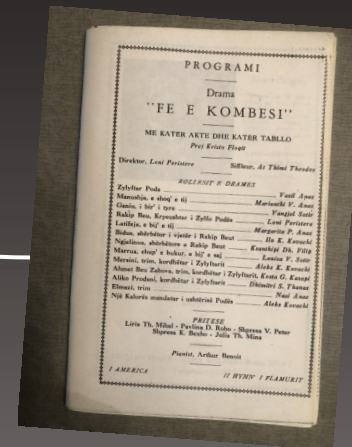


Artifact Stories



Nelson Barnett

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SAINT MARY'S ALBANIAN ORTH. CHURCH

Wellington Street and Jacques Avenue

Përkrahëni të Vetëmen Institute Fetare dhe Kombëtare

FALENDERJE:

Zonjave Margarita Pandi Anas dhe Marianthi Vasil Anas për punën e tyre të pa kursyer në qepjen e robave të Dramës.

Komisioni I Kishes.

Në Funt: KENGA E DRAMES

PARTNERS

Albanian Committee
Worcester Historical Museum

ADVISORS

Professor Katherine Foo
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D-Term, 2021

This report represents the work of three WPI undergraduate students submitted to the faculty as evidence of completion of a degree requirement. WPI routinely publishes these reports on its web site without editorial or peer review. The opinions presented in this report do not necessarily represent the opinions of WPI.

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Abstract

Digital artifact collection is now used in museum curation as a method of preserving cultural heritage and engaging communities in exhibit creation. This project, sponsored by Worcester Historical Museum (WHM), developed a website for collecting and storing digital artifacts from members of Worcester's Albanian community for exhibitions on the history of the Albanian community in Worcester. In order to present a welcoming interface to users and satisfy the archival requirements of WHM, the website supports a robust collection system and displays an understandable user interface. User testing fueled design considerations and provided a basis for recommendations regarding methods to increase website quality and promote community engagement to create comprehensive and informative exhibits.

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Community collection at the Worcester Historical Museum: A new online approach

Historical museums as social agents “express and promote certain understandings of national culture and cultures” (Huchison, 2013 p. 3). In order to do so, museums often combine the perspectives of historians and community leaders to create a well-rounded and multi-faceted exhibit. The task of creating an exhibit requires collecting items, developing an understanding of participants’ stories, and creating a comprehensive and engaging narrative about the subject. The first step, item collection, can be done in many ways. Both online and in-person collection methods are regularly employed by museums to solicit artifacts and stories from the community with whom they are working (Pulh & Mencarelli, 2015).

The Worcester Historical Museum (WHM) had previously created exhibitions for the local Jewish and Latino Worcester communities and partnered in 2019 with the Albanian Committee to design an exhibit on the Albanian community in Worcester. According to Hutchison (2013, p.1), when establishing a relationship with a new community, the museum should be attentive to the concept of “shared authority,” defined as “the relationship between public historians and those who contribute to historical understanding through their lived experience and knowledge.” This approach strives to ensure that the exhibit gives proper weight and prominence to the voices of those whose histories will be on display. In its work with local communities in Worcester, WHM has devised methods to encourage people to share their cultural artifacts and

stories for upcoming exhibits.

WHM had previously held in-person collection days where members of the community could loan or donate cultural artifacts for the museum to use. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the museum would like to create an easy-to-understand website to facilitate digital artifact collection for its planned Albanian exhibit. WHM has established a website to collect stories from Worcester residents about the COVID-19 pandemic and sees online submissions as a critical tool for community engagement. This website enables people to submit various types of media, such as images, text, and videos, that can be later uploaded into WHM’s database. WHM needed a new website designed specifically for receiving submissions from the Albanian community, one that was uncomplicated and straightforward to use. The museum and the Albanian committee hoped to create a visually welcoming and easily understandable web design to appeal to a broad audience and inspire its visitors to share their stories through the website.

Our goal for this project was to design and create a submission website that would be easy to use and welcoming for Albanian community members as well as help the Albanian Committee to develop a plan for encouraging the community to contribute their artifacts and stories. We discussed the current limitations of the COVID-19 website with the staff of the museum and

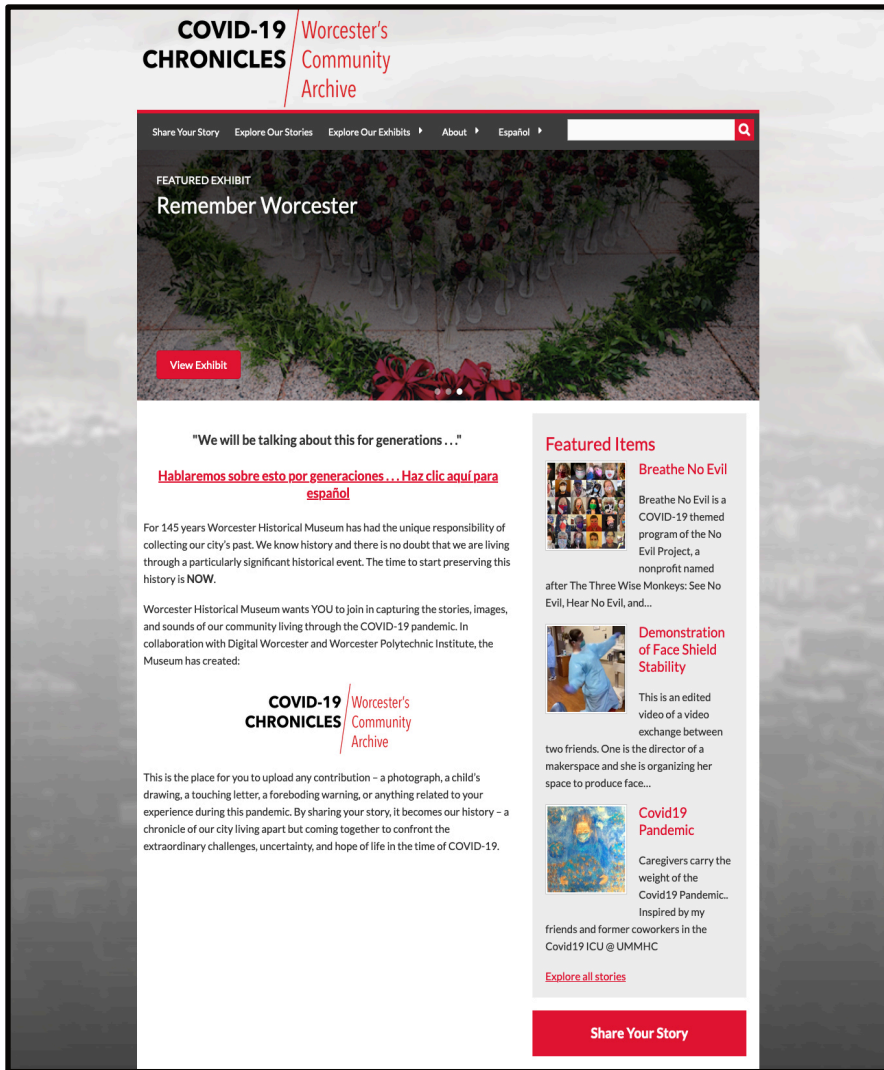


Figure 1. Front page of the WHM COVID-19 website.

identified areas of improvement. Once we created a prototype, we iterated our design based on feedback from the Albanian community with respect to the community's interest in the website and its usability. After collecting a base of submissions, we created a mini exhibit on the website in the form of an example page, illustrating one of the ways in which the submissions will be used and adding another layer of engagement to the project. Our project aimed to create the digital foundation for WHM's efforts to collect artifacts not only from Worcester Albanian community, but also from a diverse range of Worcester communities to showcase their stories through both virtual and physical exhibits.

