

# Using the WorldCat Digital Collection Gateway to highlight hidden gems

Libraries build on Web access achieved through CONTENTdm

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## Situation

In 2004, the Western Michigan University (WMU) Libraries published their first digital collection. Today, they have more than five digital collections online that include images of photography, art, maps and blueprints, as well as electronic text.

The WMU staff like to point out that their research libraries offer more than just books. WMU Libraries' digitization goal is to provide their students, faculty and staff with access to the Libraries' rare and unique diaries, photographs, maps, manuscripts, Civil War letters, blueprints and more—all through online digital collections. Their digital collections have been made searchable, many with browsable categories to aid in research, using the OCLC<sup>®</sup> CONTENTdm<sup>®</sup> Digital Collection Management Software.

With all of these historically significant resources available online, Sheila Bair, Metadata & Cataloging Librarian, wanted to improve the shareability of their data and to increase the number of people visiting their digital collections.

## Solution

One of the tools Bair selected to broaden the visibility and access to their collections was OCLC's WorldCat<sup>®</sup> Digital Collection Gateway. A self-service, Web-based tool, the Gateway enables libraries, archives, museums and other cultural heritage organizations to upload the metadata of their digital content to WorldCat<sup>®</sup>. Available at no charge, the Gateway works with all OAI-compliant digital repositories.

**“The Gateway seemed like a perfect way to spotlight our valuable ‘hidden collections’ and increase the chances of discovery by getting them out on the Web where people are searching.”**

*Sheila Bair, Metadata & Cataloging Librarian*

## AT A GLANCE

### Western Michigan University Libraries' Digitized Collections

- More than five collections online
- In six months, there were 7,664 visits to their digitized collections. Of these visits, 1,337 were referred from WorldCat.org<sup>™</sup> and 541 from Google

Bair explains, “I first heard about the WorldCat Digital Collection Gateway at a CONTENTdm User's Group Meeting at the American Library Association conference. And I volunteered for the newly formed Metadata Working Group to learn more about it and in order to improve access to our digital collections.”

While Bair thought that the Gateway was easy to set up, she realized that there were important decisions to be made when it comes to mapping metadata from Dublin Core to MARC, which determine how the records display in the WorldCat.org<sup>™</sup> interface. The Metadata Working Group, which Bair had joined, developed a guide that assists in making those types of decisions. The guide, “Best practices for CONTENTdm and other OAI-PMH compliant repositories: creating shareable metadata,” provides a best practice for each metadata element, including a recommended WorldCat.org field mapping, as well as the MARC fields at work behind the scenes. The guide can be found at: [www.oclc.org/gateway/support/best\\_practices.pdf](http://www.oclc.org/gateway/support/best_practices.pdf)

“As a cataloger,” says Bair, “I was also, at first, concerned that due to the nature of the Dublin Core schema, the mapping was not ‘perfect.’ But I soon realized that the Gateway is not a cataloging tool as such, but rather a discovery tool, and that on the Web most people are searching by keyword.”

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Because keyword searching is common today, it is especially important to surface terms meaningful to the end-users—and this is where a cataloger’s judgment is critical. Bair offers this recommendation to help highlight hidden gems in multipage books and manuscripts: It is important to remember that the Gateway uploads metadata at the book level, not the page level. Therefore, information on individual pages needs to be brought out at the object level, even though this breaks the cataloger’s “20% rule” for creating subject headings for records.

She provides this example of a nearly 300-page diary: A letter from General Longstreet to General McLaws was found on the ground by Alonzo Ide of the 2nd Michigan after the Siege of Knoxville and was transcribed in full into his diary. The letter was written on the day of the assault on Fort Sanders, a battle that the Confederate Army lost. Longstreet, in this letter orders McLaws to “please impress your officers and men with the importance of making a rush.” Longstreet was not pleased with McLaws’ performance in this battle and McLaws faced a court marshal afterwards. Did he ever receive this key message? Is this a possible research project?

Because WMU Libraries have included name headings for Longstreet, McLaws and the Siege of Knoxville in the object-level metadata, a researcher searching those keywords in WorldCat.org finds this diary as one of the top search results.

Bair believes that it is much more important to hook the right person up with the right information than to follow cataloging rules exactly.

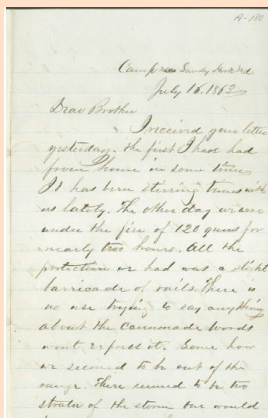
The WMU Libraries are continuing to use the Gateway with each new collection they publish online, unless there are copyright restrictions. And as their other digital collection software systems comply with the standard harvesting format (OAI-PMH), they intend to harvest those collections to WorldCat as well.

## Results

Since exporting their first collections to WorldCat through the Gateway in March 2010, they have had more than 7,820 visits to their digital collections in six months, resulting in more than 50,000 item views. And 1,337 of these visits to the collections were referred from WorldCat.org, while 541 visits were referred from Google.

Bair offers advice for those considering the Gateway for their digital collections’ metadata. “Think of your metadata records as marketing tools, as mentioned in the best practices guide.”

“Titles and descriptions can provide context, keywords not included in controlled vocabularies, and a reason for someone to click through to your site to see the full resource. You have great stuff, hidden treasures... so don’t be afraid to advertise them!”



(LEFT) Samuel Hodgman letter, dated July 16, 1863, from the United States Civil War Collection.



(RIGHT) Photo of the front exterior view of the Everyman’s House from the Caroline Bartlett Crane Collection.