

The CONTENTdm Library and Information School Program

Summary:

Building digital collections requires a practical understanding of database design, information retrieval and metadata standards. Faculty from ALA-accredited Library and Information Studies programs have successfully used CONTENTdm in their curriculum for several years. During 2005-2006 twenty-two faculty members from fifteen professional schools participated. At the end of each semester, the faculty submitted reports discussing learning goals and evaluating the effectiveness of CONTENTdm in the classroom.

Interest in the software has spread through professional scholarly communication, with additional requests now entertained from graduate schools of Business Administration and Information Science as well as from junior/community-college and technical college instructors. Eighteen LIS programs have now begun the 2006-2007 academic year with CONTENTdm.

Over two years of experience, faculty and student feedback strongly suggests that CONTENTdm is an especially effective tool for teaching concepts in standard database design, information retrieval and metadata application. A practical and easy-to-use program, CONTENTdm allows the application of theory to practice in both individual and group projects. Students are able to have hands-on experience and produce measurable results. Many faculty noted that CONTENTdm enables their students to build market-ready portfolios critical to top-quality library service today.

Participating Programs	Faculty	Course Titles
California State University San Jose	Robin Dale	Digitization and Digital Preservation
Dalhousie University	JoAnne Watson (Three faculty)	Digital Library Management; Records Management
Dominican University	Gertrude Hoh	Digital Libraries
IUPUI	Bill Helling (06), Laurie Gemmill (07)	User-Centered Database Design; Digital Libraries
Kent State University	Marcia Zeng	Digital Image Processing and Collection Management
Louisiana State University	Cavan McCarthy	Digital Libraries
North Carolina Central University	Eun-young Yoo	Introduction to Digital libraries: Theories and Practices

Pratt Institute of Library and Information Science	Charles Rubenstein	XML for Applications; Database design; Digital Libraries; and Information Technologies
SAIT Polytechnic	Darlene Taylor	Managing Digital Content
Syracuse University	Mary Elings, Gunter Weibel	Digitization of Collections in Libraries, Museums and Archives
University of Alabama	Steven MacCall	Metadata Management and Control
University of Hawaii (Planned)	Luz Quieroga	Technology for Libraries and Information Centers
University of North Carolina	Jane Greenberg	Metadata Architectures and Applications
University of South Carolina	Jinmook Kim	Digital Libraries
University of Southern Connecticut	Josephine Sche	Preservation for Library Materials
University of North Texas	William Moen, Samantha Hastings, Elise Lewis	Advanced Topics in Digital Imaging Management
University of Wisconsin Madison	K.-Sun (Sunny) Kim	Digital Libraries
University of Wisconsin Milwaukee	Stephen J. Miller (06) Iris Xie (07)	Digital Libraries

Highlights from faculty reports¹ for 2006

CONTENTdm has been found to provide an especially effective tool for teaching concepts in standard database design, information retrieval and metadata application.

IUPUI: A database design course was taught by William Helling, a visiting lecturer from Crawford Public Library. “Traditionally this course has centered on the instruction of relational databases using Oracle for SQL practice and Microsoft Access as a tool to demonstrate simple relational database design. The reason for this concentration (on rdbms) has been due to the large presence of such databases in the form of a typical library’s ILS... the traditional ILS is not built to handle digital objects. Thus I decided to incorporate another database model into this course, *and the choice of CONTENTdm was easy: CONTENTdm is the most popular choice for many institutions, especially academic libraries, which wish to begin long-term digitization initiatives. INCOLSA ... supports CONTENTdm efforts throughout the state. Finally, many institutions advertise jobs that seek applicants with skills in metadata manipulation, and experience with CONTENTdm is often mentioned by name as a desirable job skill.*”

Syracuse University hosted faculty from University of California Berkeley’s Mary Elings and Gunter Weibel. In past years, William Garrison had taught the Digital Libraries class at Syracuse University. At the CONTENTdm Users Group meeting held at ALA Annual in June in New Orleans, Bill added that the class he taught using CONTENTdm had been extremely popular at Syracuse.

