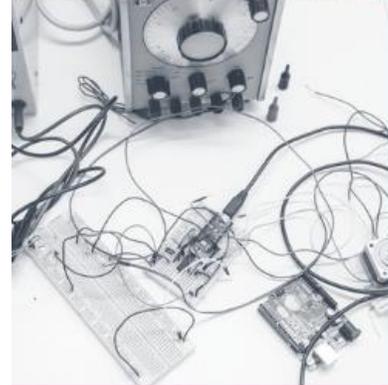


Creating Exhibitions with Omeka S

Subhanya Sivajothy, Data Analysis and Visualization Librarian

Feb 6th, 2026





Land Acknowledgement

McMaster University is located on the traditional Territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee Nations, and within the lands protected by the “Dish With One Spoon” wampum agreement.

Code of Conduct

The Sherman Centre and the McMaster University Library are committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for its presenters and participants.

As a participant in this session, you agree to support and help cultivate an experience that is collaborative, respectful, and inclusive, as well as free of harassment, discrimination, and oppression. We reserve the right to remove participants who exhibit harassing, malicious, or persistently disruptive behaviour.

Please refer to our code of conduct webpage for more information: scds.ca/events/code-of-conduct

Session Recording and Privacy

This session is being recorded with the intention of being shared publicly via the web for future audiences. In respect of your privacy, participant lists will not be shared outside of this session, nor will question or chat transcripts.

Questions asked via the chat box will be read by the facilitator without identifying you. Note that you may be identifiable when asking a question during the session in an audio or visual format.



Certificate Programs

The Sherman Centre for Digital Scholarship Certificate of Attendance

The Sherman Centre's certificate program recognizes attendance at our workshops. It complements degree training, supports the development of critical competencies in data analysis, research data management, and digital scholarship, and formalizes core skills fostered by our workshops.

Participants are invited to attend seven workshops and receive a certificate of attendance. To verify your participation in today's workshop, we will provide a code and additional instructions at the end of the session.

You can learn more about the certificate program at [**scds.ca/certificate-program**](https://scds.ca/certificate-program)

The Canadian Certificate for Digital Humanities

This workshop is also eligible for the Canadian Certificate for Digital Humanities. To learn more about the certificate, visit [**ccdhhn.ca**](https://ccdhhn.ca). You can also contact local liaison Alexis-Carlota Cochrane at [**scds@mcmaster.ca**](mailto:scds@mcmaster.ca)

Agenda Outline

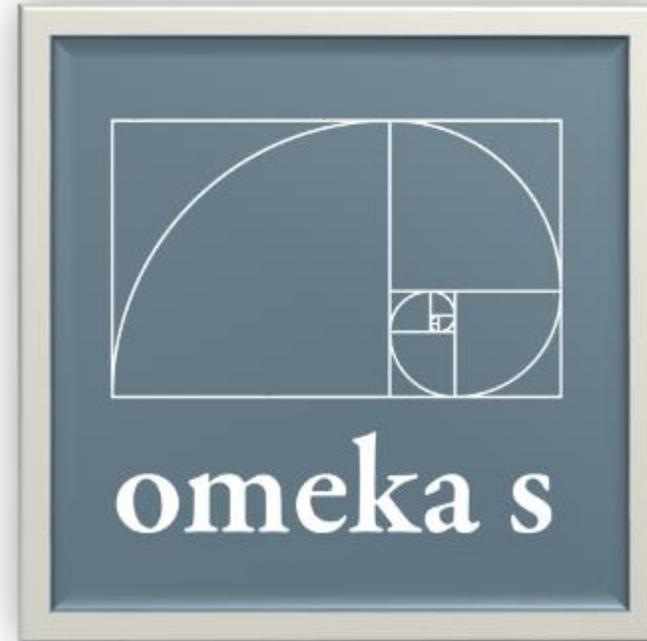
- Welcome + Introductions
- Introduction to Omeka Ecosystem + Hosting
- McMaster Ecosystem (Sandbox + Production Site)
 - McMaster Exhibits
- Omeka S Interface, Items, Sites + Activity
- Omeka S Design Principles + Activity
- Questions
- Quick Break (Testing Accounts)
- Co-Working Session

Name

Role (Student? Researcher? Community Member?)

What do you hope to do with Omeka S?

