Coffee with the Commons

Art Information Commons Initiative Update

Project Team & Design for Context

September 26, 2019

Today's Discussion

11:00am-11:30am
Year 1 Overview

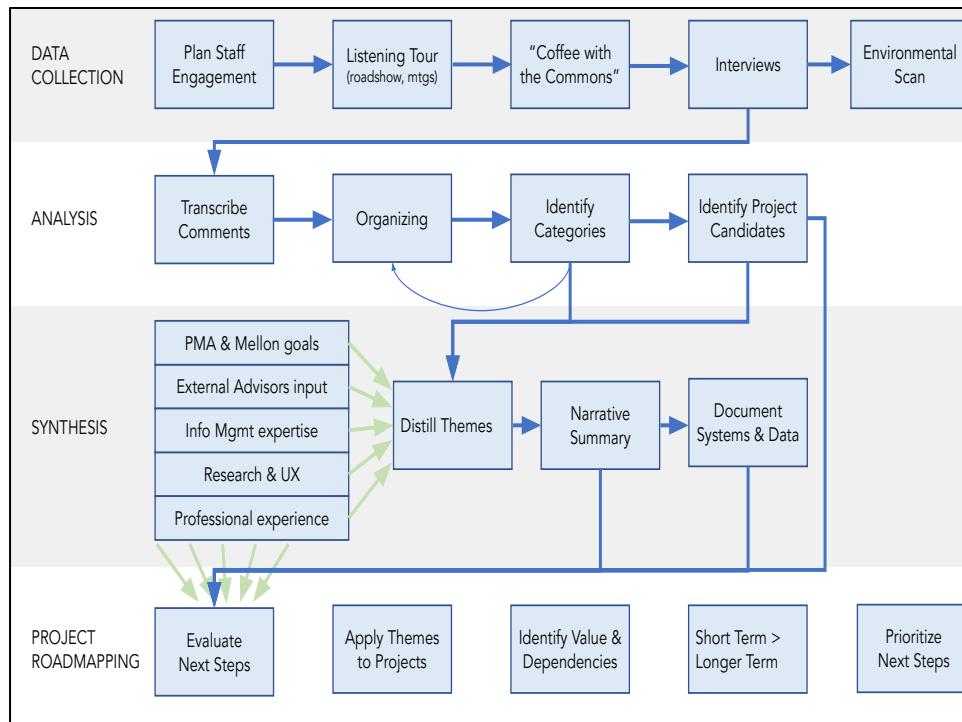11:30am-11:45am
Looking Forward: Year 2

11:45am-12:00pm
Questions & Discussion

Philadelphia
Museum of
Art

PIETRO BO

Cildo Meireles

Cildo Meireles, *Pietro Bo*, 2012, audio recording on LP, with case.
Track title: Lina, va fare un caffè (Lina, I'm Going to Make Coffee).

Welcome to our back-to-school Coffee with the Commons. We are excited to share what we have accomplished over the course of the first year of the Art Information Commons. The first half of the discussion will review our major activities and findings from Year 1. We will then look forward and discuss what plans we have underway for Year 2. There will, of course, be plenty of time for discussion during both sections.

And with that, I will turn it over to Duane Degler, Principal at Design for Context, who worked on creating AIC's first year report.

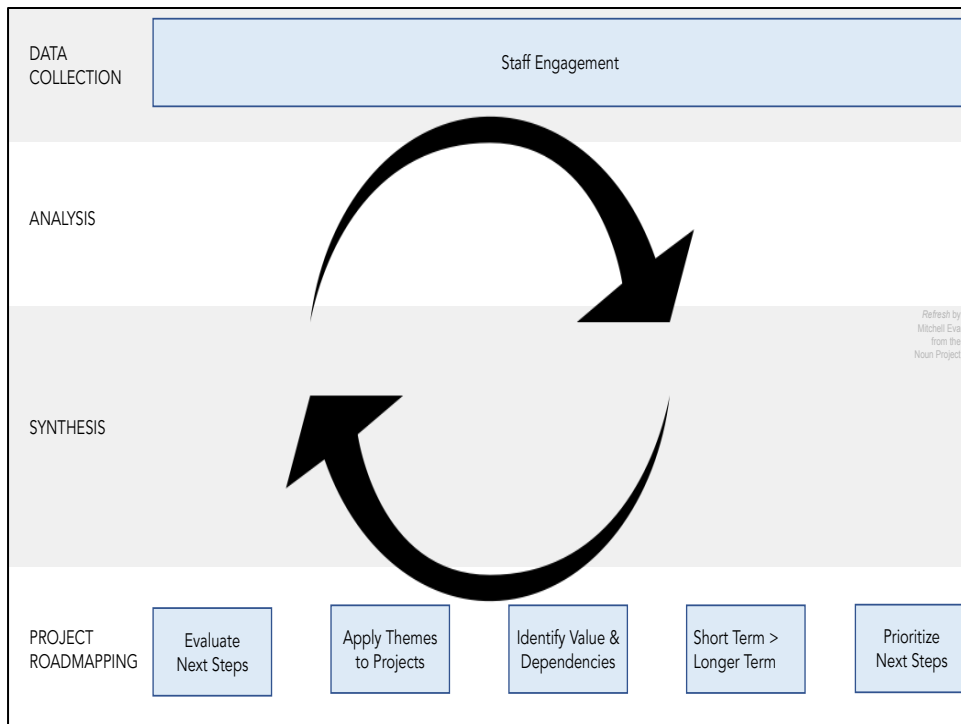| DATA COLLECTION | Plan Staff Engagement | → | Listening Tour (roadshow, mtgs) | → | "Coffee with the Commons" | → | Interviews | → | Environmental Scan |

