From Spreadhseets to DSpace: Building a Collection Management System in a Small Archive

Overview of the Archives

The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health established its archives in 2012. Substantial progress began in 2014 with the creation of several spreadsheets used to index material and group files into fonds structures. The inaugural Archivist and Records Manager was hired in 2015, and the archives has now evolved into an essential part of the Foundation's activities

Transition to an Archives Database

As the archives grew, there became an apparent need to transition to a web-based collection management system. Questions guiding this transition included:

Q: What open-source software was available for collection management in a web environment?

Q: Could the selected database be built with non-technical expertise?

Methods

The transition was broken into four phases. Phase II, Archival Database Testing and Evaluation, studied ArchivesSpace, DSpace, Collective Access, and Access to Memory along three indicators:

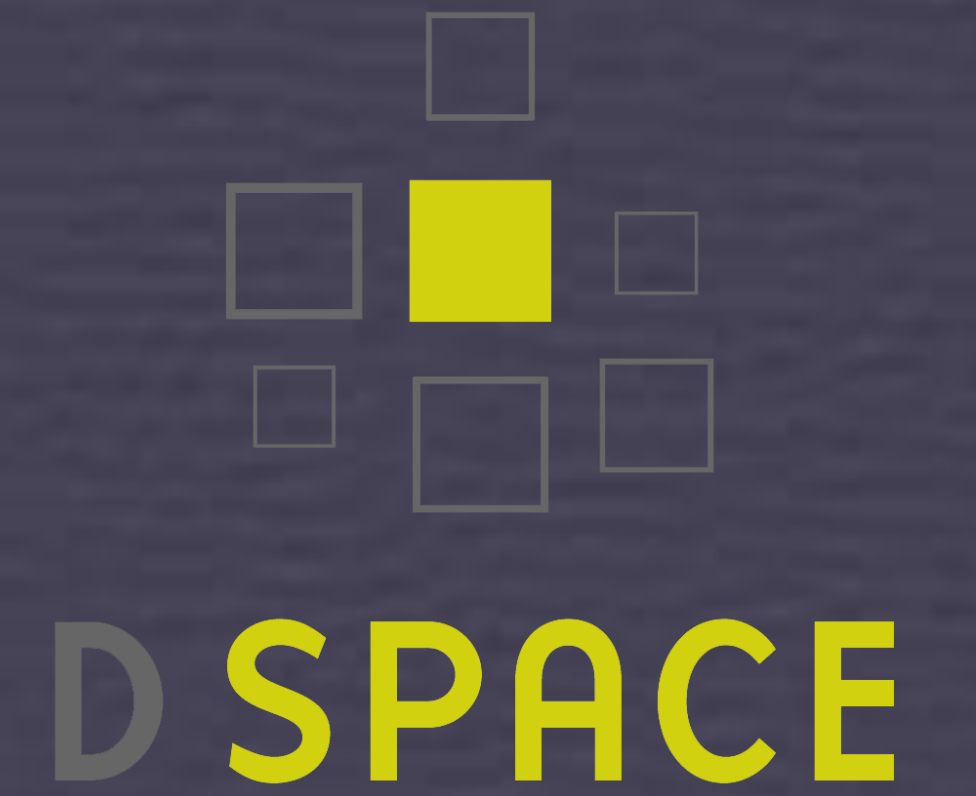| Ease of Use	Ease of Customization	User Community and Support
1. Ease of installation and setup 2. Frequency of updates 3. User experience and system interface	1. Ease of data importing 2. Ease of custom metadata schemas 3. Ability to apply Hogg Foundation branding	1. Availability of free tutorials 2. Institutional use cases 3. Activity of listserv and forums

Phase I – Preliminary Research

Phase II – Archival Database Testing and Evaluation

Phase III – DSpace Prototyping and Project Planning

Phase IV – Final Implementation

Results: Implementation of DSpace

The results of the evaluation demonstrated that DSpace best fit the Hogg Foundation's needs. It is a stable platform that allows for deep customization, and is supported by a strong user community.

D SPACE

Documentation Produced

Documentation is essential in transitioning to a new system. Over the course of the Hogg Foundation's transition, the following documents were produced:

❑ Archives CMS research report
❑ Archival database evaluation matrix
❑ Metadata decision-making reports
❑ Custom metadata mapping templates
❑ DSpace metadata guidelines
❑ DSpace polices
❑ DSpace workflows and procedures
❑ User experience reports

Future Goals

In the coming months, the archives hopes to do the following:

I. Lead DSpace training sessions for staff
II. Optimize DSpace UX according to feedback
III. Import digital photographs and other objects
IV. Integrate DSpace workflows with Fluxx grants management

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