Omeka Classic



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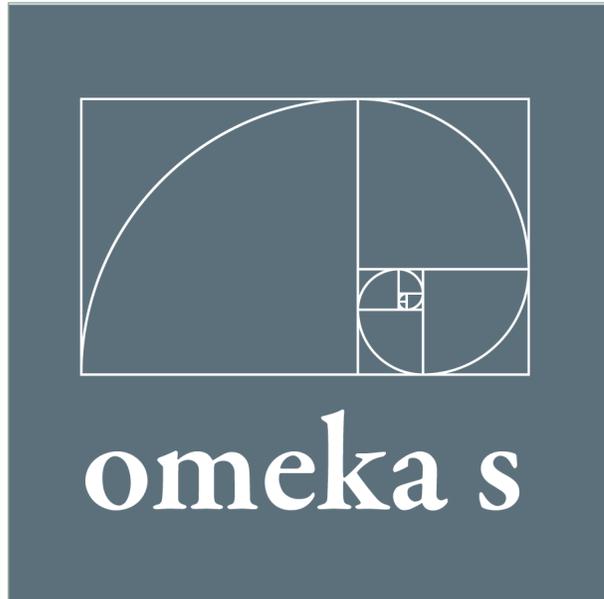
Library



**Sherman
Centre**
for Digital Scholarship

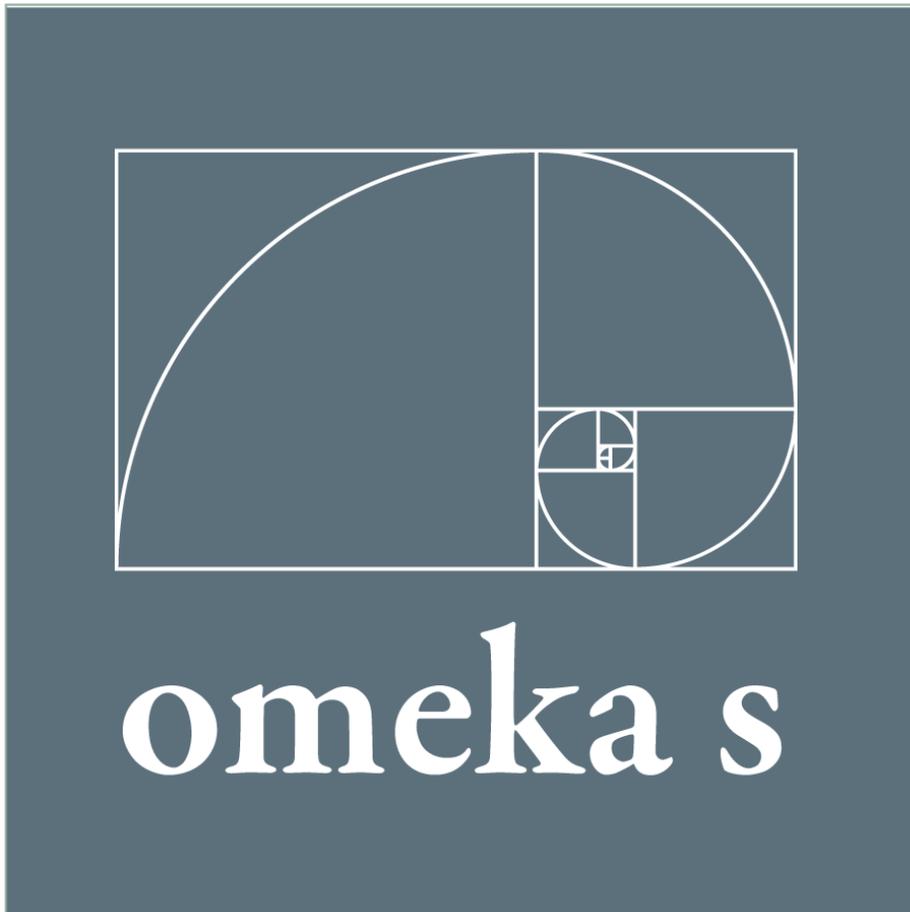
Omeka Classic

- Older Version
- Can host your own server
- Cloud hosting on omeka.net
- Offers limited features and themes for free accounts



- Latest version of software
- Interface similar to Wordpress
- No Cloud Hosting (need to host on your own server)
- Different backend architecture

If you want to host it yourself you can use Reclaim Hosting, but McMaster University also offers hosting



- Open Source
- Large Developer Community
- Good way to learn and practice coding HTML
- Customizable
- Creating Relational Data (Omeka S)
- Not a great tool for digital preservation
- Not amazing for a large-scale digital library.

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Library



Skills you will need for Omeka include:

- Research Topic
- Curated Information (Photos, Audio, Primary Source Documents, Maps etc.)
 - Do you have permission?
- Understanding Content Management System and Metadata Schema
- Basic HTML
- Understanding Basic Design Principles
- Writing Website Text
- Using Modules such as Timelines, Data Visualizations, Mapping etc.



