



## Project Explanation and Purpose

### Documenting Ferguson Statement of Purpose

Documenting Ferguson is a project of Washington University Libraries which seeks collaborative partnerships with local universities, cultural heritage institutions, and community organizations to preserve both local and national history surrounding the police killing of Ferguson, Missouri teenager Michael Brown on August 9, 2014. As an institution with a strong regional presence, the Libraries feel an obligation to the people of the St. Louis, Missouri region and to future research and scholarship of cultural events in our area. The project will document and create a permanent record of experiences related to this tragic event, including citizen protests and rallies; community reactions, meetings, and memorials; and capturing cultural events via social media.

As we solicit content from the community, we are committed to building better relationships with our partners and with surrounding communities. As entrusted stewards of the shared content, our goal is to ensure that the community's voices and perspectives are accessible and not forgotten. Through this partnered effort to create a community sourced repository of primary documents, we strive to facilitate dialog and encourage educational outreach and community reconciliation within greater St. Louis.

### Specific Components of Documenting Ferguson Project

#### Technical Development

##### Collecting Digital Content

**Omeka** - The Documenting Ferguson collection is currently delivered via Omeka digital exhibition software. Omeka provides basic functionality for creating items with basic Dublin Core metadata and associated media files. Items can then be organized in a thematic collection or a curated exhibit. Omeka also provides many plug-ins to expand on its fundamental functionality. Using Omeka's Contribution plug-in, we have provided a form for contributors to fill out, which allows them to select an item type for contribution, including story, image, video, audio and upload their media. Users fill out very basic metadata (title, creator, data, description, and geographic location) and provide their name and email address. Contributors must agree to the Terms & Conditions of the collection, written by Micah Zeller, Copyright Librarian and approved by WUSTL's Office of General Counsel. The Terms & Conditions ensure that contributions do not violate any person's copyright and gives WUSTL the right to archive, preserve, and use the material for this collection and for other purposes, barring profitable use.

Should a contributor wish to share a large number of media files, they may send files to Digital Library Services via dropbox (<http://www.dropbox.com>) with a corresponding file containing metadata for each item. Thus far, contributors have expressed satisfaction with the process, and when suggestions arise, modifications have been

made. For example, one of the first contributors shared over forty images and found completing a form for each item to be tedious. Responding to this concern, we put the dropbox work around in place. We will continue to respond to feedback from contributors to make this process as welcoming as possible.

As the site continues to reach more users and more content is contributed, using a standard such as Dublin Core and having minimal metadata facilitates interoperability and sustainability.

**Archive-It** - Archive-It is a service, built by the Internet Archive, that allows users to capture and archive born-digital content that is hosted on the web. All captured content is served through the Archive-It webpage under the capturing organization. You can see the Washington University page at <https://archive-it.org/organizations/786>. The service crawls websites and digs into the site to capture content that is linked from the main webpage. This method provides an archived website that is as true to the original in feel and functionality as is currently available.

The DFP is utilizing the Archive-It service in two specific ways. The Washington University Archives is capturing websites that are directly related to the campus and Wash U community. We are recording those sites and they are publicly available on the Washington University in St. Louis Archive-It webpage. In addition to this internal capture, DFP has coordinated with Archive-It to help supplement and strengthen their collection of web content. Archive-It developed a Google form that allows the public to submit websites that relate to the events that occurred and continue to occur in Ferguson, MO surrounding the August 9th, 2014 shooting of Michael Brown. The DFP webpage includes the link to the Archive-It form, encouraging continuing submissions to their collection of web content. WUA has also been collaborating with Archive-It, by submitting links directly. Both of these methods have helped to provide a significant amount of material to assist Archive-It in documenting the Ferguson events.

### **Approving Content**

Once items are contributed, media files are stored on WUSTL hosted Omeka servers and an item is created in the Omeka system with metadata entered by the contributor. An email is automatically generated and sent to [digital@wumail.wustl.edu](mailto:digital@wumail.wustl.edu) so that an administrator in Digital Library Services (currently Shannon Davis) may review the contributed item. Items are by default put into the Documenting Ferguson Omeka collection, but are only viewable to those logged in to Omeka. After reviewing the contributed item file and metadata, the administrator makes the item public, so that anyone may view it. The project team has created a list of approval criteria for contributed items, which are as follows:

1. Content is related to the events surrounding the fatal shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO on August 9, 2014
2. File size of contributed content does not exceed 30 MB
3. Metadata submitted is deemed to be accurate by the administrator
4. Users have the right to submit content and submission does not infringe any existing copyright
5. Content does not provide personal information of the contributor or any other individual, including addresses, phone numbers, etc.
6. Content does not endorse any commercial product
7. Content does not pose a risk of damage to the network, computers, or servers of Washington University

### **Preserving Content**

To ensure long term sustainability of content in Documenting Ferguson, contributed items will be ingested in WUSTL's Fedora Repository for preservation. An administrator will copy files from the Omeka server to Digital Library Services servers and rename them with the contributor's last name, first initial, and descriptive information (for example, regesterm-manincrown-ggchurch.jpg). The metadata for the contributed item will be exported from Omeka using dcmes-xml (Dublin Core) output format and the new filename will be entered in the item's exported metadata. Ingesting items in Fedora also facilitates eventually moving the Documenting Ferguson collection from Omeka to Hydra.

