editing of content, including cultural heritage
- E-mail listserves can be used to collaboratively:
  - Identify photographs
  - Plan local and family history events
  - Help everyone feel included
- It takes work to build and maintain e-mail listservs, but we highly recommend them
  - some tools: YMLP.com or Groupspaces.com
  - or you could ask someone to create a listserv for you
Step 6: Using the Project in Communities
Step 6: Using the Project in Communities

- A digital local and family history website is a great resource! Make sure everyone can use it

- Some possibilities:
  - Multi-media Powerpoint presentations (yours and others)
  - Basic computer classes for community elders structured around digital library
  - Oral history kiosk - help people record their memories
  - Using content from project for community anniversaries, celebrations and reunions of all types
  - Make a documentary or book on community history
  - Interactive photo slide shows on public smart screens
  - Your innovative ideas!
Step 6: Collaboration

- What has worked for you?
- How do YOUR COMMUNITIES use digital technology to collaborate?
- Examples: Family Reunions, Church Anniversaries, PTA planning, other
- How do you think you could build collaboration around digital local and family history?
- Where would you start? How would you build? How would you keep the momentum going?
Conclusions - Benefits

- Benefits of digital local and family history
  - Inter-generational transfer of knowledge
  - Strengthen community ties
  - Holistic mental health
    (everyone's history is valued and appreciated)
  - Bridging the digital divide
  - Staying connected to one's past & a sense of roots
  - Strengthen community, family and personal identity
  - Education and lifelong learning
  - Storytelling in new ways for new audiences
  - Fascination with finding out where we've been
  - Your ideas
Conclusions - How to get there

• What **is needed** to develop digital local and family history?
  – Democratic access to:
    • Equipment
    • Software
    • Training
    • Servers
  – Everyone feels included and empowered to participate
  – Everyone feels connected to history

• There is a lot to learn

• The best way to start is to jump in & get started
Outline of the Presentation

- Opening Video - Community Digitization
- Contextual Overview
  - The Big Picture
  - Community Informatics
- eBlackCU Case Study and Evaluation
- Community and Family History Digitization Manual
  - Getting organized
  - Getting the information
  - Getting it digitized
  - Sharing it with others
  - Building a digital library
  - Building collaboration & sustainability
- Conclusions
Want to learn more?

- Attend full-day workshop @ Carbondale Public Library, May 19, 2012
- Stay in touch : nlenstr2@illinois.edu

- Acknowledgments
  - Illinois Humanities Council
  - UIUC Office of Vice Chancellor for Public Engagement
  - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign:
    Graduate School of Library and Information Science
- Local Partners
  - Museum of the Grand Praire, Urbana Free Library, Champaign Park District, Salem Baptist Church, Central High School, Urbana High School, North 1st Street Business Association, many many more