



Center for History and New Media

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OMEKA: SERIOUS ONLINE PUBLISHING SOFTWARE UPGRADE AVAILABLE

June 2, 2009, Fairfax, VA: The Center for History and New Media (CHNM) at George Mason University, in partnership with the Minnesota Historical Society, is pleased to announce a major new release of its *Omeka* <<http://omeka.org>> web publishing platform, version 1.0.

From the Swahili word meaning “to display” or “to lay out for discussion,” *Omeka* is a next generation web publishing platform for collections-based research of all kinds, one that bridges the scholarly, library, and museum worlds through a set of commonly recognized standards. In doing so, *Omeka* puts serious web publishing within reach of all scholars and cultural heritage professionals.

Exciting new software enhancements allow individuals and organizations to easily import collections records, carefully crafted databases, and information saved in other systems into an *Omeka* website. Two new plugins translate and import simple database files (CSV) and record and file sets available in the Open Archive Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) format. Additionally, *Omeka* sites using a separate OAI-PMH Repository plugin may make their archive data available for sharing, thus facilitating collaboration across institutions and individuals.

Omeka is free and open-source, easy to use, standards based, and extensible. It is designed with non-IT specialists in mind, allowing users to focus on content and interpretation rather than programming. Its “five-minute setup” and data migration tools make launching a collections-based site as easy as launching a blog. *Omeka* brings Web 2.0 technologies and approaches to academic and cultural websites to foster user interaction and participation. It makes top-shelf design easy with a simple and flexible templating system. Its robust open-source developer and user communities underwrite *Omeka*’s stability and sustainability.

Omeka is funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and the Samuel H. Kress Foundation.



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Features:

- * Free and open source publishing suite for scholars, librarians, archivists, museum professionals, and cultural enthusiasts
- * Unqualified Dublin Core structure is interoperable with existing digital collections systems.
- * Element sets for institution-specific metadata sets
- * Data migration tools: OAI-PMH harvester and CSV Importer
- * W3C, 508 standards compliant
- * Improved exhibit building
- * Themes: easily choose, modify, or build your own site design.
- * Support for displaying and updating icons of your choice to associate with different file types.
- * Auto-complete function when tagging to encourage standardized usage.
- * Web 2.0 functionality: Syndicate content with RSS feeds; tag items with keywords; personalize favorite items; invite users to share in content creation.
- * Plugins: geolocation, user-created content, social bookmarking, document browsing, batch uploading, or build one to suit project needs.

Sites Recently Built with *Omeka*:

- * *Lincoln at 200*, Newberry Library and Chicago History Museum <<http://lincolnat200.org/>>
- * *Digital Amherst*, Jones Library, Amherst, Massachusetts <<http://www.digitalamherst.org/>>
- * *Children and Youth in History*, Center for History and New Media and the University of Missouri–Kansas City <<http://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh>>
- * *Bowling Green State University Centennial Memories*, Bowling Green University Libraries <<http://memories.bgsu.edu/lits/>>
- * *digitalMetro*, New York Metropolitan Library Council <<http://nycdigital.org/dmetro/>>
- * For a complete list, visit the *Omeka* Showcase: <<http://omeka.org/showcase>>



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About the Center for History & New Media

Since 1994, the Center for History and New Media <chnm.gmu.edu> has used digital media and computer technology to democratize history—to incorporate multiple voices, reach diverse audiences, and encourage popular participation in presenting and preserving the past. CHNM combines cutting edge digital media with the latest and best historical scholarship to promote an inclusive understanding of the past as well as broad historical literacy. CHNM maintains more than two dozen online history projects directed at diverse audiences, making them available at no cost through its website. In 2007, CHNM's websites had 300 million hits and 10 million visitors—making it one of the busiest non-commercial history education sites on the entire World Wide Web. CHNM has been a leader both in using digital media to improve the public understanding of history and in developing innovative, easy-to-use digital tools for accessing historical content. In terms of public understanding, CHNM maintains several very popular and award-winning web-database projects, including educational projects such as History Matters, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution, and World History Matters and public history projects such as the September 11 Digital Archive, the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank, and Gulag: Many Days, Many Lives. CHNM's work has been recognized with major awards and grants from the American Historical Association, the National Humanities Center, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, the Department of Education, the Library of Congress, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the National Historic Records and Publication Commission, Atlantic Philanthropies, and the Sloan, Hewlett, Rockefeller, Gould, Delmas, and Kellogg foundations.

About the Minnesota Historical Society

The Minnesota Historical Society <mnhs.org> is a private, non-profit educational and cultural institution established in 1849 to preserve and share Minnesota history. The Society collects, preserves and tells the story of Minnesota's past through interactive and engaging museum exhibits, extensive libraries and collections, 25 historic sites, educational programs and publishing. The Library, Publications and Collections Division encompasses the departments and programs that collect, preserve and provide access to historical resources through a wide variety of means. The primary area of service for the Society is the state of Minnesota, with an estimated population of just over 5.1 million people. But researchers from all over the country and the world make use of its collections, in person and, increasingly, through its web site, which hosts a number of excellent and innovative resources. For example, in FY06, over 570,000 people visited the Society's museums and sites; the Library had over 32,000 researchers in attendance; and the web site enjoyed over 6.6 million total visits.

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