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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OMEKA: SERIOUS ONLINE PUBLISHING SOFTWARE UPGRADE AVAILABLE

November 11, 2008, 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 0.10b.

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.

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 unqualified Dublin Core metadata structure and adherence to web standards allows anyone to design fully accessible online exhibitions efficiently. *Omeka*'s modular architecture and rich API empower people with a range of programming skills to participate in its open source community and expand its capabilities by adding specialized metadata element sets and plugins. Plugins bring Web 2.0 technologies and approaches to academic and cultural websites that foster user participation.

CHNM is also re-launching the project website, http://omeka.org, with a new look. The new design showcases a diverse range of *Omeka*-powered websites and encourages involvement from the open-source development and user community.

Scholars and cultural heritage professionals no longer need extensive technical skills or expensive systems to publish collections-based research and online exhibitions—they only need *Omeka*.

Omeka **.10b 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.

* W3C, 508 standards compliant

* Improved exhibit building

* Element sets for institution-specific metadata sets

* Web 2.0 functionality: Syndicate content with RSS/ATOM feeds; tag items with keywords; personalize favorite items; invite users to share in content creation.

* Plugins: geolocation, bi-lingual sites, user-created content, document browsing, batch uploading, or build one to suit project needs.

* Themes: easily choose, modify, or build your own site design.

* Data migration tools: Coming soon for popular content management systems

Sites Built with *Omeka*:

* *Making the History of 1989*, Center for History and New Media, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989>

* *Eminent Domain,* New York Public Library, <http://exhibitions.nypl.org/eminent>

* *Bracero History Archive*, Center for History and New Media, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Brown University, and the Institute of Oral History at the University of Texas at El Paso <http://braceroarchive.org>

* *Upper Ringwood Collections*, Ringwood Public Library, New Jersey <http://www.upperringwood.org/index.php >

* *Gulag: Many Days, Many Lives*, Center for History and New Media, Gulag Museum at Perm 36, and International Memorial Society <http://gulaghistory.org>

* *Pictures of the Year International Archive*, Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri School of Journalism <http://archive.poyi.org/>
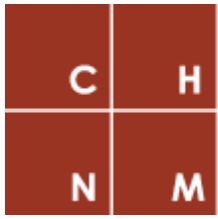
About the Center for History & New Media

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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