The rationale for a shift to more community-conscious exhibits and curation techniques

The American Alliance of Museums reports that, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, American museums received more than 850 million visits annually, surpassing the count for all major league sporting events combined, and generate nearly \$50 billion annually (Fig. 2; Kashan, 2021). Such high traffic, and therefore public influence, calls for a sustained awareness of the complex and nuanced history of museums in order to continue to make them better and more equitable spaces. The original model of modern museums as private collection spaces-- where wealthy individuals could gather and ponder natural history and ancient artifacts-- exploded in popularity during the European colonial era of the 17th and 18th centuries. The first "museums" were established as assemblages of artifacts forcefully removed from colonized nations (Vawda, 2019). Only since the 1960s have museums begun to incorporate and amplify the voices of marginalized communities who had for so long been disregarded (Fluehr-Lobban, 2008). Many modern-day history museums aim to not only serve as a collection space for research and preservation, but also incorporate and amplify the perspectives of the people represented in their exhibits (Swan & Jordan, 2015).

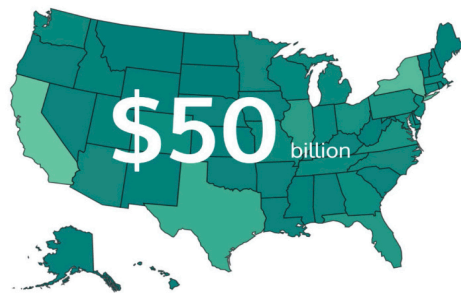
The shift to community-conscious exhibitions and curation began during the civil rights movement in the United States. Following the civil rights movement in the US, museums now search for ways to collect and share knowledge while being as respectful as possible to the

cultures involved. Fluehr-Lobban (2008) attributes "novel approaches in research methods and outcomes generated by collaborative anthropology" to "second wave feminist methodology" (p. 177). These approaches include viewing those who were formerly seen as "informants" in anthropological research as "participants" instead, which helps to foster long-term, collaborative relationships between researchers and those whose histories they are studying. Additionally, Hutchison (2013) cites "the role of 1960s radical politics" in "encouraging critical awareness of the museum's social role and the emergence of a 'new' museology in response to this" (p. 3). The referenced "new museology" seeks to deeply consider the portrayals of cultures and social identities within exhibits and how they might be perceived by the public. Significant care is paid to the cultural influence that an exhibit will have towards the public understanding of a particular culture. Hutchison demonstrates the growth of the new museology concept, writing that "in 1997, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) produced a policy statement on museums and cultural diversity, with a view to 'eradicat[ing] past and present inequalities in cultural representation of diverse peoples'" (pp. 3-4). These practices and the increased awareness of incorporating community members as participants in the telling of their own story represents a significant step towards allowing museums to have a greater positive influence on their visitors. Museums have undergone a significant change in their approach to

Museums as Economic Engines

In 2017, the American Alliance of Museums partnered with Oxford Economics to study the museum sector's significant contribution to the US economy.

Source: Oxford Economics, IMPLAN, 2017.



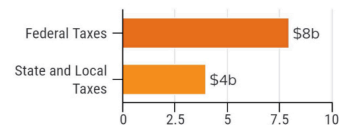
Museums in the United States contribute nearly \$50 billion dollars annually to the nation's economy.

State	GDP
1. California	\$6.6 billion
2. New York	\$5.4 billion
3. Texas	\$3.9 billion
4. Illinois	\$2.7 billion
5. Florida	\$2.3 billion

Top 5 States by GDP Contribution

\$12b taxes

Even though many museums operate as nonprofits, they generate significant tax revenues to federal, state, and local governments.



726,000 jobs

Each year, the museum sector supports important jobs for people in every corner of the nation.



Download the full report at <http://aam-us.org/EconomicEngines2017>

collecting and presenting histories. Historically, little attention was paid to the ethics of artifact collection methods.

Beginning in the 1960s and 70s, however, community voices were granted a larger presence in museum exhibits (Hutchison, 2013; Fluehr-Lobban, 2008). An early implementation of community voices came in the form of oral histories in which individuals shared their stories related to the exhibit to add a greater personal connection between the museum visitor and the exhibit (Mandelli, 2019). More recently, museums have begun including the community in the actual curation, analysis, and presentation of the exhibit. In the context of museums centered on Native Americans, West (2019) notes that “[Native American] voices and the cultural communities they represented brought with them viewpoints that departed significantly from museum and interpretive methodologies that descended from the Enlightenment and Western rationalism” (p. 51). Relinquishing some of the long-established authority of museum curators to the community whose history is to be shared is a modern approach to research that creates a more well-rounded and comprehensive understanding of the subject.

Figure 2. Infographic detailing the economic impact of American museums in 2017 (Stein, 2018).

How museums use the techniques of participation and co-creation to incorporate the voices of the community into their cultural history projects

Since this shift to a more community-focused narrative in museum exhibitions, museums have collaborated with communities in different ways. Participation is the term used to describe a community or group working with the museum by donating, selling, or lending artifacts that the museum can use to make or enhance an exhibit. Since the 1940s, personal accounts through audio and video have also become more popular (Swan & Jordan, 2015; Mandelli, 2019). The museum may use these stories as a part of its exhibit as a way to immerse viewers and directly include the voices of the community. At the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in DC, there is an exhibit focused on audio recordings of personal accounts that visitors can listen to. The museum has a lot of these interviews in their archive and is still collecting more, but participation is limited only to interviews in this exhibit (US Holocaust Memorial Museum). After the interview(s), the interviewee gives their permission to the museum to go forward making the exhibit without them being a part of the decision-making process. The exhibit was then planned using the interviews to guide the larger story. This makes it a participatory collaboration as it was only as long as the interview.

Now, since the internet has become a larger part of our day to day lives, it is now easier for museums to reach out to community members and non-locals alike.

While some museum blogs work to collect audio testimonies to attract others to experience the museum like the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, other blogs hold public votes that can change what exhibits are displayed at a museum or help decide on slogans (Pulh and Mencarelli, 2015). If not through votes, museum exhibits can be chosen because the topic is relevant or popular for the time. For example, many museums such as the Chicago History Museum, the National Museum of American History, and WHM are currently collecting Covid-19 stories and posting them online. WHM is also currently collecting pictures for a Black experience mural in response to George Floyd's death and murder trial. In these ways, the museums are allowing communities to play a role in creating exhibits based on their experiences and culture, which in turn permits curators to tailor exhibits so that they reflect the social climate.

Co-creation, an approach that utilizes the partnership between museums and communities, differs from the concept of participation in a few aspects. While it is not always necessary, such as in the US Holocaust Memorial example above, it can be useful when creating an exhibit on a local community and culture, especially one that has been oppressed or marginalized (Swan & Jordan, 2015). Co-creation places a greater emphasis on community involvement where participation's emphasis is on the end

goal and uses sources to create their vision. Rock and Rogers (2016) explain how, unlike participation, co-creation asserts that:

- Communities have more power than they would in a participatory project
- Both the community and museum's goals are achieved
- Communities are involved from the project's inception and have the power to shape any aspect of its progression
- The finished project will be 'co-owned' by the community and museum.

Though the definition of co-creation is still largely debated, co-creation involves a partnership with the community from the beginning of planning an exhibit to the very end. Both parties have a say in what goes into the exhibit and how it is shown (Rock & Rogers, 2016). In contrast to co-creation, participation is more of a consultation.

Co-creation is best used for projects that are trying to showcase the history of a marginalized group because it allows representatives of the community to ensure their

Co-creation — Partnership between a museum and a community that begins in the planning stages and continues until the end of the exhibit.

Participation — Exhibit curators may look for interviewees after they have already decided what the exhibit will focus on as a way to inform their decisions about the exhibit as well as give them information to add to it (Shopes, 2002).

culture is accurately displayed. Since 2018, for example, WHM has been working with Worcester's Black community to start and maintain a conversation about Black history. The museum meets with a committee to talk about current issues facing the Black community and how to best bring those issues to the public eye. This is a form of co-creation. Though it is unclear how much control the committee has in the final museum post, it is evident that the committee has been a part of the planning and that a collaboration is happening. There are other museums, like the Otago Museum which worked with two community groups in New-Zealand, that will sometimes approach community groups with co-creation in mind; they make meetings with the community co-creators early on to plan with them from the very beginning. Then, as the community is involved with the conception of the project, they also have a say in the end product: where the exhibit is placed and how it is set up are examples of what the Otago Museum discussed with their co-creators (Rock & Rogers, 2016). Some museums, like the National Museum of Australia, even go as far as having their community co-creators sign off on the final exhibition before it is shown to the public, making sure both they, and the museum, are happy with the way they are represented in the exhibit (Fluehr-Lobban, 2008). Requiring that not only the museum but also the co-creators sign off on the end product brings balance to a playing field that used to give museums the high ground.

