



project update

May 2006

Highlights: New partnerships link Pachyderm with external content management systems; the Pachyderm community continues to grow; updates to the code to be deployed; new templates in the works; Pachyderm moves into open-source; documentation, additional templates, and more examples of Pachyderm presentations are on the way.

Background

The *Pachyderm 2.0 Project* is a partnership led by NMC: The New Media Consortium and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), and funded by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The project brings software development teams and digital library experts from seven NMC universities together with counterparts from six major museums to create a new, open source authoring environment for creators of web-based and multimedia learning experiences. The new tool is based on Pachyderm, the authoring and publishing tool developed by SFMOMA to author its successful series, *Making Sense of Modern Art*.

Central to the Pachyderm 2.0 Project is the development of an interoperable, robust, easily distributable version of Pachyderm that is open-source and includes a wide range of pedagogical templates. The learning materials created with Pachyderm 2.0 are optimized for Internet delivery, easily reusable, and conformant with key search, archival, and cataloging standards. The final product will be made available to the field at no charge as an explicit goal of the project.

Current Status

Crosswalks to other systems. Pachyderm has been approached by several vendors and developers, including Gallery Systems, the Open Knowledge Initiative, Almagest, and university-based developers working with WebCT, among others. Gallery Systems, makers of The Museum System (TMS) and EmbARK, works closely with museums, and crosswalks developed for these two digital asset management solutions could be used by many Pachyderm users. The Open Knowledge Initiative designed and published the Repository Open Service Interface Definition, a specification which defines how digital content is stored and retrieved; a plug-in which will allow Pachyderm to integrate with systems using this definitions is nearly finished. Other proofs-of-concept are underway as well.

Community development and training. The second phase of the Edward and Betty Marcus Foundation Digital Education Project for Texas Museums has begun: the first of six three-day intensive training seminars took place in May in Austin, Texas. Nine Texas museums were represented, and each group left with a partially-completed Pachyderm project that told the story of some aspect of their own collections, history, or exhibitions. Additional trainings will follow roughly every six weeks. This project, funded by the Edward and Betty Marcus Foundation, aims to facilitate the use of new digital tools in Texas art museums to help tell media-rich stories about the museums' collections and exhibitions. Museum participants in the project receive training in digitizing media, digital storytelling, and Pachyderm, helping them to create detailed stories about their holdings and shows.

Development. Improvements to the code have been implemented and tested, and will be deployed on the public server in a few days. These changes make the authoring tool more intuitive, improve the display of some templates, streamline the publishing process, and introduce a few cosmetic changes to the authoring system. The Windows installation package is undergoing final polishing and will be distributed to a select group of testers at the end of May. The beta Frame Editor is undergoing a

The Pachyderm project is supported by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)





project update

usability and design review prior to full release; it is now available for use in beta form. The first draft of the technical documentation is complete. Three new templates (timeline, dual comparison, and multi-comparison) are in final testing and expected to be released soon.

Open-source community. A shared wiki has been established for members of the Pachyderm community to share expertise and information. The wiki will include documentation and tips for using Pachyderm. The Pachyderm development email list is now open to all interested parties, and a special list has been established for news and announcements. The Pachyderm code is available on SourceForge for open-source developers. In addition to the seven current Pachyderm installations, four more are being installed and will be up and running soon. Pachyderm runs successfully on Windows, Macintosh, and Linux.

Authoring and content. More than 150 accounts have been added in the last eight weeks. The Pachyderm Showcase has been released (www.pachyderm.org/showcase), featuring more than a dozen presentations ranging from student work to interactive case studies. The museums that participated in the first Marcus Digital Education Project training continue to work on their pieces, as do the recipients of Pachyderm content development grants.

Conferences and workshops. Pachyderm has recently been presented at museum and technology conferences across the country, including Museums and the Web (Albuquerque), the American Association of Museums (Boston), the California State University Conference for Academic Technology Staff (Monterey, California), and the University of Mary Washington Faculty Academy (Fredericksburg, Virginia). Presentations are planned for the NMC Summer Conference, MERLOT, and other upcoming events this summer.

Next Steps

Three more templates are in early planning stages, and the tombstone creation and display is undergoing a significant upgrade to allow for more customization of tombstone information. As the finishing touches are added to the Pachyderm project on SourceForge, the project is ready for open-source developers.

Project Leads

NMC: The New Media Consortium
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

University Partners

California State University (and CDL)
Case Western Reserve University
Northwestern University
University of Arizona
University of British Columbia
University of Calgary
University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Museum Partners

Berkeley Art Museum
Cleveland Museum of Art
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco
Metropolitan Museum of Art
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
The Tang Museum at Skidmore College

Additional Partners

Design Worlds for Learning

The Pachyderm project is supported by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

