What’s In Your Digital Content Toolkit?
Exploring Options for Online Exhibitions

Introduction
Most university libraries have a digital content management system (CMS) in place that provides good longer-term archival storage and supports search and discovery of digital assets. But do these systems also support the shorter-term needs of special curated projects and curators? For instance, can individual librarians and curators collate digital objects from multiple sources, enhance them with didactic and interpretive narratives, organize them into a logical story, and present them to a far-reaching online community with ease and limited support from already busy IT departments and within a presumably limited budget?

Need
Librarians, archivists, and professional staff of the Marriott Library desire a tool that facilitates the easy production of curated content and supports collaborative creation and dissemination of information.

Rationale
Digital exhibition software could be used to:
- support curatorial arrangement of images and narrative and annotative text
- create digital exhibitions parallel to or even in place of physical library exhibitions
- bring together content from CONTENTdm and USpace (institutional repository), and even combine it with visual content not housed in either, into new contexts and relationships
- collate, synthesize, and interpret "data" uploaded by researchers
- extend the reach of library exhibition programming
- publicly display faculty and student digital scholarship

Task Force and Its Charge
A task force – the Digital Exhibitions Software Task Force (DESTF) – of library stakeholders from various departments, including Special Collections, Fine Arts, the Digital Scholarship Lab, Digital Collections, External Relations, Applications Development, and Systems Development, assembled to evaluate potential tools and make recommendations to the Marriott Library’s Digital Library Council (DLC). The DESTF was chaired by the Head of Fine Arts and Architecture.

Process
The DESTF was established in November 2010, and met formally four times through February 2011. At the initial meeting, task force members identified tools to review. These included: dmBridge, Drupal, Fedora, Omeka, OmniUpdate, and Pachyderm.

Members developed a list of "required" and "desired" evaluative criteria. Each member was assigned a tool to review and compiled their findings in an evaluation table.

In mid-January 2011, DESTF members each presented highlights of their findings to the group. Following this exchange, all members reviewed the evaluation documents generated by each reviewer as well as examples of gallery-style applications of each tool. The DESTF chairperson created a campus guide with the library’s Ex Libris ILS for the collation and exchange of the review.

In late-January 2011, the DESTF met to vote on the top three candidates and eliminate three tools from further consideration. The dial at the right highlights the points that determined the outcome of the DESTF’s vote. In early February 2011, the chair reported to the DLC on behalf of the DESTF.

Recommendation
The DESTF recommended adopting OmniUpdate as its primary digital exhibition tool, based on the caveat that it could incorporate plug-in options available in Omeka. Also, the task force recommended experimenting with Pachyderm templates, to be framed within OmniUpdate webpages.

Next Steps
- Increase the number of library licenses for OmniUpdate to allow more individuals the ability to create and upload content
- Create more gallery templates
- Prioritize the integration of digital exhibition plug-ins, mimicking the potential functionality of Omeka
- Experiment with Pachyderm templates within OmniUpdate webpages

Top Candidates
The DESTF endorsed the following three software tools:

1. **OmniUpdate**
   - Easy use facilitated by templates
   - Streaming capacity
   - Responsive technical support
   - Digital exhibition plug-ins can be developed
   - Already selected as platform for new library website

2. **Pachyderm**
   - Easily lay out your content using pre-built templates
   - Developed exclusively for curated projects
   - ADA compliant
   - Can be framed within existing library webpages

3. **Omeka**
   - Designed exclusively for curated projects
   - Open Source
   - Requires limited IT support
   - Many plug-ins available and Web 2.0 functionality

Evaluation Criteria
Background & long-term history of company offering the tool:
- Frequency of new versions & patch releases.
- Direct & hidden start-up costs (staff time, set-up, customizing, testing).
- Plug-and-play. Hosted locally or off-site by vendor? Minimal, on-going IT support.
- WYSIWYG design. Customizable templates.
- Extensive documentation. Active developers’ forum and user community.
- Which peer institutions are using this tool?

Frequency of new versions & patch releases:
- Multiple, non-IT staff can upload & edit content. Authenticated access.
- Wide variety of media & document files supported. Dynamic interchange with CONTENTdm.
- Video streaming. Media download controls.
- Metadata workflow.
- Support of hierarchical and thematic relationships between objects.
- Search and discovery. Search Engine Optimization.
- User experience: ADA compliance, dynamic navigation, and Web interactivity.

Bottom Candidates
The DESTF eliminated the following three software tools from further consideration:

1. **dmBridge**
   - Requires substantial IT and Web support

2. **Fedora**
   - Not "plug-and-play"
   - Developed as a CMS architecture rather than a curatorial tool

3. **Drupal**
   - Not "plug-and-play"
   - Developed as a CMS architecture rather than a curatorial tool

The design of this poster was inspired by the Pachyderm “phone dial” template.