The practice of co-creation reduces the risk of the museum unintentionally misrepresenting a given community. While only some members of the community can work closely with the museum, co-creation helps prevent wrong

interpretations or a white-washed narrative that stereotypes an entire culture (Vamanu, 2020). Co-creation is a way for these communities to show a side of themselves not marred by stereotypes, a side that can be celebrated for overcoming difficult circumstances where community members can feel pride in the exhibit and how they have told their stories and museums feel accomplished in making the exhibit they wanted to in an ethical way (Shopes, 2002; Francis, 2018).

The process of co-creation takes a lot of time, though, because it requires extensive coordination between parties. Depending on the size of the group co-creating, scheduling meeting times and making sure everyone's voice is heard can lead to difficulties. The Otago Museum, in its project with indigenous New Zealand peoples and Pacific Islanders, combatted this issue by having key members from a group meet with museum staff regularly for updates and decisions. These members would then go back to their communities with information about the exhibit, such as where the exhibit is going to be shown and what needs to be collected for the exhibit. This makes it easier to take big decisions up front at the beginning as then the groups do not have to worry about getting everyone together to make these bigger decisions later in the project (Rock & Rogers, 2016). This difficulty of trying to arrange meeting times for larger groups can be one reason why a museum may not practice co-creation. For example, US Holocaust Memorial Museum has one of the largest collections of holocaust oral histories, if they were to make this a co-creation project, it would take too many resources and make many holocaust survivors relive their experience for all that time.

WHM has had practice in both participation and co-creation, WHM's work with Worcester's Black community was a co-creation project. Though the museum cannot meet with everyone that is a part of the community, it is currently documenting the "BLM Mural Project" by collecting stories and images from community members. In this way of collecting information from Black community members, WHM is trying to ensure that everyone who is not a part of the group it is working with is still a part of the conversation. Through the committee, the community is a part of the decision-making and planning process and WHM makes sure other voices are heard as well through their collection email.

WHM has also worked with other communities on co-creation projects such as the exhibition on Water Street with the Jewish community. While creating this exhibition, WHM collected items from and interviewed people who grew up on Water Street and were a part of the Jewish community. WHM staff now plans to extend these past efforts into an exhibit about the Worcester Albanian community. They will work with a committee in planning and collecting artifacts and recorded interviews for an Albanian exhibit. WHM believes a website to collect videos, images, stories, and other media from Albanian community members would be an easy way to involve a large portion of the community without needing them to come into the museum. With the help of the Albanian Committee, the goal is to create an exhibition that celebrates the history and culture of these families in Worcester.

How museums have implemented user interface design techniques into their websites

Other museums have created their own submission websites, which serve as examples for the project. WHM also has a COVID-19 website that collects submissions from Worcester locals about their experiences during the pandemic. The submission page grants users the ability to share stories, pictures, videos, and audio files. As seen in Figure 3, the website has a list of fields where users can input information about their submission. These functions are possible through the website's interface. Throughout the years, the philosophy for creating interfaces has changed. Before the 1980s, programmers designed interfaces that were simple for them to navigate but more difficult for non-developers to operate and understand. This practice was employed in order to save time and money, and also to ensure that the programmers did not have to do any extra or unnecessary work. Beginning in the 1980s, however, programmers began to shift their focus towards designing interfaces that were easier for users to operate due to the increased integration of machines into society (Chechikov, Dzyubenko, & Lukin, 2020). Since this switch, programmers have developed several design strategies that they can utilize when creating an easy-to-use interface. Some examples include goal-oriented design, which focuses on the goals that a user hopes to achieve through the interface, and user-centered design, which aims to understand the abilities of the targeted audience. By understanding the capabilities of the users, the programmers can then design an interface that can accommodate any needs that the users may have (Checkikov et al., 2020).

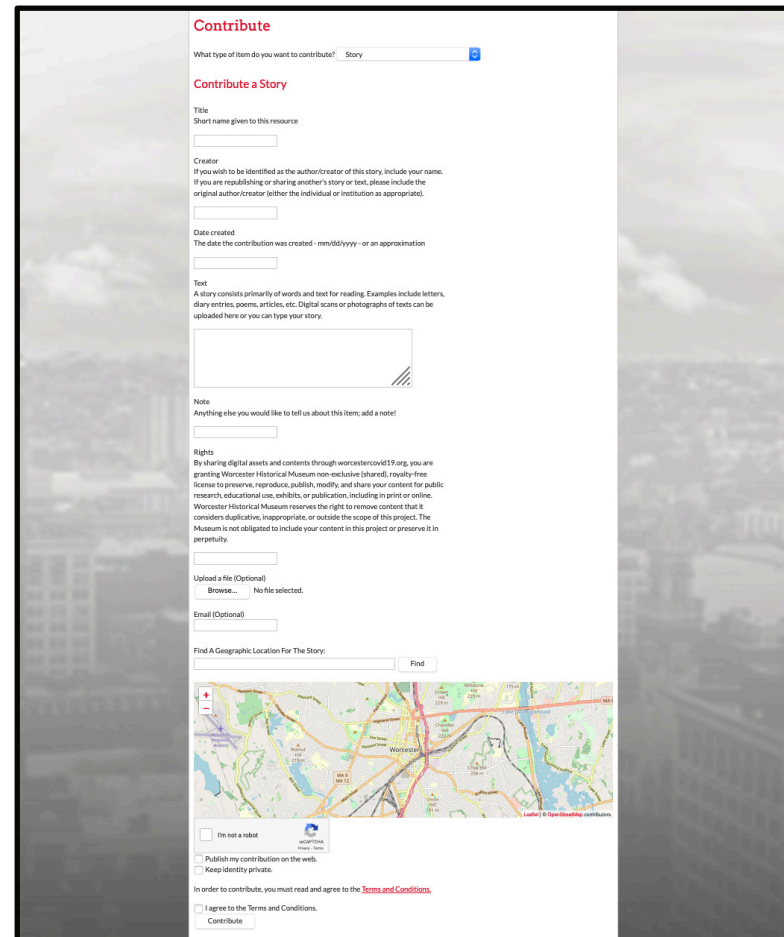
The image shows a web form titled "Contribute" for submitting a story. The form includes several sections: "Contribute a Story" with a dropdown menu for "What type of item do you want to contribute?" (set to "Story"); "Title" with a text input field; "Creator" with a text input field and a note about including names; "Date created" with a text input field; "Text" with a large text area and a note about content types; "Note" with a text input field; "Rights" with a text input field and a detailed license statement; "Upload a file (Optional)" with a "Browse..." button; "Email (Optional)" with a text input field; "Find A Geographic Location For The Story:" with a "Find" button and a map of Worcester, MA; and a final section with checkboxes for "I've read & submit", "Publish my contribution on the web.", "Keep identity private.", and "I agree to the Terms and Conditions.", followed by a "Contribute" button.

Figure 3. WHM's COVID-19 Story Submission Page (worcestercovid19.org/contribution)

WHM anticipates that its artifact submission website for the Albanian exhibition will have to accommodate the needs of an older generation of Albanian Americans since they may have the most diverse set of artifacts and stories in the community. The museum is concerned, however, that this demographic has had very little experience with online submission forms and does not want the interface to be intimidating or off putting. In a 2012 study, it was found that older adults, whose ages ranged from 50 to 70 years old, were more likely to struggle to find menu bars that were on the periphery of the screen; their attention mainly went towards the center of the screen. The researchers suggested that important content should be repeated in the center of the screen and on the periphery (Bergstrom et al., 2013).

While the positioning on the website is important, the content of the website is also notable to consider. Researchers found that useless graphics confuse older users. They recommend that designers aim to have a layout that is clean and not cluttered (Bergstrom et al., 2013). Pictured in Figure 4 is the National Museum of American History's COVID-19 collection form, which exemplifies the tactic of keeping the layout clean. Most of the screen is white space; no extra graphics were added that could distract from the form. The Museum of Youth Culture in London (Fig. 5) does not follow this strategy. Its form is located at the bottom of the page, and other possibly distracting text and images are included on the page. Additionally, a place to put in an email is added before the actual form, taking away from the submission itself. The Museum of Youth Culture's submission site is crowded, especially when compared to the clean and simple site of the National Museum of American History.