Let's look at some basic structures for an exhibit!

- **A classic structure:**
 - A few pages
 - 1-3 paragraphs of text per page
 - Up to 5 photos per page
 - Chronological Order?

How to approach text in your Digital Exhibits?

Readability and Scannability - Use short paragraphs, clear headings, bullet points, and bold text to break up content and help visitors quickly find what they need. Identify who your target audience is and write for them. Use active voice!

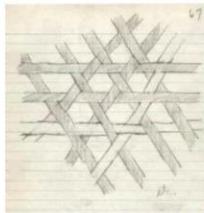
Accessibility - Ensure your content is accessible to all users, including those with disabilities. Use descriptive alt text for images (**new updates include a feature for this without needing a module**), proper heading hierarchy, clear link text, and sufficient color contrast to meet WCAG guidelines.

Content Structure and Navigation - Organize information in a logical, hierarchical way that guides visitors through your exhibit. Consider how different sections connect and provide clear navigation paths to help users explore content meaningfully.

Multimedia Integration - Think about how text works with other media elements. Write captions for images and videos, provide transcripts for audio content, and ensure text descriptions enhance rather than duplicate visual elements. Omeka S works in content blocks.



Welcome



Drawing of open weave
basket pattern from
Volney Jones' field
notebook

How do Indigenous peoples make baskets and mats using plants native to the Great Lakes region?

In 1933, Volney Jones, an ethnobotanist at the University of Michigan's Museum of Anthropology, set out to answer this question by visiting Indigenous communities in Ontario and Michigan. Through interviews and observation, Jones learned how Anishinaabe basket makers prepared plants for weaving and the techniques they used to make these textiles. Jones took detailed notes and collected over 100 items for the Museum's growing ethnobotanical collection.

More than 85 years later, University Michigan students in the Museum Anthropology course researched the items Jones collected and help create content for this website. By reconnecting these items with field notes and photos, we learned about the Anishinaabe families who Jones interviewed and the knowledge they shared with him.



Although Volney Jones worried that many of the weaving traditions he observed in 1933 were not being passed on, much of this knowledge continues to be a vital part of Anishinaabe culture today. During conversations with Anishinaabe artists, the Museum Anthropology students learned about these living traditions and their continued importance. By researching the history of this collection and listening to Anishinaabe community members, students learned to see the museum

Resource template successfully updated

Class: Text

Original label	Data types	Alternate label	Alternate comment	Required?	Private?	Default language
Title	...			Yes	No	
Description	... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text 			Yes	No	en
Contributor	... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omeka: Property 			No	No	
Coverage	...	Spatial Coverage		No	No	
Creator	... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> URI LC: Name Authority File Omeka: Property 	Author	Select from LC Names first if applicable. Then search existing Omeka values. Provide a new external URI as a last resort.	Yes	No	en
Date	... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timestamp Interval 			No	No	
Format	... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omeka: Property 			No	No	
Identifier	...			No	No	
Language	... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omeka: Property 			No	No	
Publisher	... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omeka: Property 			No	No	
Relation	...			No	No	

Asynchronous Workshop

Do **MORE**
with
Digital
Scholarship

**Digitization for
Digital Scholarship**



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Try the Sandbox

The best way to learn is to experiment; learn more about Omeka S by playing around in the sandbox, pre-populated the sandbox with items, item sets, resource templates, and a few sites. The sandbox also includes many of the modules and themes currently available. Feel free to work with the existing content or add your own.

