

Western Digital Assets: Islandora Governance

MULTIMEDIA ARCHIVES BASED ELECTRONIC LIBRARY (MABEL)

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Introduction

The implementation of the Multimedia Asset Based Electronic Library (MABEL) Digital Asset Management (DAM) system is a university-wide partnership supporting the sustainable management of Western’s digital assets. The system is a central repository for digital photographic, audiovisual and other documents, making it easy to organize, share, moderate and preserve digital assets. As a result, MABEL facilitates creativity, outreach, research, teaching and learning at Western Washington University.

Goals of this document

The primary goal of this governance document is to provide a framework for ongoing management of MABEL, specifically:

1. Provide context and rationale for system governance
2. Establish an administrative infrastructure with defined roles and responsibilities for governance and support the MABEL over time
3. Document the governing policies and procedures of the system
4. Identify system deliverables

Audience

The intended audience for this document is three-fold:

- Governance participants (including system sponsors)
- System users
- Potential users

Context and Summary

Rationale & Objectives

The partnership that supports this system convened in 2015-2016 as a collaboration among marketing, graphic design, and digital asset professionals from the Office of Admissions, Woodring College, Video Services, the College of Fine and Performing Arts, Web Communication Technologies (WebTech), University Communications and Marketing, and Western Libraries. The group came together with a common goal of establishing a central repository for digital assets at Western.

After extensive review of multiple DAMS, the group recommended the open-source Islandora platform as the system best suited to centrally manage Western’s digital assets. Islandora provides robust tools to

ensure long-term management of digital assets with enduring value. As a central platform, Islandora enables the consolidation of formerly disparate, redundant, and inefficient practices relating to the creation, management, access, and use of digital assets at Western. In particular, the group selected Islandora for the following reasons:

- **Open source.** All of the technologies leveraged by the Islandora project are open source allowing for Western to innovate as needed rather than wait for a vendor to implement a solution. Improvements to MABEL have included a batch upload tool, fixing bugs we have found, and the ability to contribute back to the community and tailoring to our institution's requirements.
- **Robust back end.** Islandora's integration of [Fedora](#) provides state-of-the-art preservation support. Other systems evaluated did not support the same kind of long-term sustainability of assets.
- **Powerful search capacity.** [Solr](#) search platform provides incredible power and fast indexing. Islandora is built to facilitate metadata standards that will greatly enhance accessibility of content, particularly when content scales to large numbers.
- **Drupal integration.** Because Islandora has a Drupal front-end, Western can leverage existing Drupal expertise and development standards. This feature will allow for more creative and facile development of user interfaces and content access portals.

Scope & Intended Outcomes

MABEL is a sustainable central repository for managing digital assets in support of marketing and communications, outreach, research, teaching, and learning. The robust discovery platform enables the following practices:

- **Discovery:** Provides faster discovery and more user-friendly access to digital content.
- **Increased Efficiency:** Promotes more efficient use of institutional resources and in sharing content with internal and external constituencies.
- **Shared Expertise:** Enables collaboration and coordination across campus divisions in support of best practices and sharing of expertise.
- **Stewardship:** Provides a reliable, sustainable platform for long-term stewardship of digital assets and on-going support for content contributors throughout the University community.
- **Sustainability:** Ensures scalable online environments for storing, accessing, and managing assets.

In addition to the practices described above, MABEL aligns with the University's [strategic mission and goals](#). Specifically, MABEL contributes to the goals of engaging Western as Place (Goal 2) through the provision of an online environment that houses and preserves digital assets unique to the Western community. Furthermore, the innovative use of an open source platform for teaching, learning, and preservation purposes supports the spirit and desired outcomes of Goal 1.

Budget

In FY17, the University provided \$25,000 of recurring funding to support ongoing campus-wide digital assets storage needs. Western Libraries contributed additional start-up funding and contributing partners across all stakeholder groups are providing ongoing expertise for system implementation and development.

At the beginning of FY21 an MOU entered between University Relations and Marketing (URM), Western Libraries and Information Technology Services (ITS) transferred the recurring \$25,000 per year from URM to ITS. This recurring budget provides 100TB of storage for the project.

