FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Omeka S (1.0) Beta Available: Open Source Web-publishing Software for Digital Cultural Heritage

For press inquiries, please contact:
Sharon M. Leon, PhD, Director of Public Projects, RRCHNM, and Director of *Omeka*
sleon@gmu.edu

Fairfax, VA, November 2, 2016. The Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University is pleased to announce the public beta release of ***Omeka S*** **(1.0)** <http://omeka.org/s/>, the next-generation, open source web-publishing platform that is fully integrated into the scholarly communications ecosystem and designed to serve the needs of medium to large institutional users who wish to launch, monitor, and upgrade many sites from a single installation.

Though *Omeka S* is a completely new software package, it shares the same goals and principles of *Omeka Classic* that users have come to love: a commitment to cost-effective deployment and design, an intuitive user interface, open access to data and resources, and interoperability through standardized data.

Created with funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, *Omeka S* is engineered to ease the burdens of administrators who want to make it possible for their end-user communities to easily build their own sites that showcase digital cultural heritage materials.

- Colleges and universities that want to encourage their faculty and students to develop online publications that make use of special collections and digitized materials will find *Omeka S* ideal.
- Museums and historical societies that would like to create a digital exhibit to accompany the many physical exhibits and installations at their institutions can turn to *Omeka S* as way to efficiently administer that digital work and reuse digitized collections.
- Individual researchers interested in publishing linked open data will find *Omeka S* a reliable solution for creating and maintaining research collections, and for publishing new scholarship.

While the **Items** remain the core of *Omeka S*, the new software is designed to capitalize on linked data standards for item description. *Omeka S* uses JavaScript Object Notation-Linked Data (JSON-LD) as its native data format and ships with popular RDF vocabularies, which make it possible to enmesh *Omeka S* in the semantic web and to connect to aggregators like the Digital Public Library of America.

After users create and describe their items or import materials from a range of external repositories for access in a shared pool of items, *Omeka S* allows them to create and publish individual sites. **Sites** are built by creating pages, selecting from a range of layout blocks for those pages, and attaching items or media from the pool of resources selected for use with the site. As **Modules**

extend *Omeka S* functionality, they can also add page layout blocks, such as a map or a collecting form. Site **Themes** can be customized in a number of ways, including with the addition of a logo and the selection of colors for styling elements.

Developers will appreciate that *Omeka S*'s Read/Write REST API enables all of the major software actions, such as the creation of users, items, item sets, and sites. This infrastructure makes it possible to easily create modules that extend *Omeka S*'s core capacities.

Omeka S users will find extensive documentation written for developers <https://github.com/omeka/omeka-s-developer> and end users <https://github.com/omeka/omeka-s-enduser> to guide them in learning more about working with the software.

# # #

Omeka S Features and Technical Specs

Omeka S, <http://omeka.org/s>, is now available for download, and includes the following features:

Administration:

- Launch and maintain an unlimited number of sites
- Equipped with popular linked open data vocabularies for resource description, including Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI) Terms, DCMI Type, Bibliographic Ontology (BIBO), and Friend of a Friend (FOAF)
- Import other RDF vocabularies
- Extend core functionality with Modules <http://github.com/omeka-s-modules/> that include mapping, collecting, and more
- Develop with a fully functioning REST API

User Roles:

- Global Admin: full installation privileges
- Site Administrator: robust site and content management privileges
- Editor (Content Expert): full privileges for content creation
- Reviewer: robust content privileges but can only delete own content
- Author: creates own content
- Researcher: search and read privileges only

Item Creation:

- Customize metadata creation by using Resource Templates composed of LOD properties
- Import or connect to resources from a range of external repositories (Fedora, DSpace, Zotero, Omeka Classic sites, CSV files)
- Attach media items through file upload, URI, or oEmbed
- Publish linked open data (JSON-LD)
- Organize items into Item Sets

Site Creation:

- Create sites composed of pages with flexible layout blocks, including a page title block, an HTML block, an item with metadata block, an item showcase block, a media block, a browse preview block, a table of contents block, and a line break block
- Style sites with responsive and accessible Themes <http://github.com/omeka-s-themes/>

System Requirements:

- Linux
- Apache
- MySql 5.5.3+ and the MySQL driver for PDO
- PHP 5.6+ (the latest stable version preferred) and the PHP extensions for PDO
- ImageMagick 6.7.5+

About the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media

Since 1994, the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (RRCHNM) <rrchnm.org> 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. RRCHNM 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. RRCHNM maintains more than four dozen online history projects directed at diverse audiences, making them available at no cost through its website. In 2015, RRCHNM's websites had almost 34 million visits and over 18 million unique visitors—making it one of the busiest non-commercial history education sites on the Web. Over the past nearly twenty years, RRCHNM has conducted more than $20 million in grant funded research, boasts an annual budget of nearly $2 million, and enjoys a nearly $3 million endowment (achieved with the assistance of two Challenge Grants from NEH), all of which guarantee its long-term stability.

RRCHNM has been a leader in using digital media to improve the understanding of history by students, scholars, and enthusiasts, in building digital archives, and in mounting online exhibitions—often in partnership with libraries, museums and archives. RRCHNM maintains several very popular and award-winning digital exhibit sites, such as *Gulag: Many Days, Many Lives* <gulaghistory.org> and *Histories of the National Mall* <mallhistory.org>. RRCHNM has also assembled and actively maintains several large-scale, and award-winning digital archives, including the *Hurricane Digital Memory Bank* <hurricanearchive.org>, the *September 11 Digital Archive* <911digitalarchive.org>, a partnership with the Library of Congress, and the *Bracero History Archive* <braceroarchive.org>, a partnership with the National Museum of American History, University of Texas at El Paso, and Brown University. RRCHNM also hosts and edits the *Papers of the War Department, 1784-1800* <wardepartmentpapers.org>, which makes freely available online to scholars, students, and the general public some 42,000 documents of the early War Department that were lost to fire in 1800. For this work, RRCHNM has won the National Council on Public History's Outstanding Public History Project Award twice.

RRCHNM is also a leading developer of free tools and software for museum professionals, librarians, scholars, and students. RRCHNM currently heads two major open source software development projects, one designed to assist the consumers of digital content, the other to help producers of digital content. For content consumers, RRCHNM offers *Zotero* <zotero.org>, a free, open source, easy-to-use research tool that helps researchers gather and organize resources, and then annotate, organize, and share the results of their research. Funded by major grants from Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Mellon and Sloan Foundations, *Zotero* has received several awards, including *PC Magazine's* "Best Free Software" award for two years running. For content producers, RRCHNM offers *Omeka* <omeka.org>, a family of web publishing tools oriented toward the needs of cultural heritage institutions. *Omeka Classic* has seen tremendous success with over 150,000 downloads and a robust, growing, and active open source development and user communities. *Omeka.net* offers a hosted solution for those who do not have the ability to install and host their own *Omeka* sites.