Getting Started With the Digital Commonwealth

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Digital Commonwealth Is…

• An organization designed to bring together digital collections held in cultural heritage organizations throughout Massachusetts through a single point of entry: *we are building a cultural commons.*

• A volunteer group of librarians, archivists, and other people wanting to share their knowledge and enthusiasm about digital collections – and assist other organizations in providing the same.
Mission Statement

The Digital Commonwealth serves as the open-access online discovery platform to the digital objects representing the breadth and depth of the rich cultural heritage of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Its member institutions are located all over the state and are comprised of libraries, archives, historical societies, museums, and cultural institutions.
Digital Commonwealth mission

Promote the creation of digital library assets by libraries and other cultural organizations on Mass

Provide online public access to these resources

Auburndale Trading Card, Newton Public Library
Core Services

- Web Portal access to Digital Library collections in Mass

—contains only the metadata that enables the discovery of the digital objects; it does not contain the actual digital objects.

Children working with hay, Charlemont, Mass.
From Jones Library Special Collections
Core Services

• A Repository for storage of digital collections created by member organizations
  - stores and maintains both metadata and digital objects according to a framework of policies and standards. By means of its technological infrastructure, the repository provides access to the digital content.

Recruiting at the State Armory in Cambridge Massachusetts, 1916
From: MA National Guard Museum and Archives Worcester
Core Services

Guidance, instruction and assistance on applying appropriate technologies used in the production of digital library resources.
Example Current Members

Portal contributors

- The Clark (Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute)
- Massachusetts Historical Society
- North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE)
- SAILS Library Network
- State Library of Massachusetts
- UMass Lowell
- WGBH Educational Foundation

Portal & Repository contributors

- Brookline Public Library
- Framingham State University
- Newton Free Public Library
- Watertown Free Public Library

More member contributors soon!
(Upcoming additions of content made during grant-funded digitization program for members.)
Announcements

Seventh Annual Digital Library Conference and Vendor Fair
May 1, 2013, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, at the Devens Commons Center, Devens, Massachusetts. For full details visit the 2013 Conference page.

Digital Commonwealth and Boston Public Library Announce Application for Free Digitization Services: Please read about the recent grant and the application process by which Digital Commonwealth members may apply for free digitization services from the BPL. A grant from the MLBG (and funded by the LSTA) has made this excellent opportunity available.

Plan of Service: The Plan of Service for FY2012 is available. See also Digital Commonwealth's Strategic Plan.

Lesson Plans Featuring Digital Materials: Digital Commonwealth has awarded grants to teachers who developed lessons plans using digital resources. The resulting lesson plans are now available for public use and are available in their entirety on the Common Core Content Standards page.
Participation: Harvested or Linked Site

• Digital Commonwealth will harvest your metadata for inclusion in the portal.
  – Metadata must be in an OAI-PMH compliant system; OR
  – An OAI static repository document must be created and hosted on a web server to enable harvesting

• Digital Commonwealth will add a link on our portal to your online digital collection.
  – Included in your annual membership fee
Portal Queries

- Results from harvested sites will link to websites that the collections originate from.

- Results from sites within the repository will stay on the Digital Commonwealth site.

Tip O’Neill, From Boston College Libraries
New Repository!

BPL developing

Store your digital files

Access available through portal

Charcoal kiln, Prescott, Mass.
From Jones Library Special Collections
Digital Commonwealth organizational structure

- 5.01(c)(3) non-profit
  - can now take grants

- Board of Directors
  - 10 people volunteers

- 5 Standing committees

- BPL is partner and technology provider
Standing Committees

- Conference
- Portal, Repository, Technology and Standards
- Outreach
- Nominating
- Development

Trolley Cars Run Wild
From Athol Public Library
Getting Started

1. Collections
2. Funding
3. Digitize Your Materials
4. Create Your Metadata
5. Access
Step One: Collections

• Determine potential items / collections for digitization

• Think about existing collections
  • What do you have that is important?
    – Important to your organization
    – Important to your community
    – Important outside the Commonwealth

• Put it in writing!
Step Two: Funding

Locating resources:

• Available Budget

• Grants

Allocating resources

• Current staff
• Opportunities with partners/collaborators
• Interns/volunteers

Bird's Eye Map of Athol from State Library of Massachusetts
Step Three: Digitize Materials