Western Libraries will allocate up to \$5,500 annually to fund software and consultation fees associated with MABEL.

The FAST index for the original fund is FBISLD and the director of Web Communication Technologies is the fund manager until the account reserves reach zero at which time the account will be dissolved.

Mission

Mission Statement

MABEL supports responsible stewardship of unique and valuable digital assets created or managed by Western Washington University. MABEL facilitates creativity, communications, research, teaching, and learning at Western through:

- Shared storage
- Common access points
- Powerful search and retrieval
- Robust metadata standards
- Enhanced efficiency and workflows
- Sustainable preservation model
- Sustainable open architecture
- Broad user community

Management Structure

Executive Committee

Purpose: Provide oversight relating to resource and funding needs; system promotion, adoption, and expansion; resolution of problems to assure cross-division support and sustainability; and receive and approve recommendations for appointments from the Management Group. The Executive Administrative Committee reports to the Provost and Vice President of University Relations and Community Development.

Membership:

- VP University Relations and Marketing/designee
- VP Enrollment and Student Services/designee
- VP University Advancement/designee
- VP Business and Finance/designee
- Dean of Libraries/designee
- CIO/designee

Management Group

Purpose: Provide a regular forum and structure for implementing the system, for managing system-wide concerns, and for developing or implementing system-wide policies and standards. Develop and report assessment data. Membership may be drawn from different divisions and departments, based on expertise.

Membership Functions:

- Management Group Chair*
 - Coordinate meetings as needed, provide updates, set agendas and keep minutes
 - Bridge communications with Executive Administrative Committee
 - Act as main point of contact for group members regarding emergent issues or needs
- Site administration*
 - Conduct site-level user administration
 - Advocate for and contribute to system development
 - Provide technical support for implementation
- Drupal administration* (WebTech designee)
 - Provide guidance and technical assistance on the Drupal implementation aspects of Islandora
 - Assist in building and maintaining the front-facing Islandora themes
- Infrastructure and Storage administration (Enterprise Infrastructure Services (EIS) designee)
 - Manage back-end changes, communicate technology shifts and new capacity. Work with front end system administrators to negotiate down times, upgrades, etc.
- Content Standards and Rights* (Communications and Western Libraries Heritage Resources designees)
 - Coordinate external user requests.
 - Articulate and advocate for baseline system-wide metadata and content model standards
- Consult on access and usability of system content
- Records Retention and Digital Preservation (University Archivist)

- Set criteria for global retention policies, preservation metadata and format best practices, and archival selection and preservation workflows.
- System development and sustainability (Western Libraries developer, WebTech, EIS)
 - Develop additional tools, features, and functionality as needed
 - Monitor and articulate resource needs to support optimal system functionality
- Brand and Marketing collateral management (University Communications Marketing and Media coordinator)
 - Management and curation of Western's digital brand assets
- Managing student content (AS Publicity Center Coordinator)
 - Responsible for ensuring voices of students using the system are represented and that Associated Students content conforms to system standards and policies.
- Ad hoc/standing subgroups as appointed by Management Group
 - Promotion of content in Teaching, Learning and Research (ATUS)
 - Training of new MABEL users*
- Others as determined by the Executive Administrative Committee

*Indicates roles that ideally are held by a University position focused on the cultivation of MABEL.

Content Policy and Best Practices

Purpose

Content policy and best practices identify basic criteria for content that will ensure it is appropriate, well-managed, consistently usable, and sustainable. The current focus for the system is to accommodate the following kinds of content: audiovisual resources, Libraries digital collections, and campus-wide digital assets relating to marketing/communications and graphic design. In the long run, however, the system may prove capable of taking on a more expansive role in digital asset management across the institution.

Content Policy

All content in the system must be:

- Compliant with Rights criteria established in the MABEL Rights Management policy (see "[Rights Management](#)" section);
- Shareable (internally and/or externally), with the extent of sharing to be determined by creating units;
- Managed, in that it conforms to metadata, retention, format and use best practices;
- University-owned or licensed through a written agreement and retained in support of the University's mission.
- Unique material that does not duplicate another resource in MABEL, i.e. no duplicate photographs or exact copies of video footage. This is to make the best use of space and increase ease of use for users.