Year 1 was very productive, because you all provided a lot of useful input. To summarize your involvement in data collection, after early planning sessions with the AIC team, we did what we've called a "listening tour" through the roadshow conversations, meeting with you individually and in groups, and the "Coffee with the Commons" working sessions in May and June. We also started gathering a collection of other projects that we know of - both in museums/cultural heritage, and in business and tech - to help inform the AIC initiative.

We transcribed and organized all our notes (particular thanks to Juliet, Bree, and Jade for their detailed efforts!), sorting and grouping them to identify categories of ideas and insights. As we did that, we also made notes of ideas and challenges you described that could be promising early-stage prototypes or analysis during our planning phase. The candidate projects aim to help us be more tangible and tactical by working with you, and getting feedback on how possible solutions could fit into your work in practice - not just theory.
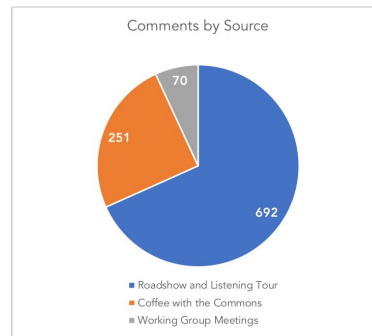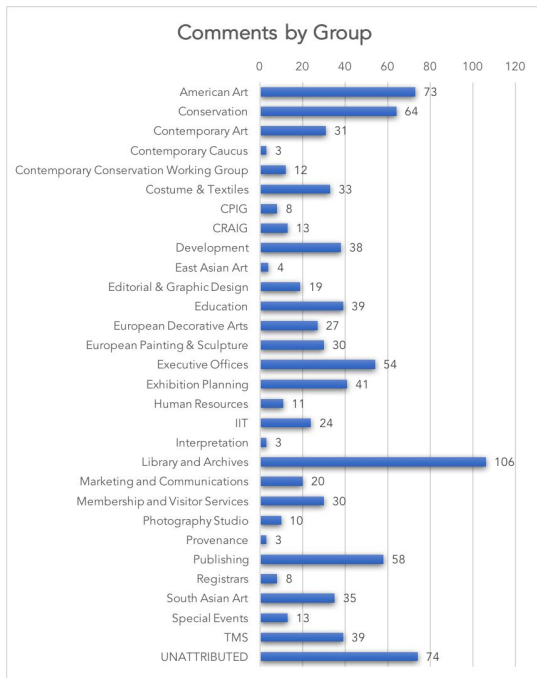
The categories and projects from analysis allow us to identify a set of themes that help us group and organize both challenges and opportunities. They will help us going forward in planning our work and our engagements with you all. Along with your input, we also synthesized input around the original AIC goals and Mellon expectations, the wealth of feedback we gained from our advisors who you met in July (at the afternoon panel or at David Newbury's talk - both recorded!), and the broad experience of the AIC team. As we synthesized, we described our thoughts and your issues into narrative summaries as well as capturing initial inventories of

data and systems for later refinement.

The aim of all this was learning, and also working on a project roadmap for the next two years… and beyond that. Roadmapping is in progress. We are looking at the project ideas, aligning them with various threads of the themes, identifying where some may need to come before others, and starting to prioritize. These ideas will be reviewed with internal staff and conversations with our External Advisors.

DATA COLLECTION	Staff Engagement				
ANALYSIS					
SYNTHESIS					
PROJECT ROADMAPPING	Evaluate Next Steps	Apply Themes to Projects	Identify Value & Dependencies	Short Term > Longer Term	Prioritize Next Steps

Refresh by Mitchell Eva from the Noun Project

While we're getting more tactical and talking about projects, we will continue engaging with you all - listening, involving you in activities, and providing learning opportunities. The cycles I just described are part of the way the AIC initiative moves forward - analyzing, synthesizing, learning, and sharing iteratively as we move forward. You will hear more about our next steps a little later in this session.

