Reusability of University Digital Archives: Meeting the Needs of K-12 Teachers

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Interactive University

- 1996, campus-wide initiative, part of IS&T
- Use Internet to open UC's resources to K-12 communities and the public
- UC-community partnerships
- Research and develop tools and models to gather and share digital resources
- “Themed Collection” (TC)
- Partnership with CDL to develop TC’s
The California Digital Library

- Established in 1997 by UC Office of the President
- Develops tools and services for 10 UC campus libraries
- Provides access to both licensed and freely available digital content
- Stewards of Online Archive of California (OAC) – a collection of digital materials held in libraries, museums, and archives across California
Calisphere: CDL’s Public Site
About the Project

- Collaboration between Interactive University and California Digital Library
- Activities to make UC’s freely available content more usable to K-12 teachers
- Integration of assessment
- Creation of intermediate-level collections – Themed Collections
Plan for this Afternoon

- History and context
- Examples of work
- Project evolution
- Challenges and strategies
- Lessons learned and remaining questions
- Discussion
Challenge

How can we open up the University’s resources to a broader community?
Strategy

Allow assessment to inform design:
Conduct iterative assessment with target audience.
Solution

Themed Collections: Clusters of primary sources
Themed Collections
Pieces of the Puzzle

- Archive of freely available digital content (OAC)
- Assessment
- Understanding users
- Themed Collections
Archive: An Evolving Approach

- Online Archive of California (1998)
  - Primary sources from UC and CA museums, historical societies, and archives
  - 120,000 images, 50,000 documents

- Public service mission ➔ CDL Public Site (2002)

- Public Site ➔ Calisphere (2006)
Calisphere: CDL’s Public Site

To be launched early 2006
Assessment: An Iterative Process

- Who is our target audience?
  - American West Project: Initial user needs assessment
- How do teachers currently use digital objects in the classroom?
  - Interactive University teachers study
- How do we incorporate CA content standards?
  - Teacher Advisory Board focus group
- Is Calisphere’s user interface usable?
  - Usability testing
Understanding Users

- The users didn’t change; our understanding of them did.

- Assessment-infused understanding of primary audience

- Question: How to organize materials for ease of use in classroom?
Understanding Teachers

- Teachers use supplementary materials
- Modular collections of primary sources
- Teachers begin with questions
- Teachers value informed selection
- Collections need introductions and context
- *Usable* design and presentation
- California content standards are important
Why Not Learning Objects?

- Learning design
- Learning objectives
- Assessment
- Interaction
- Feedback
Themed Collections

- Supplementary materials
- Maximum adaptability for teaching – a balancing act
  - Granularity
  - Scope
  - Context
  - Malleability
- Teaching is a social endeavor
Themed Collections
Team: Skill Sets

- Project management
- Assessment and evaluation
- Curatorial expertise
- Curriculum development
- Writing and editing
- Research
- Design
- Marketing
Lessons Learned

- Constrained by nature, contents, and size of originating collections
- Bounded by the use of standards to develop topics, but in line with users’ expectations
- Not a “one-stop shop” for materials – high-quality, well organized, unique resources
- Teachers dig them!
Challenges and Questions

- Is a content expert necessary?
- Is a curriculum specialist necessary?
- What if there aren’t appropriate materials to represent chosen topics?
- What is the context threshold?
- How should we market TC’s?
- “Can’t we get a machine to do this?”
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Discussion

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