## Content Development

The promise of the Documenting Ferguson project is in successfully securing a diverse collection of content for the project. The initial stages of content development will focus on obtaining and selecting content. As the repository grows and our partnerships develop, we plan to implement content programming focused on user education and community engagement.

### Obtaining Content

Our suggested plan for securing content is a two-prong approach using a marketing strategy and collaborative partnerships. The marketing strategy will build awareness about the project through promotional literature and advertising. Building an awareness of DFP will spark interests and encourage participation through contributing content. Efforts to obtain content will require the DFP to create presence at local community events. This will also require assistance from our collaborative partners that might be sponsoring.

#### Targeted Opportunities to Obtain Content:

- Promotional literature
- Advertising in local media
- Recruit Wash U employees that are Ferguson residents to share promo materials
- Attend local events
- Contact with people directly involved in events (this may need to wait until we have more partnerships and trust established)
- Collaborate with Divided Cities outreach
- Create opportunities for current contributors to talk about their work to create awareness
- Create a component/infrastructure of DFP which will acquire physical content of the Ferguson Movement

### Selecting Content

All content will adhere to guidelines set out in the Terms and Approval section. The review process for selecting i.e. accepting submitted materials will be an open policy. Our aim is not to limit perspectives on the aftermath of Ferguson. Some materials might seem tangentially related but because of the lens with which contributors view the issues they might see their content as wholly relevant.

## User Education and Community Engagement with Content

To ensure that the content of DFP is easily accessible to the community, we will create educational resources and programs that will allow for various forms and levels of engagement. Listed are ideas to engage in teaching and outreach:

- Research guide and workshops on Information, Media, and Visual Literacies.
- Start to develop a library research collection dealing with policing, activism, and other themes related to Ferguson unrest.
- Traveling book/reading list poster
- Recommended reading section on the issues

## Partnership Development

We have started a list of individuals and organizations that we think will be valuable to reach out to regarding this project. Please see the separate list. This area will take more time to flesh out, but we are continuing to work on this.

**WUSTL Community**

**Ferguson Community**

**Greater St. Louis Area**

## Long-term Outcomes

### End product

Because we are in the early stages of this project some of these ideas may change, but the DFP team envision these results related to sustainability of the project, user education, and community engagement:

- Funding in support of community engagement events in the form of talks, symposia, screenings, and research
- Creating a collection to support advanced research of policing and community protest
- Training of librarians and the community on capturing oral histories
- A celebration and recognition of the contributors
- Student prizes/awards for use of DFP
- Equip a library team to be ready to mobilize when historic events happen within the community to document and preserve information

## Assesment

### Website and Omeka collection usage

To assess usage of the DFP website, Shannon Davis has set up Google Analytics for both the project website and the Omeka collection. Reviewing Analytics data will demonstrate increases in usage for the sites, particularly in regards to when press releases were published and more attention was brought to the project. Already within the past month, pages within the Ferguson collection in Omeka are displaying as the top four page hits within

Google Analytics. The Ferguson project at [digital.wustl.edu/ferguson](http://digital.wustl.edu/ferguson) has also received the highest page hits of all collections on the digital web server within the past month. Additionally, more qualitatively, it is evident that the project is getting wide exposure, with contributed content increasing steadily.

### **Process/user contribution**

Initial contributors were asked their opinions on the process of submitting content. Their suggestions were implemented, with DLS accepting large quantities of contributed content via dropbox.com. While no further feedback on the contribution process has been received, the project team can survey random contributors to review their experience contributing to the project and how the process could be improved. While we hope that contributions to this collection will be ongoing for some time, the project team can perform periodic assessment of the success of work as a group on a shared project and how to improve such group work in the future. It is also expected that this collection will serve as a model for other community generated collections, so the workflow of receiving contributed content, making it available, and archiving digital content will be assessed (by Digital Library Services) for its efficiency and possible need for improvement. Similarly, the methods used to publicize this collection can be used as a model for projects in the future. A field has been added to the contribution form to capture data on how contributors heard about the project to determine the most successful PR methods. Once the content starts to grow we will revisit the open contribution policy to assess feasibility and relevance.

*Drafted by Documenting Ferguson Committee September 2014: LaTanya Buck (consultant), Rudolph Clay, Shannon Davis, Makiba J. Foster, Chris Freeland, Nadia Ghasedi, Jennifer Kirmer, Sonya Rooney, Andrew Rouner, Rebecca Wanzo (faculty advisor), and Micah Zeller*