Comments by Group

Group	Count
American Art	73
Conservation	64
Contemporary Art	31
Contemporary Caucus	3
Contemporary Conservation Working Group	12
Costume & Textiles	33
CPIG	8
CRAIG	13
Development	38
East Asian Art	4
Editorial & Graphic Design	19
Education	39
European Decorative Arts	27
European Painting & Sculpture	30
Executive Offices	54
Exhibition Planning	41
Human Resources	11
IIT	24
Interpretation	3
Library and Archives	106
Marketing and Communications	20
Membership and Visitor Services	30
Photography Studio	10
Provenance	3
Publishing	58
Registrars	8
South Asian Art	35
Special Events	13
TMS	39
UNATTRIBUTED	74

Comments by Source

Source	Count
Roadshow and Listening Tour	692
Coffee with the Commons	251
Working Group Meetings	70

First, a glimpse at the wide range of groups we have met with. What I find gratifying is that there has been a lot of input across all the different groups. You all have shared a lot of ideas, concerns, questions - thank you.
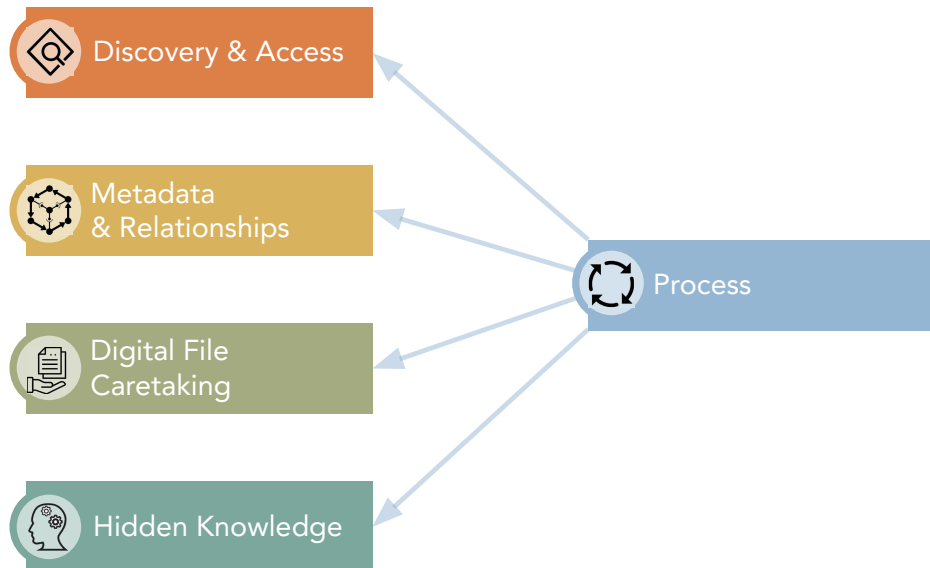
On to the themes. We have identified six broad themes that we believe help us organize our understanding of art information at PMA. The four on the left span the most talked-about theme of Discovery & Access, and the various levels of information that people create, manage, and seek out. And those four areas are incorporated into organizational processes and work practices that frame art information.

We're going to dive more deeply into the four on the left first. We also have a sixth theme that I will bring up at the end, as it centers on how we move forward past planning and into the future.

People need to find information

Discovery & Access
Enable finding art information when needed, following relationships, and trusting what you find.

Metadata & Relationships
Enable consistency, richness, and usefulness of cataloging. Create and manage relationships between data records in different systems and across other types of content.
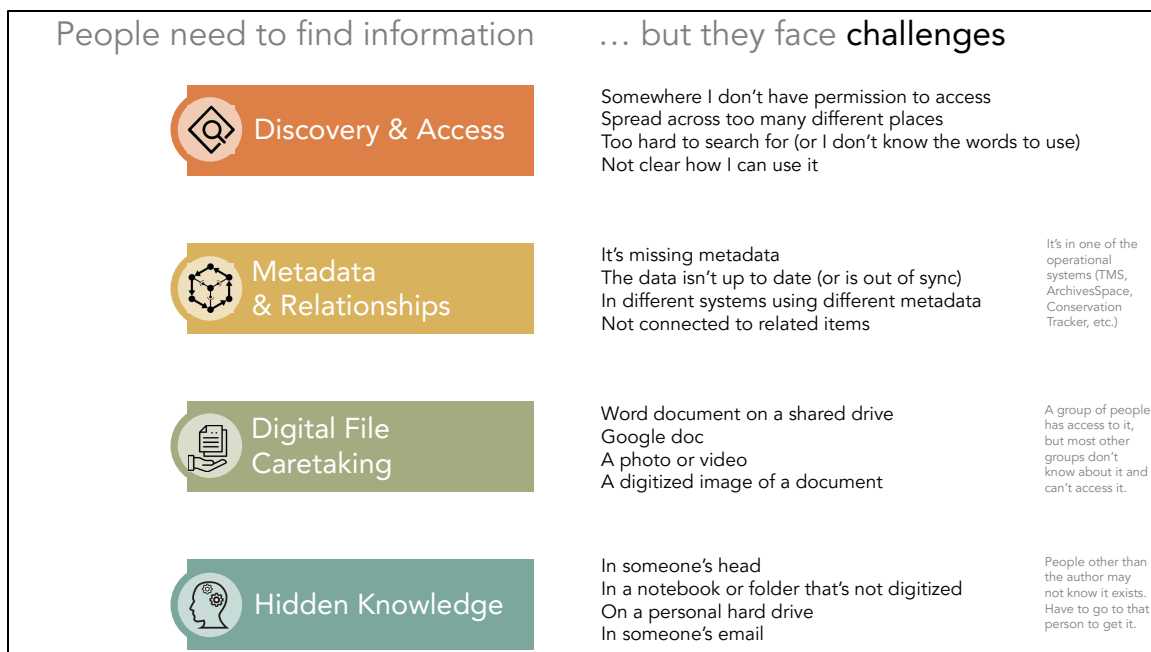
Digital File Caretaking
Enable caretaking of digital files such as educational materials, exhibition materials and background research, interpretive information, curatorial files, research, and project content. Extending access & preservation.

