



HERITANCE

THE OPEN MUSEUM PEOPLE

...because there are at least two sides to every story.

What Is Open Museum?

Open Museum (OMo) is a Web service that helps museums and individuals create dynamic online exhibits. Exhibits can include text, photo, video and audio contributions. Visitors interact with the exhibits on a variety of levels, including commenting, rating, tagging, making guided tours, contributing content, and joining in community-wide discussions.

Who can use Open Museum?

OMo is intended for any individual or organization with a collection it would like to display online.

When will Open Museum be available?

The projected public release date of OMo is March 2009. OMo invites organizations to apply now to create pilot exhibits using the prototype.

How much does Open Museum cost?

OMo is free to non-profit cultural organizations.

How does Open Museum work?

The OMo creation process is simple: curators register on the OMo site (openmuseum.org), then start creating. Using simple methods, curators can add images, text, video, slideshows, and audio clips to any object in their exhibit, and go back to edit those same contributions at any point — even after the exhibit goes public.

My museum already has a website. Why would I want this, too?

OMo can be an initial web presence for museums that don't currently have a web site, or it can be a supplement to an institution's existing web site that helps turn the site into an interactive, Web 2.0 presence.

But how will this work with my existing site?

Depending on the needs and preferences of the museum, OMo exhibits can be templated to match the look and feel of the museum's own website. Although hosted at openmuseum.org, the exhibit will appear to the visitor as a natural extension of the museum's own website.

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What kind of exhibits would I want to create on Open Museum?

OMo is ideal for exhibits that have no permanent home in a museum's exhibit space, or for collections that have no catalogs. For museums without physical facilities, OMo provides a permanent (virtual) home for collections that would exist nowhere else. OMo is also ideally suited for individual collectors, corporations, or other institutions that don't have public exhibit space but would like to showcase their collections in a public sphere. Exhibits of all kinds are welcome and encouraged.

I don't like the idea of visitors being able to change my exhibits. My institution has very strict standards for provenance, accuracy of information, etc. How would this work?

Curators of OMo exhibits maintain control over their own exhibits; visitors can contribute content by including that content in the comments section of any object, but curators can edit those comments as they see fit. If a visitor includes information that is especially informative and/or interesting, curators are able to promote the comment to become part of the exhibit. Only the curator can do this, however.

How will you address copyright issues for both text and images?

OMo is designing a copyright crediting process into the site that will require users to indicate ownership and rights conveyed. As with any similar website, the responsibility to respect the copyright of material included in exhibit content and visitor contributions are the responsibility of the individual or institutional posters. However, OMo will take all necessary steps to ensure compliance with the safe harbor provisions of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and will remove, or disable access to any infringing material.

Who created Open Museum?

OMo was created by Zirgoflex, a registered Vermont L3C (designated low-profit) social venture specializing in web-based products that support collaborative public-sphere content production. Zirgoflex is working closely with **Heritage** to promote open museum practices that foster diversity and good governance. Heritage offers free OMo training workshops, consultations and technical support to Heritage partner museums: www.heritage.org

How can my organization get involved?

For more information about Open Museum and how your organization can participate, please contact us at info@openmuseum.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

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