Content Best Practices and Guidelines

The following best practices and guidelines, developed by the Management Group, identify baseline practices across all instances of MABEL.

- **Collection structure and management:** These are guidelines and best practices governing the basic organization of content into logical units and/or hierarchies within Islandora. The idea is that common practices will affect efficiency and sustainability.
- **Metadata:** Common, baseline metadata is crucial to management, discovery, and reuse of material—all of which are fundamental goals of this system. Metadata standards will not only ensure the richness of the digital assets, they will empower more dynamic use and reuse of assets, and even allow for more streamlined data entry or batch processes during content intake.
- **Formats:** Because one of our goals is sustainability, it is appropriate to establish some basic format best practices in order to ensure that the formats we put into the system are sustainable. Highly unique, proprietary, or even obsolete formats may not be appropriate for sustained access, management, reuse, or preservation.

Retention and Disposition Policy

While all of the content in the system possesses value, only a subset of the content will be retained permanently as an archival record in support of Western’s mission. Non-permanent/non-archival content will be systematically removed in order to ensure system efficiency.

All assets in the system that are not already in “archival” status will be assigned a default 3-year retention period. Items may be flagged as “archival” at any time (see factors below). Content that does not conform to system content policies can be processed through the disposition workflow sooner than the 3-year retention period.

At a time no sooner than the end of the three-year period assets will be either:

- Given an extended retention period by asset custodian(s) or the University Archivist, if needed to remain active;
- Flagged for archival storage if approved by the University Archivist (if not flagged already); or
- Processed through a disposition workflow for deletion or removal from the system if criteria 1 or 2 do not apply

Factors affecting the decision to retain assets permanently are varied and will include (but are not limited to):

- Input from content creators, who may identify high-valued or best-quality assets;
- Input from users, directly and/or via analytics, identifying assets of ongoing value to the University’s mission;
- Uniqueness and quality (e.g. using tools and inspection to select “best” images from among many redundant images);

- Relevance to the need for historical documentation; and
- Conformance with system content policies (non-conforming content will be processed through the disposition workflow, allowing for removal or deletion).

Rights Management

WWU must possess intellectual rights to content or provide access in accordance with Fair Use provisions of U.S. Copyright law.

- Metadata standards will include mandatory use of a standardized rights statement, present as a creativecommons.org or rightsstatement.org URI
- Additional rights-related documentation (such as signed releases) may be either referenced from or included in the asset collections they inform.

Change Management

System Expansion

The Management Group will review proposed expansions and provide recommendations to the Executive Committee based on the following criteria:

- Sustainability of new user group/site, including backup plan for content if group does not sustain its use of the new site
- Ability of new user group to provide appropriate representation (if necessary) within Management Group and Steering Committee
- Potential for proposed new content to conform to system Global content policy and standards

User Management

Effective user management is a critical component of system integrity and effectiveness over time. Basic user permissions and roles will be established by the Management Group.

User training

- All users must be trained to use the system in conformance with standards and policies outlined in this governance document, as well as any local, site-level policies and standards.
- The Management Group and/or partners/designees will identify user training needs and develop appropriate training options.

Assessment

The MABEL Management Group and/or designated partners will draw from, and report on, several data sources in order to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of MABEL on an annual (biannual?) basis. These data sources include but aren't limited to the following:

- **Analytics:** User traffic and system analytics associated with the discovery layer, Islandora Batch Uploader (IBU) application, and Islandora modules.
- **Community Participation:** Content contributor feedback about performance and requested features.
- **Content Presence and Usage:** Content inventories that describe quantity and ownership of collections.
- **Usability:** User experience studies (such as focus groups and site testing).

Any reports generated will be used to inform the future development and growth of MABEL, and will be shared with the MABEL Executive Committee.

Governance Review

Healthy governance depends upon regular review and revision.

- Revisions to the governance structure and provisions outlined in this document may be made at any time but are subject to the review of the Management Group and approval of the Executive Committee.
- At a minimum, the Executive Committee will direct an annual review of the governance structure and policies outlined in this document.