Hidden Knowledge
Identify information that is currently inaccessible to others, risks being lost, where people other than the author may not know it exists, or it is "head knowledge" — in order to make it more available.

Let's start with some simple definitions of what we mean by these four interrelated themes.

People need to find information ... but they face **challenges**

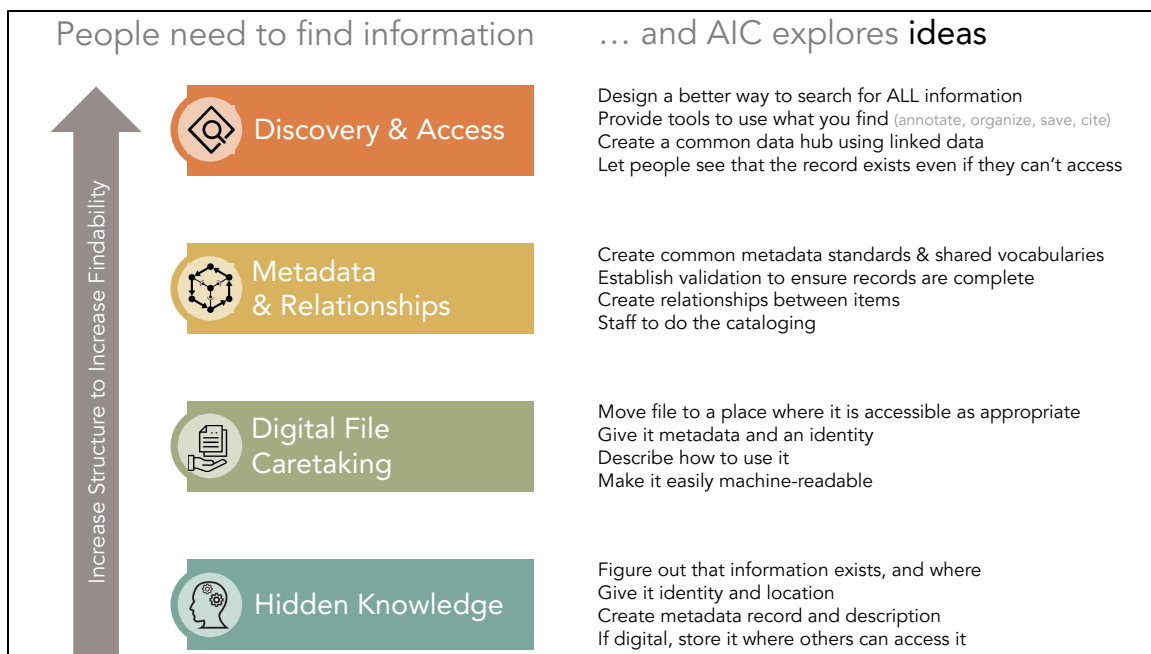|	
Discovery & Access	Somewhere I don't have permission to access Spread across too many different places Too hard to search for (or I don't know the words to use) Not clear how I can use it
Metadata & Relationships	It's missing metadata The data isn't up to date (or is out of sync) In different systems using different metadata Not connected to related items — *It's in one of the operational systems (TMS, ArchivesSpace, Conservation Tracker, etc.)*
Digital File Caretaking	Word document on a shared drive Google doc A photo or video A digitized image of a document — *A group of people has access to it, but most other groups don't know about it and can't access it.*
Hidden Knowledge	In someone's head In a notebook or folder that's not digitized On a personal hard drive In someone's email — *People other than the author may not know it exists. Have to go to that person to get it.*

I said earlier that you described a lot of challenges with your current experiences using or managing art information. The silos among information systems is a clear, known challenge that affects Discovery & Access. But there are other issues we heard around how you know the language that was used to describe something and how you find things except via multiple searches.