The image shows a web form titled "Your Contact Information" and "Your Story". The form is clean and minimalist, with a white background and black text. It includes several input fields and sections:

- Your Contact Information**
 - A paragraph: "Your contribution may be published along with your first name, last initial, and location (if provided). No other personal information will be shared."
 - First and Last Name *** (required field)
 - A text input field for the name.
 - A note: "Please type 'Anonymous' if you wish to remain anonymous."
 - Email Address *** (required field)
 - A text input field for the email address.
 - Phone Number *** (required field)
 - A text input field for the phone number.
 - Your Location (City, State)**
 - A text input field for the location.
 - A question: "Where does this story take place?"
- Your Story**
 - Story Title *** (required field)
 - A text input field for the story title.
 - Your Story *** (required field)
 - A large text area for the story content.
 - A note: "Please keep stories to 500 words maximum. Longer stories may be edited for length."
- Media Upload**
 - A note: "Optionally, add up to five photos (2MB max file size; accepted formats jpg, png, gif) or a"

Figure 4. National Museum of American History COVID-19 Story Submission Page (americanhistory.si.edu/story-submission)

WHY SUBMIT TO THE MUSEUM?

1. Remember the good times This is the perfect opportunity to dig through all those photographs and remember the good old days!
2. Preserve your story Preserve your memories and stories for future generations.
3. Set the record straight Help us change narratives around youth culture and break those pervasive stereotypes!
4. Celebrate British youth culture We're not just an archive, we're community celebrating the excitement of being young! Submitting your memories makes you part of the Museum of Youth Culture family.
5. Join our community We want to celebrate the amazing story of British youth culture from all walks of life - this is your chance to be part of that story.

SUBMIT TO THE MUSEUM

[Download Our At-Home Pack](#)

Name * **Email ***

First Last

We'll be in touch about your submission

What's the story? *

Tell us about the story behind the photograph, who is in it, where was it taken (town, venue, specific night) and when was it taken.

Any other stories from your youth?

By contributing I agree for my photos to be used for (tick all appropriate)

Project Press Exhibitions Book Projects Zines All of the above

By submitting you agree that your photograph may be included on the museum website, social platforms and for use in education.

Keep me up to date on developments of the Museum of Youth Culture. *

Yes No

Upload *

or drag files here.

All files should be in .jpg format. Please send us the highest quality you have, however we accept any .jpg over 1.5mb in size.

Figure 5. Two sections of the Museum of Youth Culture story submission page (museumofyouthculture.com/submit/)

Since older individuals tend to have poor eyesight, a website that has large text will be more accessible to them (Min, 2010). The Tenement Museum in New York City has a website, shown in Figure 6, where immigrants can submit their stories, images, and videos. In addition to having a clean and simple layout, the website also has larger text compared to some of the websites shown previously. Based on the results of Min (2010), this larger text would make the site better for older users. In contrast, the National Women’s History Museum’s submission site (Fig. 7) has much smaller text. This is not helped by the fact that the form is a Google Form within the website, which results in an additional scroll bar on the page. While most people could still use the form, users with visual impairments would likely be able to use the Tenement Museum’s form easier due to the increased font size.

In addition to the design of the interface, some museums have attempted to encourage people to submit to their website through methods such as videos and examples. The Tenement Museum includes pages with collections of previous submissions (Figure 8), which demonstrate the kinds of items that they want people to submit. The National Museum of American History also includes examples with their COVID-19 stories form. They have pages dedicated to the pandemic stories of people from different areas of life, which anyone can access and read (Figure 9). Some museums also create videos that can help to explain the purpose of the submission site, such as the Chicago History Museum’s COVID-19 story submission page (Figure 10). The inclusion of these various forms of media can connect potential contributors to the larger community of previous submitters.

ADD YOUR STORY

Do you have an object or tradition that relates to your family's immigration or migration story?

Are you an educator? [Click here](#) to begin a group page for your class or community group.
Need Help? Reference our [FAQ Section](#).

- Object name (required, max 30 characters)
- Category (required)
- Images of your object (max. 4). Author must have rights to all photos.
Describing your photo helps those with low vision access the information on a screen reader.

Select main image of object (required)

DRAG + DROP YOUR IMAGE TO THIS AREA

or

BROWSE

Describe photo (required, max 40 chars.)

Select a photo of author (optional)

DRAG + DROP YOUR IMAGE TO THIS AREA

or

BROWSE

Describe photo, max 40 characters

Select a related photo (optional)

DRAG + DROP YOUR IMAGE TO THIS AREA

or

BROWSE

Describe photo, max 40 characters

Select a related photo (optional)

DRAG + DROP YOUR IMAGE TO THIS AREA

or

BROWSE

Describe photo, max 40 characters
- Add an audio file (MP3 or M4A, 3MB max)

Select an MP3 or M4A (optional)

DRAG + DROP YOUR AUDIO FILE TO THIS AREA

or

BROWSE

Add an audio (optional). MP3 or M4A, 3MB max.

Figure 6. Part of the Tenement Museum Immigrant Story Submission Page (yourstory.tenement.org/stories/new)

Submit a Woman's Story

Honoring the Lives and Legacies of Women

Once you click submit, please head to the [donate form](#). A minimum payment of \$40 or more must be received before publication. A staff member will review the form and may contact you for more information. Typical time to publication on the NWHM website is 90 days. Your submission may be edited for grammar, spelling, length, or clarity without prior approval.

Women's Stories - Chronicling America's Diverse History

Welcome to National Women's History Museum's *Chronicles of American Women*. This site honors the lives and legacies of women – living and in memoriam – those whose individual and collective contributions have enriched our lives. With stories and pictures you can create a lasting memorial to a special woman in your life with a donation of \$40 or more.

Help us bring to light the stories of America's women. Share the story of a deserving woman from your life.

* Required

Email *

Your email

Your First and Last Name *

Your answer

Nominee's Information

Tell us your nominee's story. Who was she and what was her special contribution? How did she enrich the lives of those around her. Let's start with her background information. Please do your best to answer each question.

Figure 7. National Women's History Museum Story Submission Page (www.womenshistory.org/submit-womans-story)

Alongside the appearance of the site, another important part of the design of a submission site are the included fields. The WHM staff requested that we should use the popular schema Dublin Core, which includes fifteen different elements for a submission, including: contributor, coverage, creator, date, description, format, identifier, language, publisher, relation, rights, source, subject, title, and type. The elements are made to be very general so they can be applied to every type of media, such as books, images, or videos.

For our website, not every type will be necessary, but some will be required, such as the title and the contributor. The Dublin Core schema will ensure that the people who work with the submissions will have metadata for each of the items (Dublin Core, 2012).

Dublin Core is one schema for collecting metadata, but other museums request different information from their contributors and omit some of the Dublin Core fields in order to increase the clarity and legibility of their submission forms. Some websites use elements from Dublin Core but do not use the same terminology. For instance, instead of having a field for the contributor,

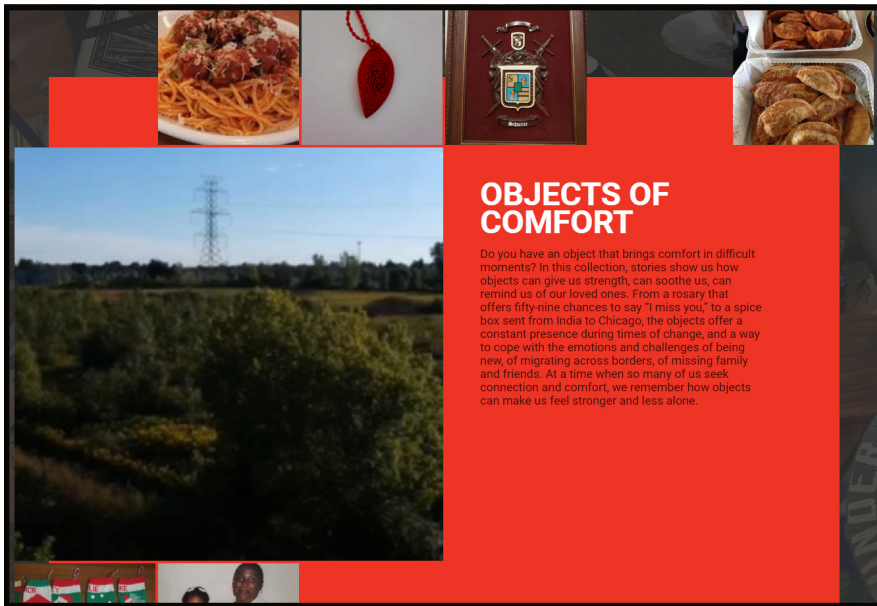


Figure 8. Tenement Museum Immigrant Story Submission Page (americanhistory.si.edu/stories-of-2020)

