

## MEMO TO CONTRIBUTING PARTNERS

I want to take this opportunity to update you on efforts to customize the digital library collection of historical materials to which you have contributed images over the past 18 months. This memo contains information that is relevant to your image and metadata production activities and provides instructions on what you can do to enhance the user experience searching and browsing the online collection.

## Timeline for customizing the interface

Right now, Lillian Lewis, Gail McClenney, and Chris Nzuriwatu (responsible for programming the CONTENTdm website templates) and I are developing a timetable for completing customizations to the website interface that I describe below. Our absolute **deadline** for implementing a searchable digital collection of historical HBCU images is **March 30, 2007!** In order for this process to be truly successful, you will be asked to provide specific information about your collection and/or to edit content that you may have already created pertaining to individual images in your collection.

## The website design

Late in the fall 2006, I solicited feedback from members of the HBCU Library Alliance Board of Directors in which I asked them to provide me with their requirements for a custom website interface for the digital collection. After reviewing several designs I sent them, they agreed to a design similar to the one below:



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At the bottom of the page I added an image from one of the contributing partners' digital collections. The image that you see here represents only one photograph in a JavaScript image slideshow that contains several photographs that I gathered from your contributed collections. These images, about 7 in all, rotate every 5 seconds in order to display the types of objects that users can expect to view from the collection overall. **I may add additional images to the slideshow and if you have suggestions for this or any website feature, please share them with me via email: [ir33@cornell.edu](mailto:ir33@cornell.edu).**

### Other website pages

At present, I am working with Chris Nzuriwatu who designed and programmed the HBCU Library Alliance website ([www.hbculibraries.org](http://www.hbculibraries.org)) to customize website templates that come with CONTENTdm. In addition to the customizable web templates (browse, advanced search, preferences, and my favorites), we will add the following web pages:

- **An about page** that users of the collection can use to view digital images and metadata from your contributed collections. This page will contain a thumbnail image from your collection and a brief explanation that you will write, describing the contents of your digital collection. **Let me know which image you want to use and fill out the enclosed production worksheet containing your collection description.**
- **A history of the project** web page that contains the goals and objectives of the *HBCU-CUL Digitization Initiative*.
- **A Copyright and Use Agreement** web page, which describes the HBCU Library Alliance's and contributing partners' collection use restrictions. I am currently drafting the language for this document using guidance provided by Peter Hirtle. **If your library has policies related to use and licensing, or guidelines relating to the sale of print or digital images, please add the name of a contact person and their email address to each of the digital objects in your online collection by creating a new metadata element "Ordering Information." This is accomplished using the Acquisition Station and if you don't know how to add a metadata element, contact me at [ir33@cornell.edu](mailto:ir33@cornell.edu).** This information will be helpful to users who want to contact your library about accessing your digital objects for specific personal or commercial reasons. Wherever possible, the HBCU Library Alliance wants to make sure your interests are represented with respect to receiving credit and remuneration for your images.

### Customizing your own institutional collections

Several of you have expressed an interest in customizing your collection in CONTENTdm. Given your interest in this aspect of creating an identity for your contributed collections, I have decided to work with no more than one or two contributing partners and Chris to accomplish this task. As we test the process of customizing templates, we will develop a better understanding of what's involved and by

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the end of March we should be better able to provide all contributing partners with explicit instructions for how to customize aspects of their digital collections. At this time, we will not work with more than one or two institutions, but please note that Cornell and the HBCU Library Alliance in partnership with the Robert W. Woodruff Library and SOLINET have written another grant to The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to renew our grant project beginning on April 1, 2007 and invite an additional 10 institutional participants.

If our project is renewed, your institution will receive funding for a scanning technician and you will be able to customize elements of your collection and add more digital content! Our goal at this time is to ensure that we can deliver a collection website that has the potential for extensibility in the (near) future.

### Server down time

During the process of adding and testing new web pages on the CONTENTdm server, you may experience periods of server down time. Gail, Chris, and I will do our absolute best to inform you well in advance of these periods. If for any reason the server is unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances, as always Gail and her staff at the Robert W. Woodruff Library will work as quickly as possible to reestablish access to your collections. A schedule of server downtimes will be forwarded in the near future to you via email. **If your contact information has changed, please make sure we have your current email and phone contact information by sending a message to Ira at [ir33@cornell.edu](mailto:ir33@cornell.edu).**

### How you can help us with enabling collection searching

**Each of you has a responsibility to ensure that the bibliographic record for each of your digital files is accurate and complete.** In other words, if the metadata for your digital images is incomplete/inaccurate it will be difficult for users to find, use, or request copies of your images!

To make your item-level metadata complete, I ask that you do the following:

- Review the PDF document “Naming Digital Files,” which can be found online at: [http://hbculibraries.org/docs/naming\\_digital\\_files\\_v2.pdf](http://hbculibraries.org/docs/naming_digital_files_v2.pdf). The very last page of that document contains a table titled “Common Metadata Elements and Descriptions.” I created this table to provide you with a list of **required** metadata elements (required of all contributing partners) to describe your digital objects. In other words, adding these metadata elements to your digital objects **is not** an option. Please use them!
- In addition to the elements that I require, I ask that you include the following elements to your individual digital objects:
  - Identifier
  - Rights

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- Repository Name
- Ordering Information

Using my copy of the Acquisition Station, I created metadata examples for each object in my collection that illustrates how you should use these metadata elements. You can view my examples online at: <http://contentdm.auctr.edu/>. **To get to my dummy image collection, do the following:**

1. Go to the link above and Click on “browse” in the body of the web page.
  2. In the pull-down menu where “The Early History of Alabama State University” appears, locate “CUL” and click on it.
  3. Click “go”.
  4. Click on the first item, which is titled “First Step in Scanning Process”.
  5. All of the metadata elements contain sample entries that I created to illustrate what to include and how should appear.
- Finally, you should review the NISO Metadata Standards at <http://www.niso.org/standards/resources/Z39-85.pdf> to ensure that you have entered the metadata element content correctly. **In several cases, metadata elements are inconsistently displayed across contributing partner collections. Please review the rules governing the display of the element set.**

If you have any questions or ideas for the digital collection website, please contact Ira at [ir33@cornell.edu](mailto:ir33@cornell.edu) or by phone 607-255-1569.