

Data and Culture

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So anyone who thinks he can get a branch of expertise to survive by committing it to writing—and also anyone who inherits the work with the assumption that writing will give him something clear and reliable—would be behaving in a thoroughly foolish manner...if he supposed that written words could do more than jog the memory of someone who already knows the topic that has been written about.

Plato, *Phaedrus* (trans. Robin Waterfield), 275c–d.

three paradigms

- ▶ the library
 - ▶ chiefly keeps books
 - ▶ serves those who look things up
 - ▶ organized by the divisions of knowledge
- ▶ the archive
 - ▶ chiefly keeps documents
 - ▶ serves those who keep or search for records
 - ▶ organized by the origins of the documents
- ▶ the museum
 - ▶ chiefly keeps art and treasure
 - ▶ serves those who preserve and those who look
 - ▶ organized by the divisions of time and culture

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- ▶ Are websites libraries, archives, or museums?

some examples

- ▶ The Colored Conventions Project and its “Digital Records”:
coloredconventions.org, omeka.coloredconventions.org

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- ▶ Children’s Literature Archive: childrenslit.library.torontomu.ca

on to the lab!

- ▶ omeka.net

Themes to reflect on

- ▶ What kinds of materials / subjects / approaches are well-suited to digital presentation?
- ▶ Who might historical websites be for?
- ▶ What makes good metadata? Is there such a thing as too much of it?
- ▶ What do your “items” need in order to be meaningful—and to whom?

Dublin Core metadata

The Dublin Core™ Metadata Element Set is a vocabulary of fifteen properties for use in resource description.

Dublin Core™ Metadata Element Set, Version 1.1: Reference Description, June 14, 2012, dublincore.org.

Why is it so difficult to find items of interest on the Internet or the World Wide Web?... The Dublin Core was proposed as the minimum number of metadata elements required to facilitate the discovery of document-like objects in a networked environment such as the Internet. The syntax was deliberately left unspecified as an implementation detail. The semantics of these elements was intended to be clear enough to be understood by a wide range of users.

Stuart Weibel, "Metadata: The Foundations of Resource Description," *D-Lib*, July 1995, dlib.org.

lab reflection: uses of Omeka

- ▶ What might Omeka be most useful for? For what purposes might you need a different kind of platform?
- ▶ What are the strengths of this platform?
- ▶ What are its limitations?

next

- ▶ read Smith excerpt (Canvas) and come prepared to discuss the main ideas