Log in with one of the following accounts

omekasmemo1@example.com

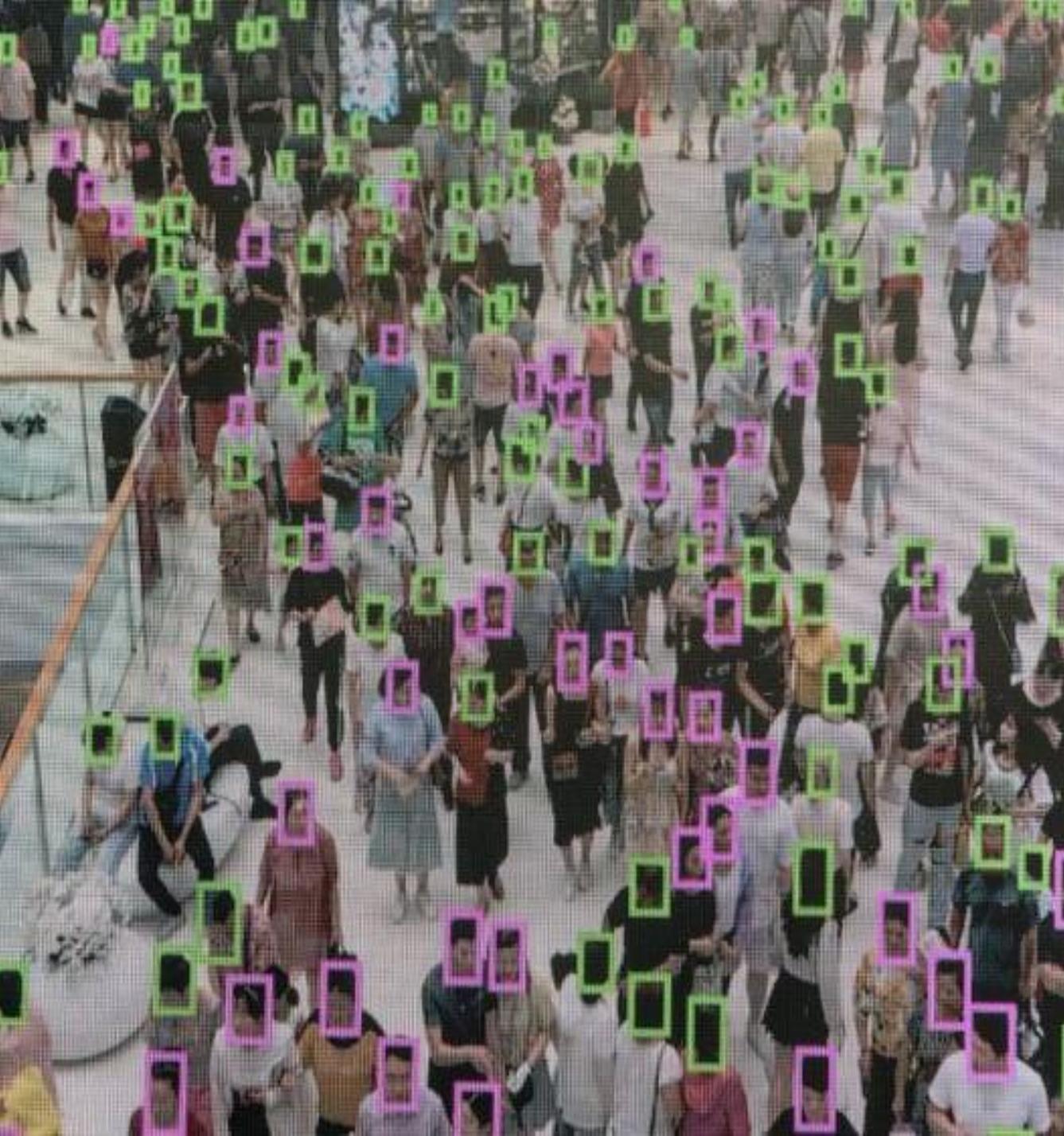
omekasmemo2@example.com

omekasmemo3@example.com

Passwords for each account are the username in the email address (omekasmemo1, etc)

Sandbox content is reset every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday.

[Go to the sandbox](#)



Tips for Omeka

- Work around a central thesis for your digital exhibit. You can keep revising your title and descriptions as you work through.
- Practice active curation! Don't merely use it as storage for your photos but be intentional about how you select the photos, how you choose to display them and the context you provide.
- Keep saving your work as you work on your digital exhibit and use the preview button frequently.

Digital Exhibits (Omeka)

[Omeka](#) is a free, flexible, and open source web-publishing platform for the display of archival and scholarly collections and exhibitions.

In support of teaching, research, and knowledge dissemination, the McMaster University Library offers cost-free access to its Omeka S web publication system for members of the McMaster University community to curate digital exhibits.

[Learn more](#) about the Omeka project, view the Sherman Centre's [Introduction to Omeka module](#), and visit the [directory of exhibits](#) to explore ways in which Omeka S has been used to create digital exhibits.

Read more about Digital Exhibits at McMaster below.

Digital Exhibits (Omeka) Overview

Expand/Collapse All

SCDS Links

Send SCDS an Email:

scds@mcmaster.ca

Register for a Workshop:

<https://u.mcmaster.ca/scds-workshops>

Subscribe to our Newsletter:

<https://u.mcmaster.ca/sign-up>

Schedule a Consultation:

<https://libcal.mcmaster.ca/appointments>

