Digital Asset Management Systems: Open Source or Not Open Source?

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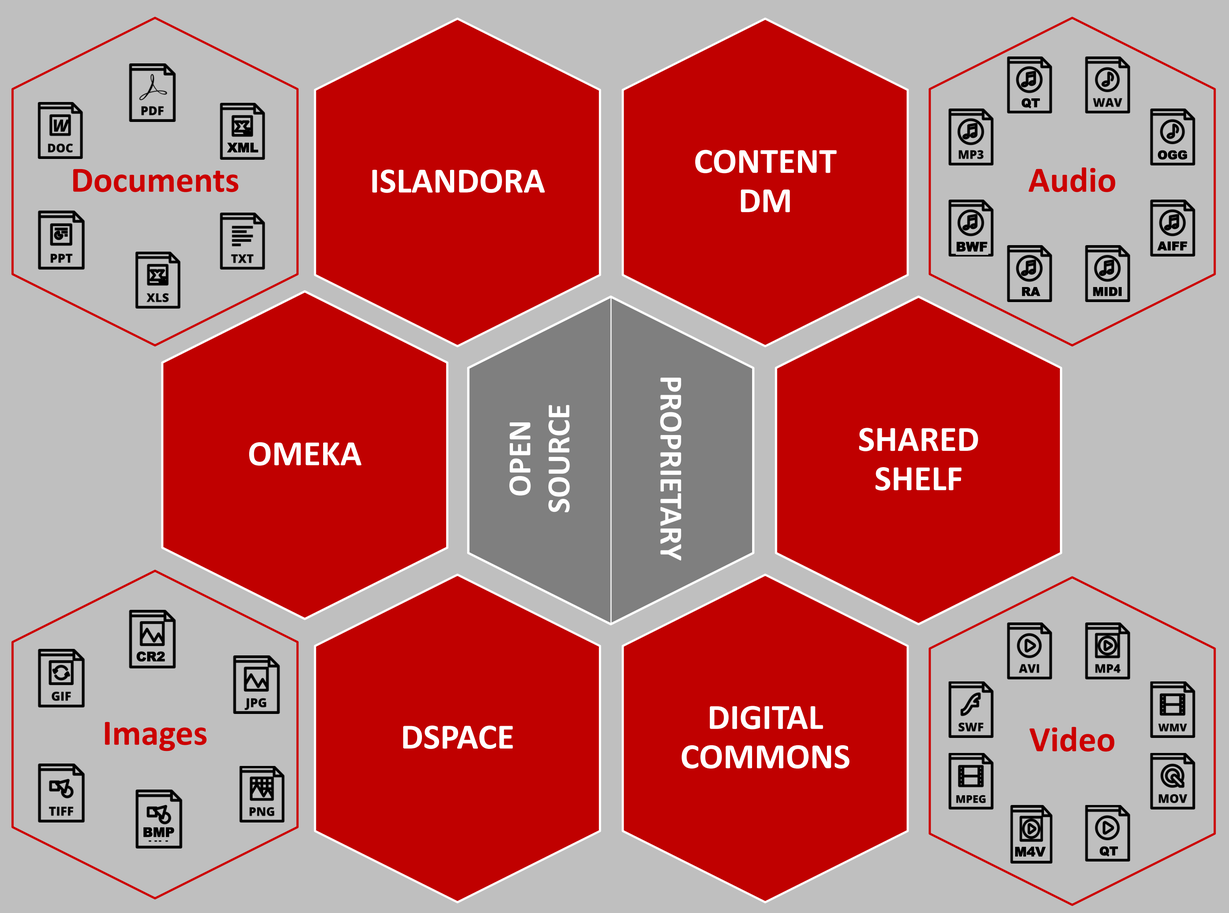
ABSTRACT

The objective of this poster is to provide an overview of a number of existing open source and proprietary information management systems for digital assets. We hope that this evaluation will assist libraries and other institutions in their process of researching and decision-making when considering implementing a management system for their digital collections.

DIGITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (DAMS)

According to The National Initiative for a Networked Cultural Heritage (NINCH), "Digital Asset Management (DAM) systems provide the means to manage digital assets from creation to publication and archiving". The open source systems evaluated are Islandora, Omeka, and DSpace, while the proprietary ones are CONTENTdm, Shared Shelf, and Digital Commons.



	Metadata Element Set	Required Fields	Fields per Collection	Characters per Field	Type of File Import	File Size	OAI
Islandora	MODS, Dublin Core, Qualified Dublin Core	Customizable using XML Form Builder	Customizable using XML Form Builder	Customizable using XML Form Builder	Upload XML files via Zip File Importer sub-module; can create custom ingests for Islandora Batch module	Plupload may be enabled to allow for uploads greater than 2GB	Islandora OAI Module - Solr and Gsearch must be configured
Omeka	Default Dublin Core; plugin for Qualified Dublin Core or a new plugin for a different element set	No required field	No limit	16,777,215	CSV via CSV Import plugin	Default up to 2 MB per file; custom increase in the php.ini file	OAI-PMH Harvester plugin imports CDWA Lite, MODS and METS
DSpace	Default is Qualified DC; can also translate from schemas such as MARC and MODS	Title Publication Date	Can support elements from other configured schemas	Unlimited size for fields holding indexed data	SimpleArchiveFormat ZIP file to upload via XMLUI; also Endnote, BibTex, RIS, TSV, CSV, OAI, etc.	JSPUI: 512MB; size limitation can be disabled XMLUI: 1GB; can be increased to 2GB	OAI 2.0 uses the Solr data source by default
CONTENTdm	Qualified Dublin Core	Title	125 fields in addition to the administrative fields	128,000. All metadata above this limit is truncated	Excel	Default up to 2 MB per file; custom increase in PHP	Enable OAI and specify collections to harvest
Shared Shelf	VRA Core 4.0; Dublin Core Darwin Core or new configured schemas	Established in the Admin tool before the collection is catalogued	29 standard fields and custom fields to be displayable or searchable	No limit	Excel (CSV not supported)	No limit; recommended under 20GB	OAI-ORE
Digital Commons	Qualified Dublin Core; custom metadata elements available	Title; Author first name; Author last name; Document type; Publication date	No limit	No limit	Excel and XML Batch Import	No limit; recommended under 20GB	OAI Data Provider, but not a Service Provider

	PROS	CONS
Open Source	**Lower initial cost** as the system is free to download and includes the source code. **Free support** from a community of users through forums, listservs, wikis, and documentation. **Software maintenance** and quick bug fixes through community code review. **Flexibility and customization** - quickly adapting to changing needs, new features are quickly added and implemented.	**Hidden costs** associated with configurations, software maintenance, and staffing with technical expertise. **Product reliability**- different versions available, no guarantee development will continue. **Minimal support** - dependent on the global community for updates **Usability** - has to be assembled by human resources and support / maintenance.
Proprietary	**Support and service -** ongoing support usually within 48 hours. Training offered as needed. **Usability** - focus is on functionality and the ease-of-use of the product. **Stability** - designed with specific needs in mind. **Product reliability** - responsible for errors, bugs fixes, and updates.	**Cost** - licensing, installation and training costs are based on the institutional size / users. **Software maintenance** - updates are not as often as needed. **Adaptation and customizations** are difficult to achieve, **Dependency -** locked down system.

CHALLENGES

First, having a clear distinction between digital asset management systems (DAMS) or content management systems (CMS) terms. Content management systems were built to allow non-technical users to create, publish and manage website content, while digital asset management systems provide an infrastructure for management and preservation of digital assets. Second, the fact that the systems evaluated here have been implemented as institutional repositories as well.

CONCLUSIONS

Choosing the right software to manage digital collections is subjective and depends on specific circumstances, users' needs, budget, and licensing preferences. There is no shortage of options when it comes to managing, implementing, and describing your digital collections. There are proprietary systems that can be easily purchased and implemented; others require extensive knowledge of technical frameworks or a steep learning curve to implement.

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