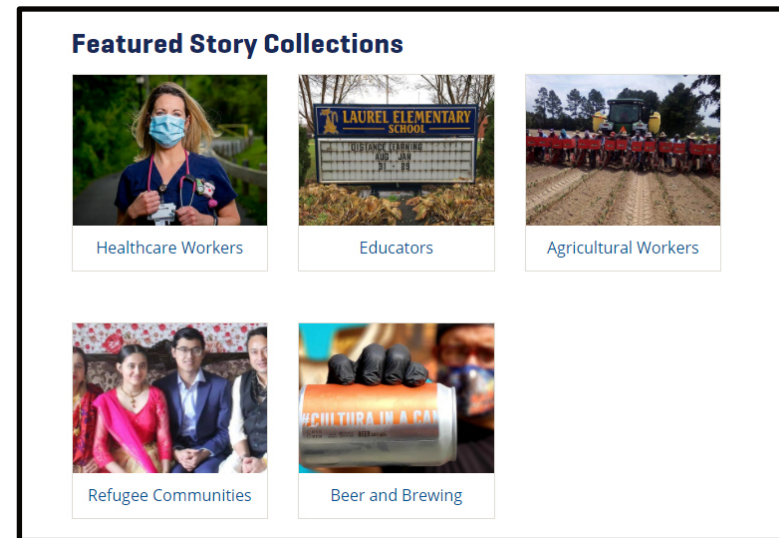


Figure 9. National Museum of American History COVID-19 Story Submission Page (yourstory.tenement.org/features/objects-of-comfort)

many forms simply ask for the person's first and last name. These changes were likely made to make the form more legible for users. One notable difference among the submission pages is the number of fields that each form requires users to fill out. For example, the Tenement Museum asks for contributors to fill in ten different text fields, in addition to agreeing to the terms of service and uploading the necessary media. The Museum of Youth Culture requires far fewer fields with only five. WHM's COVID-19 website currently has nine text fields that can be filled in when contributing an image.

Chicago's Community Response to COVID-19

In This Together is a community-based initiative to collect digital records that document personal experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are all affected by this crisis in varying degrees, and diaries, journals, oral histories, images, recordings, and similar materials will help us tell stories of this unprecedented time in history. Personal accounts provide depth and context for what an event or era was like for the everyday people experiencing it. Gathering this type of information about the COVID-19 pandemic in the Chicago area will be important for people to understand this period of our history.

We invite those of you living in Chicago and its surrounding metropolitan area to contribute any digital records that document your experience and that of your community during the COVID-19 pandemic. These could include digital journal entries, audio/video recordings, images, or emails. Submissions can be made with smartphones, tablets, or computers. To contribute a physical item, please use our [donation inquiry form](#).

Selected submissions will be displayed [here](#). Due to the volume of submissions, we are unable to notify you if your submission is posted, but you can check the page for regular updates.



Figure 10. Chicago History Museum COVID-19 Story Page (www.chicagohistory.org/covid19history/)

Additionally, some of those fields are not covered by the elements of Dublin Core, such as the field for an email address. Other museums have also included a field where contributors can add their email address in case the museum wants to contact them after they have submitted their story or image. Since this field is related to the contributor and not the item being contributed, it is not covered by the Dublin Core elements. When creating the website, we will have to choose which Dublin Core elements to include in order to not overwhelm users.

Methods

The goal of this project was to provide WHM with an easy to use and expandable online submission platform with an easy-to-use interface and well-organized collection system. The design of this system laid the groundwork for future online endeavors by the museum to collect digital submissions pertaining to local history. Our objectives were as follows:

1. Assessing the strengths and limitations of WHM's current submission process.
2. Build and test a prototype of a website for community artifact contributions.
3. Work with the Albanian Committee on strategies to encourage community participation and begin outreach.
4. Design a tool to aid museum staff in the navigation and instruction of the submission website for both internal education and user instruction.

1. Assessing the strengths and limitations of WHM's current submission process

In order to create our best version of an online submission platform for WHM, we first needed to understand the strengths and limitations of the museum's current software and data collection methods. The museum used a software called Omeka to create its other collection websites. We investigated the technical capabilities of Omeka through our own use of the software and discussions with the COVID-19 website creator, WPI Professor Joseph Cullon.

We also assessed the usability of the COVID-19 through interviews with museum staff. The key criteria we considered were the ease of use of the submission website, the program's capability to organize and report user submissions and associated metadata to museum staff, and the upkeep and attention necessary to maintain and run the website. The museum staff members most closely connected to the online submission process were the librarian, Wendy Essery, for whom the image quality and associated metadata on each submission was paramount, and the Community Engagement Director, David Conner, who was concerned with the functionality and accessibility of the webpage. These individuals served as our key informants for these topics.

In our discussions with Professor Cullon, we learned what efforts went into the COVID-19 website and what degree of upkeep and improvements were required as well as some of the techniques used to create the COVID-19 website. Our discussions with Professor Cullon worked in parallel to our conversations with WHM staff to decide on the best implementation of Omeka for their purposes. Ultimately, our goal was to create a website that could be easily maintained by WHM while also being trustworthy and straightforward to use for Albanian community members. We designed the website to work best with the time and resources the museum staff had available for its upkeep and maintenance. Discussions with David Conner provided insight into the typical demographics that would be using the website and allowed us to design the user interface (UI) to best accommodate them. In order to accomplish these objectives, we created an Omeka S site hosted through a third party hosting company: Reclaim

Hosting. This implementation of Omeka allowed for extensive UI customizability while maintaining a straightforward admin portal for future changes and robust organizational capabilities.

2. Build and test a prototype of the website for community artifact contributions

The core deliverable for our project is the website with a submission page that fulfilled the museum's organizational needs, is straightforward to use and understand, and is easily maintainable by their staff. Omeka was used to create the website and the submission page, which collects community contributions that are stored in Omeka's own database. During the creation of this website, we incorporated our background research on user interface design to create a straightforward and welcoming website.

As seen in Figure 11, our website went through an initial design process in which we created a stand-alone submission page to gather the first items from a few members of the Albanian Committee, as well as a former Worcester Polytechnic Institute professor. After that we started on the examples page as seen in the website timeline in blue above the flowchart. We had trouble with sizing the examples so they would look good on all devices, so it took a little longer than we had anticipated. At the same time as the examples page, we worked on getting feedback from Committee members and museum staff that helped us make the submission page easier to use and understand. Reaching out to users that had been contacted by the Albanian Exhibition team was next, we

hoped that going through the website with a user and hearing their thoughts on the submission process would help us find places where people might have questions or difficulties with the site.

Creating a survey was the last part of our plan to get feedback, once created we put it on the homepage of the website so people could give feedback easily without an interview, this way in the future, the museum is able to view the responses and make changes as needed. Knowing that the survey would be important to the museum in the future, we chose our questions carefully to make sure we got feedback that will be easy to understand and helpful to whoever is making changes to the website (Tyreman, 2020). We looked at websites on UX feedback and design to understand what questions are commonly asked as well as what kind of response we should allow (a scaling response, written response, etc.). This survey focuses on the ease with which they were able to navigate the website, their experience uploading their documents, and their impression of the website as a whole.

