Omeka Help Document 4:
Creating a Writing-Intensive Omeka Project

In the previous help documents in this series, you’ve learned how to start a site on http://www.omeka.net/, contribute to an existing site, and add an Item to a site. Now that those basics are covered, we can work on building a writing-intensive Omeka project.

1) Identify 9-12 Items to include in your site. Your Items should relate to a particular theme, topic, or historical context, and you should have an idea of an argument to make or a story to tell using the Items. Add them to the site, and complete the relevant metadata fields.

2) Create an “About” page for your site. Navigate to “Plugins” on the Dashboard and scroll down to “Simple Pages.” Click the “Install” button.

3) You now have a “Simple Pages” option on the sidebar menu to the left of the page. Click “Simple Pages,” then click “Edit” under the “About” page that is automatically listed.
4) Keep the title of the page as “About,” or change it if you’d like. Tick the “Use HTML editor” if you’d like to include links or formatting in the text of your About page.

In the “Text” box, include a 300-400 word introduction that frames and contextualizes your digital project. What common thread unites the primary sources featured on your site? What do we learn by putting them in conversation with each other? What is your thesis? In other words, what do you argue is revealed by your collection of primary sources? What are the surprises? How does the process of analyzing primary sources and grouping them in thematic collections shift, change, or provide evidence for how you understand a historical event/social movement/theoretical perspective/etc.? Once you’ve entered the text of your About page, click the green “Save Changes” button.

5) Now that you’ve framed and introduced your project for your audience in the About page, it’s time to arrange your Items into Collections. Conceptualize 3-4 thematic Collections to include 3-4 Items each. Click the “Collections” tab on the sidebar menu to the left of the page. Click the “Add a Collection” button.
6) Give your Collection a Title as well as a detailed description (300-400 words) that discusses how the Items in this Collection support, connect with, and/or relate to the thesis you laid out in your About page. Click “Add Collection.”

7) Return to your Items on the sidebar menu to the left of the page. Click “Edit” on each Item. Make sure that each Item has a 100-200 word detailed description in which you make analytical observations about the Item and indicate its significance in terms of your project topic/thesis. You will note that the Collections you created now appear as options to the right side of the page as you edit Items; select the appropriate Collection where you’d like the Item to appear, and click “Save Changes.”

Congratulations! You’re on your way to building a writing-intensive Omeka project!

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