The language and silo challenges are also reflected in the Metadata & Relationships theme, where information may not be complete, and is often not well connected. Relationships - links between information objects - are limited.

The third theme is Digital File Caretaking. Many of you said "Where do I put something I have, that I expect is useful to others?" as well as expressing frustrations with a lot of manual work-arounds. Retyping, copying, and pasting from PDF to a useful format to reuse or extend some existing content, putting things you care for where others can get them on the intranet or the internet. The DAMS project will help with some of this, as will the website redesign work that is ongoing - but holistic art information needs more to become a "commons."

And then there is hidden knowledge. "Head knowledge" and information that's hard to access. Much of it may be personal and in-progress, but you all have also talked about many items of value that are not available to others, and the risk of losing

scholarship that you care for and feel is important. We need to note that it might seem hidden to some people, whether or not it is not digitized. Email is a big culprit for how it hides information that could have other uses!

People need to find information … and AIC explores **ideas**

Increase Structure to Increase Findability →

Discovery & Access
Design a better way to search for ALL information
Provide tools to use what you find (annotate, organize, save, cite)
Create a common data hub using linked data
Let people see that the record exists even if they can't access

Metadata & Relationships
Create common metadata standards & shared vocabularies
Establish validation to ensure records are complete
Create relationships between items
Staff to do the cataloging

Digital File Caretaking
Move file to a place where it is accessible as appropriate
Give it metadata and an identity
Describe how to use it
Make it easily machine-readable

Hidden Knowledge
Figure out that information exists, and where
Give it identity and location
Create metadata record and description
If digital, store it where others can access it

There is a relationship between these four themes. You might sum up the overarching aim of AIC as shown in the arrow on the left. What should we do to increase the findability (and long-term usefulness) of art information by thoughtfully (and incrementally) providing more structure. That structure might be metadata, or link relationships, or reusability of different types of content, or things we haven't really thought of yet.

As the AIC initiative explores ideas that can make things better, we aim to look closely at all the levels of art information - content, data, and use. The ideas on the right side of this page are just that - ideas that we are gathering, based on our conversations and research, to consider and possibly prototype. This way we can identify and understand what moves from planning to implementation.
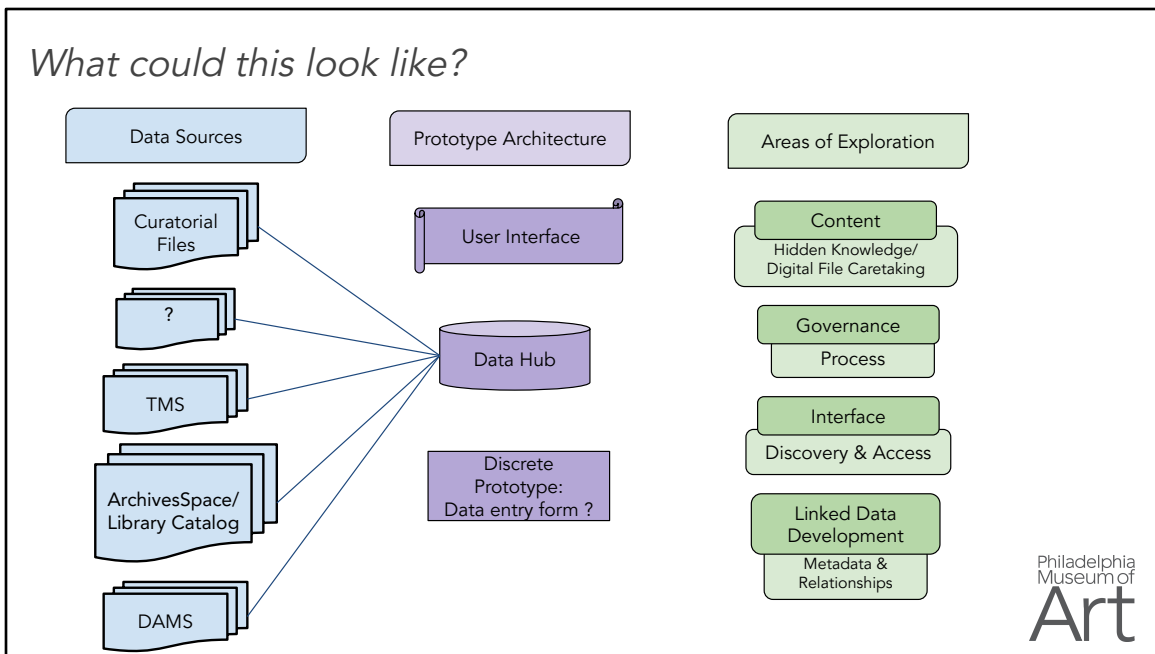
People need to find information   … and you help make it happen

Increase Structure to Increase Findability

Discovery & Access

Metadata & Relationships

Digital File Caretaking

Hidden Knowledge

Process

Staff Involvement & Skills

Enable collaborative tasks that involve creating, using, or managing art information. Increase the role of digital tools. Identify where governance is needed.