Define output and required specifications

Digitizing: In-house or vendor?
  - Costs
  - Skills

Quality control

File management
Step Four: Metadata

- Follow requirements and guidelines
- Quality data is key
- Consistency is key

Will of William Dummer
From Governor's Academy
Metadata Types

• Descriptive
  – What is it?
  – Where is it?
  – What is it about?
• Structural
  – How many files are there?
  – Which file is on page one?
• Administrative
  – What do I need to know to manage it?
  – Who can access it?
  – What needs to be preserved?
• Technical
  – What is the resolution of the image?
  – What compression format was used?
Dublin Core
a.k.a. - DC

- A method of describing resources intended to facilitate the discovery of electronic resources
- National and International standard
  - ISO standard 15836-2003
- Includes 15 “core” elements
- Often used for collaborative projects
Simple DC Elements

- Creator
- Contributor
- Publisher
- Type
- Format
- Coverage
- Source
- * Identifier
- *Title
- Subject
- * Date
- * Description
- Rights
- Relation
- Language
OAI-PMH

Open Archives Initiative promotes interoperability standards that aim to facilitate the efficient dissemination of content

The Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) is a mechanism for repository interoperability

- Data providers (expose metadata)
- Service providers (harvest metadata)
Step Five: Access

- In-House repository
- Hosted repository
- Digital Commonwealth repository
- Digital Commonwealth portal
Opportunities for members

• BPL digitizing grant
• Workshops
• Training
• Get involved!
  • Help test new portal/repository
• Outreach committee
  • Help organize upcoming training and/or roundtable discussions
• Conference committee
Watertown Historic Markers

Sample lesson plan using the Digital Commonwealth

Marianne E. Brown
Step One - Exploration

The students must explore the Watertown Historic Markers and Monuments page within the Watertown link on the Digital Commonwealth website.

The students complete at least three note cards providing specific historic details about each monument.

Students must save the images of the markers as “.jpg” files, for uploading onto the Community Walk web site.
Step Two: Create a Community Walk

In this step, the students are given a short tutorial in the use of the Community Walk website to create walking tours.

Using the information on their note cards, the students create an individualized Community Walk of Watertown. This entails locating the address of each historic site on the Community Walk map, and entering the descriptive information about the historic marker or monument.
First: A slate Marker Commemorating George Washington passing by this place in 1775 on his way to take command of the Patriot Army; located at the corner of Common and Mount Auburn Streets

Second: A Soldiers’ Monument, honoring Civil War soldiers, Saltonstall Park, erected in 1889

Third: Memorial to Justice Benjamin Robbins Curtis, Watertown Square, 1930:
George Washington Marker

WASHINGTON
PASSED THIS PLACE
ON HIS WAY TO
CAMBRIDGE
TO TAKE COMMAND
OF THE
Patriot Army
JUNE · 1775 · JULY

ERECTED BY THE
Ancient & Honorable
Artillery Company
of Massachusetts
22d · JULY · 1914
Civil War Soldiers Monument
Memorial to Justice Curtis
Community Walk

This walk is .75 miles (one way) and can be viewed at:

http://www.communitywalk.com/map/index/1569476

Click on each of the three stops on the walk, and the digital photograph and description of the monument pops up.
The Community Walk

Watertown Historic Markers

1: George Washington 1775

This slate marker commemorates George Washington passing through on his way to Cambridge to take command of the Patriot Army in June 1775

2: Memorial to Justice Benjamin Robbins Curtis

Memorial to Justice Benjamin Robbins Curtis

3: Soldiers Monument
Analyze political cartoons: what do you see?

Today we ask students to examine historic sources such as photographs and political cartoons, and be “detectives” to discern what can be learned from a close view.

The Digital Commonwealth is an ideal vehicle for such exploration.

“Why Won’t You Just Tell Us the Answer?”
by Bruce A. Lesh
What do you see?

In Memoriam - Chair City, Gardner, Massachusetts
March 9, 1982

Danger
Hazardous Waste
This is what we saw…

"In Memoriam - Chair City, Gardner Massachusetts" was drawn by W. Joseph Carr and dated March 9, 1982. The cartoon shows a hazardous waste drum in an overgrown field with a chair on top. The drum's waste is leaking and drips down the side to the ground below. Here is the link to the cartoon:

http://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/items/show/819
The collection is full of photographs
What did you see?

We just examined a photograph from the Spencer Collection. Here is the link:  http://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/items/show/1160

This photograph shows office workers at their desks in the offices of Isaac Prouty & Company, shoe & boot manufacturing company in Spencer in 1911.

Students can go on guided quests of photographs, cartoons, postcards and other artifacts in the collection, prepare descriptions and provide conclusions about what they have seen.

Lesson plans are countless
Many thanks to Framingham State University

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Professor Kate Hibbard, Education Department

Many thanks for your help and assistance.
Ready To Get Started?

Contact Us!

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