

Building Online Collections on a Shoestring

Flickr + Internet Archive + Digital Commonwealth = speedy, low cost online collections



Theater Collection



Julia Ward Howe



Physical Education at



Condolence Letters and
Clippings



Perkins Postcards



Helen Keller Collection

My perspective is of a small archive building online collections on a shoestring budget using Flickr as a platform. The project started less than two years ago with about 1.5 full time staff members. Today we have over 5,000 photographs, prints, clippings, and correspondence collections on Flickr, and 288 volumes on the Internet Archive including annual reports, scrapbooks, pamphlets and many handwritten journals.

The collaboration with the Digital Commonwealth allowed us to quickly increase our online holdings by allowing us to focus on metadata rather than imaging. They were also able to digitize difficult and oversize materials we couldn't do in-house. In the first round of free digitization services we sent 1,610 individual photographs, prints, and lantern slides. In the second year we sent nearly 500 photographs and posters and 63 bound volumes including journals by Laura Bridgman- the first deafblind person to be educated (available on the Internet Archive).

As a result we have experienced increased use of our collections by researchers and a sharp increase in requests to reproduce our images which generates income. The success of the Flickr project has also helped to drum up resources and support for creating an Omeka site for our digital holdings. This will allow greater control over user experience and functionality for fielded metadata including the export of OAI-PMH compliant content needed for the eventual ingest of our assets (metadata & thumbnail with link back to our repository) into the Digital Commonwealth portal, which is in turn a contributing hub of the new Digital Public Library of America.

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What is the Digital Commonwealth?

From: <http://digitalcommonwealth.memberlodge.org>

The Digital Commonwealth is a Web portal and fee-based repository service for online cultural heritage materials held by Massachusetts libraries, museums, historical societies, and archives. The portal facilitates the searching and browsing of member institutions' digital assets, allowing the discovery of all kinds of digital resources including manuscripts, images, historical documents, and sound recordings. The repository provides a storage service for institutions that are members of Digital Commonwealth but choose not to host their own digital assets. The metadata stored in the repository is indexed within the portal. Membership is tiered \$50-500 based on organization size.

Free Digitization Services through the Boston Public Library

From: <http://www.bpl.org/compass/2012/03/18/digitization-at-the-bpl-and-a-digital-library-for-massachusetts-introduction/> "Digitization at the BPL and a Digital Library for Massachusetts: Introduction", by Tom Blake.

Through a federal funded Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant awarded to the Boston Public Library by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, Digital Commonwealth members are eligible to apply for free digitization services to build a statewide digital library. The program is currently in its second year.



From the Blind in Art Collection, which contains depictions of the blind throughout the ages.

Links to Perkins Archives Collections

Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/perkinsarchive/collections/>

Internet Archive: <http://archive.org/details/perkinsschoolfortheblind>

Website: <http://www.perkinsarchives.org>

The collections that came directly from the Digital Commonwealth project are:

Blind in Art: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/perkinsarchive/collections/72157629726009617/>

World Fair Albums: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/perkinsarchive/collections/72157629838500975/>

Royal Normal College for the Blind:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/perkinsarchive/collections/72157629792681433/>

Lantern Slides: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/perkinsarchive/collections/72157629940854037/>

Perkins' Photograph Albums:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/perkinsarchive/collections/72157629739896869/>