Ensure that PMA has the necessary staff resources and training. Raise awareness of digitally-enabled work practices to ensure long-term sustainability of managing art information.

I've said that there are six themes. At the beginning, we saw that processes touch all aspects of art information. Our focus on this area is to look at both individual and group processes, with a particular focus on collaborative tasks - where information "batons" pass from hand to hand in a clear way. It may be supported by technology, or it may just be understood by everyone for the roles that information plays.

The last of the six themes that came out of year 1 is that as we plan for the future, we need to look at skills, training, and staffing that supports your digitally-enabled work. The focus is on sustainability and long-term value.

Looking Forward: Year 2

What could this look like?

Data Sources

Prototype Architecture

Areas of Exploration

Curatorial Files

?

TMS

ArchivesSpace/ Library Catalog

DAMS

User Interface

Data Hub

Discrete Prototype: Data entry form ?

Content
Hidden Knowledge/ Digital File Caretaking

Governance
Process

Interface
Discovery & Access

Linked Data Development
Metadata & Relationships

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Thank you Duane and Jade for all of your work this past year in helping us get to this point.

So as you just heard--there is a lot of room for growth, experimentation, and testing--a lot of creative play--as we move into years 2 and 3 of our planning grant.

1. In order to incorporate all of your feedback, potential projects, and comments into actionable work, we distilled the categories even further as explained by Duane (Hidden Knowledge/Digital File Caretaking; Metadata & Relationships; Discovery & Access; and Process) into these four areas as areas of exploration: Content, Governance, Interface, and Linked Data Development (if you aren't familiar with linked data please see our Sharepoint or Github page with a link to David Newbury's lecture from July for a really good introduction to the topic).

2. In year one, we also learned about and started to document the various data sources we have around the museum

From there, how do we translate all of of the areas of exploration and disparate systems into actionable work? What can all of this start to look like?

3. These areas informed the type of basic technical architecture we think we

1. want to build to respond to the feedback we received from the roadshows and listening sessions.

2. One possible option is a data hub that will allow us to centralize data from our data sources and allow us to ask flexible and ambiguous questions of the data; a place to present the information that is in the hub, and perhaps a prototype of a data entry form to capture all of your ideas and information, without regard to any particular system or technology (technology agnostic). This does not mean that the data you provide to us would not ultimately live in its final and formal database of record (TMS, DAMS, etc.), but rather our goal would be to have the technology distribute your data back to the proper system so you can focus on researching, interpreting, and sharing your work on the collections.

3. With that, I will turn it over to Bree who will talk about a couple of examples that could inform an iterative process to build and flesh out our tests and experiments within this possible framework.

Sample Test Cases

Underrepresented Collections

African-American

LGBTQ

Women

and more...

Beauford Delaney, *Portrait of James Baldwin, 1945*.

James Baldwin. 1989. *Gypsy & Other Poems*. Illustrated by Leonard Baskin.

American Watercolor Society, *American Water Color Society illustrated catalogue of [the] twentieth annual exhibition: including the exhibition of the N.Y. Etching Club held at the galleries of the National Academy of Design*, 1887

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Content   Governance   Linked Data Development   Interface

Animated slide:
1. Previous slide content and "Sample Test Case" box are here by default
   a. In order to show how a prototype would touch on all these areas of exploration, I am going to show some sample test cases we chose based on your feedback. As I run through this example of prototype test cases, keep in mind this is one of many tests we are considering, and it would need to go through the same prioritization process as the other ideas. This was chosen just for purposes of illustrating how the process of prototyping could work.
2. Underrepresented Collections and Images appear on click
   a. The AIC team heard from you that there is a need for us to examine how we can better expose underrepresented artists and works in our collections. Your feedback is one of the factors in how we determine what we prioritize.
3. Remainder of red boxes appear on click
   a. If expanding how we capture information relevant to underrepresented groups in our collection is then chosen as a priority test case, we would need to examine the groups that might be included. These are some of the areas we might focus on. Working on all of these at the same time is a big job, so narrowing down the field to work on them one at time might be considered. For the purposes

      a.   of this discussion I'll begin by focusing on our African-American collections.