Albanian individuals from the Worcester area will be the sole users of our first prototype, which will lead to a small selection bias (LaMorfe, 2020). Our survey techniques may also incur a response bias if people decide they do not want to complete the survey. Our hope is that as someone they know and trust is telling them about the website, they are more inclined to fill out the survey at the end. We have also been told that their church would like to have the link on their own website, which will show our site as a trustworthy source while promoting it.

Despite the fact that we may not be able to implement all the changes that we would like to make before the term ends, we have learned the inner workings of the website software and have a pre-written survey. With this knowledge, we will be providing detailed instructions on how to accomplish tasks we could not complete as well as give the museum access to the survey so they can continue to collect feedback for updates.

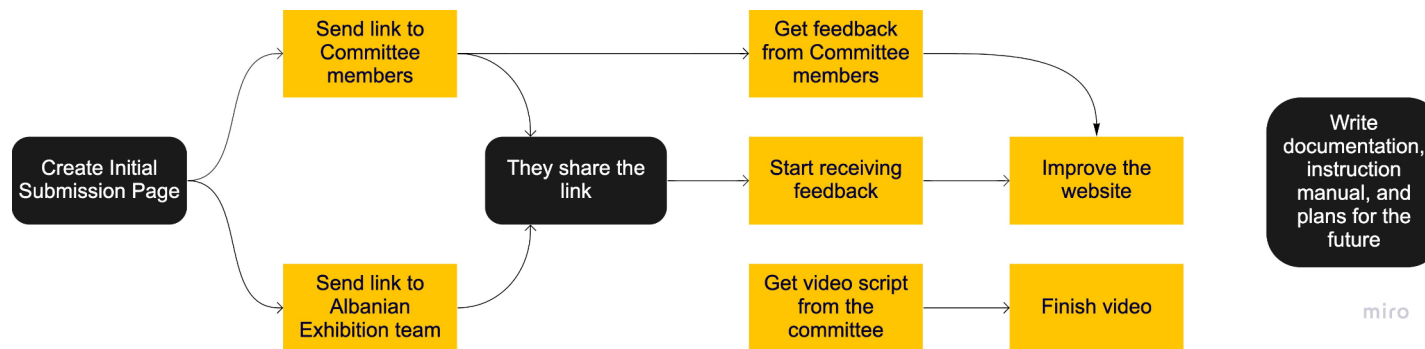


Figure 11. Methods flowchart detailing the steps of website creation and testing.

3. Work with the Albanian Committee on strategies to encourage community participation and begin outreach

We have created a video, “frequently asked questions” (FAQ) page, and a “best practices” page in order to show the community how to use the website and encourage submissions. A video may be more engaging and easier to follow, but a written page is easier to update than a video tutorial (Tyner & Fienup, 2015; Cotlier, 2019). We made sure that the video is relatively short, i.e. below ten minutes. Keeping a user’s attention will not be easy if the video goes on for too long (Cotlier, 2019). In addition, the instruction portion of the video must not be too complicated so that the flow of the video is easy to follow. The video was scripted by a member of the Albanian Committee using an outline we had written. We then recorded our audio and filmed our screens as we went through the submission page.

This video will not only serve instructional purposes but will also garner interest in using the submission website. The Tenement Museum in New York has made a video and web page encouraging people to submit their own stories for a digital exhibition; the video highlights how important all submissions are in the overall story. Our aim is to demonstrate to the community members that their story is important, and that the museum wants to hear it, like the Tenement Museum’s video does.

In addition to the video, we also created a page of FAQs. An FAQ page allows the museum to add helpful guides when something seems to be confusing visitors (Cotlier,

2019). This guide will help a user if they have a single question or if they run into a problem uploading a piece, so they do not exit out of frustration and/or confusion. Users also need to know how to upload their artifacts with best practices, so the museum does not have to reach out to every person submitting. Instead of including this in FAQ, we decided to make a new page about best practices that not only benefits users, but also the museum.

The submission page and process was discussed during our Think Alouds, interviews with users where the participants went through the submission process and described their thought process as they completed the fields. We received feedback on the clarity of the fields and the ease of use of the website. Our main goal was to identify questions to put on the FAQ page and observe any challenges the participants faced when completing the form.

Along with these instructional pieces, we also included a page with submission examples to show people what others have contributed. This will hopefully encourage people to share their own items and stories and begin outreach efforts. Outreach past this will be fostered by the Albanian Committee and the church as well as the museum possibly through in person scanning sessions. We created plans that these community leaders could follow for how scanning sessions could go, what tools we suggest and how they would use those in conjunction with our website.

4. Design a tool to aid museum staff in the navigation and instruction of the submission website for both internal education and user instruction

We created a tool that will allow the museum staff to understand how to operate the website after we cease our work on the project. The museum staff will need to be able to continue using and improving the website on their own. While the museum's COVID-19 website also was created using Omeka, the primary person maintaining that website is Professor Joseph Cullon. Through our conversations with David Conner, we learned that a how-to manual could help the staff to navigate the website.

When we were writing the manual, we consulted the knowledge that we had accumulated about Omeka. We incorporated information about how to change the pages, how to see the items, and how to export the submissions so they can be put in another database. We also included online resources about Omeka, which we used as we were developing the website, such as the forums and documentation websites. Additionally, we also described how to maintain and change the Featured Submissions page using CSS.

We also were in contact with both David Conner and Wendy Essery about what they wanted included in a manual as well as the format of the manual itself. Since we worked with Omeka.org, the technical knowledge was somewhat complex. We had to make sure our instructions were both clear and concise. Since the scope of this project goes beyond what our group has been able to accomplish in one term, this guide will assist the museum in expanding and improving the website throughout the rest of the co-creation process.

Findings

1. Co-creation between Worcester Historical Museum and the Albanian Committee

Since the inception of this project, both groups have been meeting to discuss future plans. This is in line with one guideline established by Rock and Rogers (2016 p.63) which states that “Communities are involved from the project’s inception and have the power to shape any aspect of its progression”. Through their involvement in the planning, the Albanian Committee was able to shape the course of the project alongside the museum. Initial meetings took place in 2019, during which the goals of the project and the methods to achieve them were discussed. The groups decided the goals of the project together: creating an exhibit on the Worcester Albanian experience. This again aligns with another co-creation guideline described by Rock and Rogers (2016, p.63), that “[b]oth the community and museum’s goals are achieved”. While the methods of their goals have changed because of the pandemic, they have indicated a strong commitment to the co-creation process from the start. The co-creation aspect has grown to even include historians and scholars on the community side as opposed to the examples in the background. The Albanian Committee now has a historical advisor, Fr. Dennis Nagi, Phd, and they have partnered with the Fan S. Noli Library and its librarian Neka Doko. These steps show a commitment to the project and dedication to assuring the historical accuracy and depth on the community side of this project which will make certain

the museum has all of the information it needs to share these stories.

One of the largest distinctions between participatory work and co-creation is who makes major decisions in the process. To this point, how the website is laid out has been decided by both the museum and the Committee. For example, Otago Museum and the National Museum of Australia have their co-creation groups decide together what the exhibition will look like when it goes public (Rock and Rogers, 2016; Fluehr-Lobban, 2008). Other major decisions, including the title of this project, (the Albanian-American History Project of Worcester), have also been collaboratively made by both groups. In the absence of direct correspondence between parties, our team acted as intermediaries to ensure adequate representation of both in all decisions. This way, the committee has “more power than they would in a participatory project” (Rock and Rogers, 2016, p.63).

When the pandemic hit, WHM and the Albanian Committee had to put a hold on their plans as everyone became busy navigating the “new normal”. Correspondingly, delays in achieving numerous steps of the website design presented themselves as a result of COVID-19 and related online communication formats. For example, when our team started work on this project, and would come up with a design concept such as our first submission page, we would go to one of the two groups for a meeting to get feedback before going to the next group and getting feedback on the page with our first set of alterations. This worked for decisions like the formation of the submission page, but in this way, we unintentionally adopted the

position of middleman. Acting as intermediaries was the most timely solution, though it hindered direct negotiations between the parties.