For the summer session in 2006, the course objectives were as follows:

“IST677 will cover the digitization of primary source materials in cultural heritage institutions (museums, libraries, archives). We’ll explore how to provide online access to collections with the following long-term goals in mind:

- Integrating collections from museums, libraries and archives
- Presenting the same collection in different contexts
- Ensuring the longevity of the resource created (return on investment)

The class will cover all the major steps in providing online access to materials: conceptualizing a project, digitizing materials, describing the collection (cataloging) and delivering the content to the user. We will highlight the use of standards in digital projects, with a special emphasis on descriptive metadata standards”.

RLG DigiNews editor, Robin Dale taught at **California State University San Jose**. Hers was in part a distance education class. When requesting renewal for 2006-07, she said, “...*my Class LOVED having access to and using CONTENTdm. It was such an excellent opportunity and practical experience for them.*”

¹ Comments from semester reports, electronic communications, 2006. [italics mine—gbi]

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Jane Greenberg used CONTENTdm in her Metadata class. Jane later invited CONTENTdm representation at the summer's JCDL Tools Workshop. Claire Cocco, CONTENTdm Product Manager, gave a well-received talk on the use of the Dublin Core Metadata standard and CONTENTdm functions such as the Acquisition Station's Template Creator. Prof. Greenberg directs the Metadata Research Center from the School of Information and Library Science; her research has focused on the automatic generation of metadata as well as terminology crosswalk issues. She is the co-chair of the DCMI (Dublin Core Metadata Initiative) Tools Working Group.

Louisiana State University: Professor Cavan McCarthy teaches **Digital Libraries**. He reports that it "is a required course in the MLIS program. Students submit 3 case studies: images, books and other types of materials. They also submit a digitization sampler, a digital library project, and finally, must present a sample digital library. *This course has a strong practical content. I feel it is essential for students to have hands-on experience with typical digital library activities, procedures, and software. It is not sufficient to simply examine digital libraries from the outside. CONTENTdm has become firmly established as the most significant digital library software in North America and it is most important that LSU students have the opportunity to work with it. The students themselves demonstrate considerable enthusiasm for the system, which is widely used on campus.*"

University of South Carolina: Digital Libraries is taught by Jinmook Kim. "My main objective ... was to prepare students for professional practice in the creation, organization, and management of digital assets. *I believe CONTENTdm enhanced achieving the objective by allowing students to practice what they learned in the classroom...*

(Learning) objectives are

- ❑ to understand major concepts, issues and trends of digital libraries
- ❑ to develop skills to digitize, organize, manage, and preserve different types of information objects such as text, image, audio and video.
- ❑ to gain experience for planning, creating and evaluating digital libraries
- ❑ to appreciate the social aspects of digital libraries and the implications for information service
- ❑ to identify current research problems in digital libraries

University of North Texas: Professor William Moen introduced the application; its use in class was quickly taken up by faculty instructing Digital Library practicum, Samantha Hastings and Elise Lewis. Elise is continuing to teach with CONTENTdm in 2006-07. "This tool has been a valuable resource for the students. They have had the unique opportunity to learn an application being utilized by many of their future employers... *It is an excellent resource that can bridge the theoretical issues and practical aspects of developing digital collections. The students were excited to use a resource that is implemented in so many information centers. All have expressed gratitude for the*

opportunity to learn such a powerful system. This has better prepared our graduates for their futures in information centers.”

Pratt Institute of Library and Information Science: Professor Charles Rubenstein began with a weekend workshop for a dozen students; later this developed into a course serving dozens of students across 3 sections of database management, networks and digital libraries courses. These courses will be repeated in 2006-07, and a fellow instructor has also asked for an instance to use in his Digital Libraries class. They currently use three CONTENTdm instances of 24+ users each.

Dalhousie University: Our first **Canadian** school to use CONTENTdm in teaching, Dalhousie's program is administered by a departmental professional, JoAnne Watson, for use by three teaching faculty.

SAIT Polytechnic: Beginning with the 2006/07 academic year, we have extended our LIS program to include the critical technical college student. SAIT requested the use of CONTENTdm for its Library Information Technology Program. A new course will be offered to upwards of 30 onsite students and up to 20 distance education students by Darlene Taylor.