2.   All but African American and the James Baldwin portrait will disappear on click

      a.   But first, why would we start here? As part of our prototyping we will provide how it will answer specific needs and use cases. In this case, we know diversity is important to you and to the museum. This is based not only on some of the feedback we received in Year 1 which resonated across all departments and was centered on different needs for diversity, it also dovetails with the work of the African American Art Working Group and the redesign of the American Galleries. Additionally, learning how to capture better data regarding these underrepresented groups/collections can help one of the core AIC initiative goals of improving our ability to accurately describe our collections for better access. This test case would help illuminate areas where our collection management systems, practices, etc. need more flexibility in regard to that.

      b.   Let's walk through the various areas of exploration. We would need to look at our content, this piece of art is a portrait of James Baldwin by Beauford Delaney. Not only is this by an African-American artist but it depicts an African-American poet. Our goal is to consider what terms or metadata can assist us in accurately describing our African-American collection as well as this portrait in particular. Other questions to answer would be: How do we currently describe our collections and what necessary bits of information are we missing? We find those answers through the process of examining current descriptive practices. For that missing data, we might look at what content we currently create as a guide. This could include artist interviews, and archival or educational material. Another step might be to examine the constituent "Artist/maker unknown" to see if there might be ways to further distinguish this term. The museum is already making strides in this area as we currently articulate an associated location if possible.

      c.   Looking to governance, we may need to formulate a clearer standard for tombstone information, as well as a new label format based on this new and necessary data. Linked data models might assist us in this endeavor as the AIC team looks for ways to make sure this information is accessible for search. Linked data also ensures that if new standards are implemented they are made to align with future needs. Finally, as part of discovery and access, we would need to figure out the interface to be used for searching for this information--basically building the architecture that helps bring all of this to fruition. This would include the data entry form suggested in the previous slide as something to test. Further investigation of what data we would need, where new data would live, who would enter it, how much time it

      a. would take, and how we would get that information to the appropriate systems for further use would need to be done before offering a recommendation.

2. Women and image appears on click
    a. Another example of missing data is women artists. Women in art have been faced with challenges due to gender biases in the art world. They often encountered difficulties in training, travelling, and trading their work, as well as gaining recognition. Attributions are a challenge where women artists sign works with only a first initial and last name. An added challenge includes tracking artists that have changed names.
    b. Some of you may remember recent Barra fellow, Amy Torbert, who collaborated with Kathy Foster on the American Watercolor exhibition. Amy has created analytic charts of the American Watercolor Society exhibitions. Her research recently uncovered 59 newly identified women artists. Can we incorporate Amy's research into our institutional data sources? Can we build on this research for future scholars?
    c. The answer is yes. The AIC team could then expand the prototype work by using the first case as the foundation for moving forward to include another discrete use case, such as using Amy's research, to capture the data needed for improving access to women artists.

3. A final example. Click for James Baldwin portrait and an illustration by Leonard Baskin in James Baldwin's book of poetry *Gypsy and other Poems*.
    a. Finally let's go back to that James Baldwin portrait. The other image included here is from a book in our library. This unique volume titled *Gypsy and other poems*, was designed by Leonard Baskin to present unpublished poems by James Baldwin. This deluxe edition includes color and black and white engravings (of which this is one) on various papers, and is one of only six to include a special drawing and original copper plate of one of the engravings. For this test case, we would want to not only just better describe works of art in our underrepresented collections, but also connect them to related materials from other departments. Here we would not only need all of the information we just discussed, but we would need to begin to design infrastructure and tools to connect data in disparate systems, so this could be between TMS which houses our art information and Aleph which houses our bibliographic information.
    b. And on and on...as we iterate through other test cases in order to improve metadata capture and build the systems architecture we would need for doing it. Keep in mind it is possible we would get through the first test case and find that this was not the best prototype for our needs, so we would take what we learned and under advice from our steering committee and other groups determine another discrete prototype and test cases. This is what a planning grant

a. means--it is creative play. It is a process for finding prototypes we can extrapolate on a larger scale for figuring out the most extensible solutions to our goals, for taking into account the feedback we received from you over the past year, and for working with you in the future.

Beauford Delaney, American (active Paris), 1901 - 1979. *Portrait of James Baldwin, 1945.* Oil on canvas, 22 × 18 inches (55.9 × 45.7 cm). 125th Anniversary Acquisition. Purchased with funds contributed by The Daniel W. Dietrich Foundation in memory of Joseph C. Bailey and with a grant from The Judith Rothschild Foundation, 1998, 1998-3-1

Gypsy & Other Poems, by James Baldwin, illustrations by Leonard Baskin, Northampton, MA: Gehenna Press, 1989. Special copy f of six 'hors d 'edition' of 325 with copper plate and drawing.

American Watercolor Society. 1887. *American Water Color Society illustrated catalogue of [the] twentieth annual exhibition: including the exhibition of the N.Y. Etching Club held at the galleries of the National Academy of Design.* New York: [publisher not identified].