One way to keep co-creation a collaboration is meeting often so decisions are never made by just one group (Rock and Rogers, 2016). Therefore, continuing to act as middlemen was not going to work for bigger decisions which required discussion between the two groups, such as permissions. When we tried to figure out permissions for users to choose between when submitting, we went back and forth a couple times before it became clear that this was a decision that needed a meeting involving both groups. A meeting was also needed as we started to hear differences in expectations between WHM and the Albanian Committee. While differing ideas are normal in collaboration projects, there was confusion about who would be maintaining the website, which is important once the team is no longer working on it. This issue was a result of not meeting for a long period of time but needed to be decided soon as the time they had to figure this out was limited to the seven-week term.

The two groups largely discussed ownership rights in their first meeting since Covid-19. Representatives of the Committee and the museum presented differing opinions on permissions and ownership rights, showing how not meeting can lead to opposing ideas. Ownership, maintenance of the site, and storage of the data were topics that found conclusions in the meeting. All parties agreed that this should be a joint partnership, which co-creation heavily relies on. The museum will maintain the site as they were the sponsors of this project, and the data

will be stored on Reclaim Hosting, that way neither group has sole access to it. This development illustrates the importance of ongoing meetings and discussions between co-creating parties. A recommendation from Rock & Rogers (2016) is to meet weekly with at minimum the leaders of each group. Then, briefings between those leaders and their own groups can take place. The meetings do not necessarily have to be weekly, but they should be consistent and continuous throughout the project.

If meetings between the co-creating parties do not maintain a regular schedule, any project can easily veer away from collaboration. The committee and WHM have greatly improved their communication and collaborative efforts, but, as we found, months apart can cause misunderstandings. Regular communication must be maintained throughout the rest of the project for the best results. Given that the website is under the control of WHM but the project is a joint effort, changes to the website should be made only after approval by the Committee. While it can still be considered co-creation with limited meetings, as long as changes to the website and other large decisions are not being made without approval of both parties, this runs the risk of switching from a co-creation project to a participatory project.

2. How the perspectives of WHM and the Albanian Committee shaped the development of our project

From the beginning of the project, the direction and development of the website was influenced by the perspectives held by WHM and the Albanian Committee. Each person had their own interests that shaped their perspective.

WHM plans to use the website as a blueprint for future collaborations with other Worcester communities so the staff were interested in having a format that could be used when designing future websites. In our discussions with the museum staff, they granted us nearly full freedom in the design of the submission pages and overall website.. They made suggestions about the wording of certain pages and fields but mostly emphasized that the website should have an obvious connection to the museum. We incorporated this into our site by including WHM's logo as well as by stating their involvement in the project in both our informational video and the "About" page. Additionally, the formatting and types of pages we created, such as the Featured Submissions page, could be replicated for future websites to maintain continuity across separate WHM platforms.

The technical aspects of the website were also discussed. Specifically, the staff expressed the need for metadata with each submission. This data would use the Dublin Core schema, which, as mentioned on pages 11-13, includes fifteen fields, such as title, description, and creator. This information would make it easier for them to organize the

submitted stories and artifacts. While Dublin Core has fifteen fields, we did not include all these fields in our submission form. We found that a large number of fields could clutter the form and make it potentially overwhelming for users. To ensure that no individual would be dissuaded from submitting due to lack of knowledge of the item, we chose to only require fields that any contributor would inherently know and to leave the others optional. Contributors are only required to provide a self-chosen title and a brief description of the item. By requiring important fields, we made sure that the museum had the information they needed to organize the submissions.

The museum was also concerned about how the website would be received by the community. The staff emphasized that it was necessary for the website to be welcoming and trustworthy so the community would be more willing to contribute to the project. One idea that was discussed during our meetings with the museum was a video that could explain the purpose of the project and show people how to use the website. After creating this video, we embedded it on the front page of the website so new visitors would notice it first. By making a welcoming website, we could encourage the preservation and presentation of Albanian history and culture.

The Albanian Committee had their own concerns about the project. They asked if a donation link could be added to the website to help support the cost of the project. This addition proved to be more complex than it would originally seem since WHM and the committee had to decide who would be handling the money and for what

purpose it would be used. Both parties have already invested time and money into this project. This situation shows how co-creation projects require groups to examine the roles that they each play within the larger project. Through early discussions, groups can establish individual responsibilities and develop a collective understanding of how those responsibilities fit together. These decisions are especially important in this new age of digital collection and exhibitions, where questions around ownership and roles are less clear.

The Albanian Committee also asked for a link to St. Mary's Albanian Orthodox Church's website to be added to the site, since that is their parent organization. Like WHM, the committee also wanted the website to seem both welcoming and trustworthy, and the link to the church was one idea to achieve that goal. Since many community members are already associated with the church, connecting it to the website could raise the community's level of trust in the website. The intersections and differences in interests between the two organizations and their methods of addressing those interests demonstrate how collaborations can result in creative ideas that increase the overall quality of the project. The decisions that came from the conversations between WHM and the Albanian Committee were essential in order for all stakeholders to understand and consider the various viewpoints being brought into the project.

3. How different views on the goal of the project resulted in differing strategies for collection

During our meetings, the groups also had different opinions on the possible types of submissions that should be accepted on the website. The museum staff were interested in whether the primary purpose of the submissions was for long-term preservation or more immediate exhibit creation. Since WHM is a historical museum, they specialize in collecting and storing artifacts to be a part of the historical record. Originally, the museum staff viewed this project from a historical preservation perspective and were therefore concerned about the quality of the photos that were being included in the submissions. They first suggested that only scanned images should be allowed to be submitted in order to prevent the need to rescan blurry images.. Additionally, since the museum has few staff members, the task of rescanning all the submissions would be an extremely hard and time-consuming undertaking. The Albanian Committee introduced some nuance to this approach by acknowledging the value of submissions of varying degrees of quality. They aim to collect large volumes of artifacts and stories that could be sorted later once an exhibit is being created. One of the Albanian Committee's main goals for this project is to get the community involved. By welcoming all submissions to the website, they can make sure that no one feels excluded and unable to contribute.

The discussions surrounding the types of photos that could be used relate back to the question of the overall goal of the project. Both groups viewed the website as a way to increase community involvement in the preservation of Worcester's Albanian history, but each brought unique ideas about the range of submissions that would most benefit the project. These differences in perspectives between the two co-creating parties sparked fruitful discussions that enhanced each party's understanding of the partnership. This demonstrates that museums can benefit greatly from collaborative efforts towards exhibit design and collection building.

4. Improving website design and identifying future recommendations through the analysis of user feedback.

The goal of the website was three-fold: to support artifact preservation; categorize and organize submissions; and present a trustworthy, easy-to-use frontend that promotes the larger WHM-Albanian Committee collaboration. Discussions with the museum staff and Albanian Committee members provided a strong starting point, and user testing identified future areas of improvement.

Each contributor is a unique individual with an equally unique story to share. To this point, WHM staff shared their experiences working with other Worcester communities during which they sometimes received items that the contributor wished to remain unopened or to require permission before being used in an exhibit. The museum expressed the necessity to provide a variety of permissions options upon submission of an item through the website.

The WHM staff gave us four options for permissions, which we incorporated in a clickable "Terms of Use" link at the bottom of the page. Providing the user with these options demonstrates that their submission will be handled with care and professionalism even if they do not place any restrictions on the use of their item. This increases the trustworthiness of the website and the project as a whole.

Once we made the initial submission page, input from members of the Albanian Committee provided the very first user-perspective feedback. They appreciated the minimalist approach to the page, which was free of clutter and straight to the point. This observation aligns with research that recommends against over-cluttering web pages to improve their usability (Bergstrom et al., 2013). Committee members also shared input on the "flow" of the page, suggesting some modifications to provide a smoother user experience. For example, our original implementation of the permissions options associated a number with each level of permission and presented a drop down menu of the numbers on the submission form (Fig 12a). The full permissions were found in a "Terms and Conditions" link at the bottom of the form. However, because the field to input a permissions preference was far above the link to the permissions information, the two were disconnected and difficult to navigate. Additionally, the "Terms and Conditions" link redirects the user to a new tab, which greatly disrupts the submission experience. To avoid this confusion and streamline the submission process, we found that listing the description with the numbers in the question itself provided a more straightforward user experience in our testing (Fig 12b).

User testing was conducted with one individual from the Worcester Albanian community and two non-Albanian participants. These tests were conducted over Zoom using a Think Aloud testing strategy in which the participants shared their screen and described their thought process as they progressed through the steps of submitting their item. Observing and noting the participants' thought processes revealed information in two notable areas; namely, how the language of the fields affects user experience and the quality of submission, as well as the base level of technical knowledge required to contribute an item.

A critical component of making a webform accessible is the language used to describe each field. As discussed on page 12, many museum contribution pages alter the language of the metadata fields to be more understandable and welcoming to the contributors. The delicacy of the balance between exact metadata fields and the descriptions presented to users was evidenced in the Think Aloud sessions. When submitting a photograph, all participants filled out the fields for "Date of Photo (if known)" and "Photographer (if known)" with ease and understood their intended purpose. However, two out of the three users had difficulty understanding the intended information for the

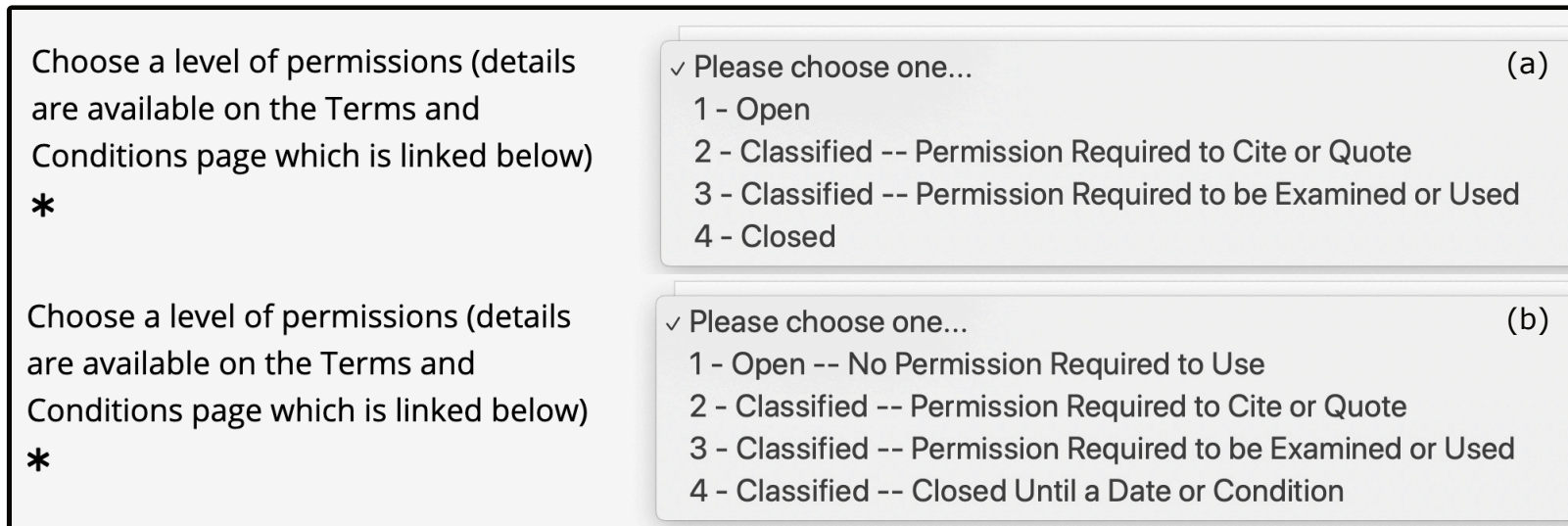


Figure 12: (a) Original permissions options on the submission form. (b) Updated permissions on the submission form to be understandable at a glance.

field described by "Person(s) in the photograph (if any)." They explained their confusion as being caused by a lack of specificity on how much detail they should provide. For example, one participant who was submitting a photo of a family was unsure whether to specify the relationship of each person, and if they should be identified by position in the picture. The hesitancy exhibited by users when filling out this field demonstrates a feeling of intimidation caused by the form and could result in them being unmotivated to share further items.

Features on the website such as an uncluttered layout, large text, and visually centered information were guided by UI design research focused on reducing confusion for older users (Bergstrom et al., 2013; Min, 2010). While our implementations of these features were successful based on the ease of navigation and comprehension observed in the Think Aloud sessions, a separate technological sticking point was brought to light. In order to upload an item to the website, users must locate the file on their device. In two of the three tests, participants spent the greatest amount of time on this step as they searched for the item they intended to upload amongst their other files and folders. One participant even chose to submit a different image from the one originally intended because of how long it was taking to locate their first choice. This was perfectly acceptable for a test run but would be disastrous in a real submission. As it is impossible to provide individualized direction on the submission page for how to locate the intended contribution on the user's device, this is a significant sticking point. However, there are some possible techniques to reduce the occurrence of this issue. For example, providing a "best practices" section that

suggests preparing a submission by identifying the item's location prior to filling out the forms, and having a more technologically comfortable individual complete the submission process alongside the contributor to aid in any unforeseen difficulties could reduce this issue. The former of these we implemented into our website. The substantial improvements that resulted from short discussions with users of the website illustrate the effectiveness of the iterative design process and suggest incorporating a space for user feedback into the final website design.

Conclusion and Recommendations

During the past seven weeks, we have learned about the process of co-creation, the methods employed to collect digital artifacts, and website design and maintenance. Through our discussions with key members of the project at WHM and on the Albanian Committee and through user testing of the website we created, we have compiled a list of recommendations regarding the next steps necessary to improve the website and the best ways to mobilize and encourage the Albanian community to share their stories. These recommendations are intended to help the project to flourish and achieve the goals of both the museum and the committee.

1. Outreach and Collaboration

WHM and the Albanian Committee have shown great commitment to this project through their planning, compromises, and collaboration. The project partners are planning in-person collection days in the style of those previously done by WHM once the COVID-19 pandemic subsides. We believe these events can be leveraged to both digitize artifacts and collect physical items. Digitized documents can be uploaded to the website during an in-person collection day by providing a station with a physical scanner and a staff member accustomed to using the website. Additionally, a photo booth can be set up where contributors can work with a staff member to take a high quality photo of their item and upload it to the website. These methods will ensure that the submitted image is high quality and that all the associated metadata and

permissions are accurate. Outside of those collection days, we recommend that smartphone images should also be accepted. Our best practices page will provide guidance to people to submit clearer photos, and contributors can be contacted before the item is put in an exhibit if a higher quality image is desired.

2. Website Design

While the website we have created is fully functional, improvements could be made to the user interface design. During the course of our project, we created a video to introduce the website and the project prominently on the front page. By necessity, this version of the video features us describing the project and how to use the website. However, we suggest that this video be redone with members of the community in order to connect the website more closely to the long-term project. Similarly, we also recommend changing the text on the "About" page to more accurately reflect what both groups would like to say about the project. The current text was written by us as a placeholder until an official version could be drafted. As the project progresses, we believe it is important to update the "Featured Submissions" page with newer submissions at regular intervals, for which we are providing well formatted code and instructions. This would keep the website fresh and up to date, demonstrating dedication to the project. Additionally, a new official project logo should replace the current WHM logo in the top left corner of the website.

Due to limited user testing, we were unable to collect testimonials from Worcester Albanian community members to feature on the website. We believe that, as this project grows and more people become involved, adding featured testimonials to the website in the form of short comments from contributors describing why they contributed to the project and their experience using the website would improve the website's trustworthiness and appearance. These testimonials can be gathered either as an added feature on the website or via direct communication between project partners and contributors.

There are a few technical elements that can be addressed moving forward. Specifically, the code for the "Featured Submissions" page can be modified to dynamically resize to maintain proper formatting on smartphones and smaller sized windows. Lastly, modifying the php code to automatically send a confirmation email for every submission is encouraged. Because most of these more sophisticated improvements involve a working knowledge of coding techniques, we believe that a dedicated individual experienced in IT and computer science should be appointed to the upkeep, improvement, and maintenance of the website.

Digital co-creation between communities and museums is still a relatively new exhibition creation method that has become more necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even through this adversity, the Albanian Committee and Worcester Historical Museum have persevered and continued to work together to complete their goals. By continuing to develop the website as well as beginning to have in-person collection days, the committee and museum can open the door for every member of the community to share their story.

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