Steering Committee

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Members
Nancy Ash, Barbara Bassett, Renee Bomgardner, Katie Cannon, Jenni Drozdek, Gretchen Dykstra, Emma Gunuey, Cathy Herbert, Jasmine Patel, Katie Reilly, Marcy Serkin, Jenny Thompson, John Vick

- Advocate across the museum, within their departments, and externally for the Art Information Commons and spread the common language of the initiative to sustain communication and support;

- Help coordinate AIC activities with those of the Collection Presentation and Interpretation Group (CPIG), the Collection Resources and Information Group (CRAIG), the Metadata Working Group, and other art information management-related museum groups;

- Share practices and efforts within the museum and from their professional field to inform the work of the Art Information Commons;

- Provide feedback on strategies for art information data management, aggregation, and research in addition to helping prioritize workflows and prototypes to test.

Calvinist Meeting, c. 1600, Etching, 1985-52-40635, The Muriel and Philip Berman Gift, acquired from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

We had our inaugural Steering Committee meeting this past week. The Steering Committee is a group of PMA staff that will advocate on behalf of the Art Information Commons and sustain communications within their respective areas and departments, help coordinate AIC activities with other committees and working groups, share practices and efforts within their own departments and fields, and provide feedback on tools and strategies moving forward. We will be meeting with the Steering Committee regularly throughout the grant.

DAMS Metadata and Governance Group

- Focus on metadata and governance holistically across the museum
- Build a foundation for reusable data
- Develop sustainable workflows
- Develop and select standards for vocabularies, lead content creation and mapping toward linked open usable data

Begin with Digital Asset Management

- Establish museum practices for managing digital assets in the Digital Asset Management System (DAMS)
- Develop standards and best practices for managing assets and metadata in a way that promotes reusability and findability
- Members represent content areas:
    - Object, Installation, and Exhibition
    - Location and Event
    - Conservation
    - Documentation & Interactives
    - Marketing Assets
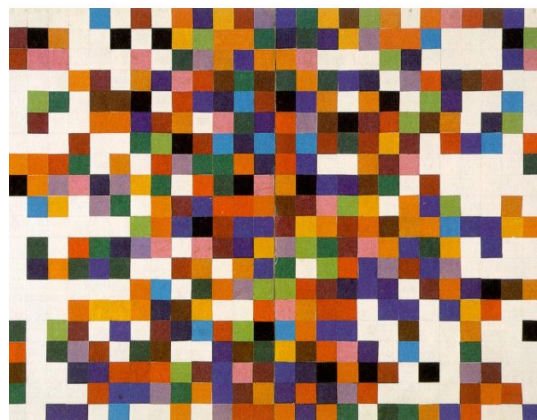
Spectrum Colors Arranged by Chance I, Ellsworth Kelly, American, 1923 - 2015, 1951 © Ellsworth Kelly, courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, 2007-30-3, Purchased with funds contributed by C. K. Williams, II (by exchange), 2007.

The DAMS Metadata and Governance Group will focus on metadata governance and standards holistically across the institution, within the context of the Art Information Commons. The group will meet throughout the year, alternating between working sessions as subgroups and full group meetings for progress updates, discussions of DAMS governance, and other alignment activities; represent the interests and views of stakeholders with similar workflows and needs; and report out on Group progress to their departments and other groups. Learning opportunities will be provided to the group, specific to the work they will be doing.

Staff Engagement Opportunities

☕ Coffee with the Commons:
December 9, 2019

👥 February and July 2020 Symposia

💡 Other learning opportunities,
trainings, and workshops to come

Toni von Horn, *Cutex Advertisement: After Dinner Coffee*, c. 1932, gelatin silver print.

Coffee by Gregor Cresnar from the Noun Project, Conference by Jesus Puertas from the Noun Project, Collaborative idea by ProSymbols from the Noun Project

As Kristen, Karina, and Bree have mentioned, we are engaging staff members through the Steering Committee and the DAMS Metadata and Governance Group as we move through the Art Information Commons. This allows us to receive critical feedback and insights on our work to date and next steps.

In addition, there are many other opportunities for all staff to remain engaged and involved with the Art Information Commons. We will continue to conduct regular Coffee with the Commons forums to share our progress, major activities to date, and new findings with plenty of room for discussion and questions. Our next Coffee with the Commons will be December 9, so keep an eye out for an official invite! We hope to see you there.

We are also planning for an all day symposium in February 2020, followed by one in July 2020. For February we will focus on the human collaboration component of the Art Information Commons and other digital and cultural heritage projects happening within and outside of the museum. Specific sessions, speakers--both internal and external, and logistics are currently being worked through, so we will follow up with more detail. These all-day symposia are a way to bring multiple voices together, synthesizing ideas from across sessions instead of separating out workshops and lectures in separate, smaller programs.

Other opportunities to learn, participate, and contribute will be scheduled throughout the year including workshops, trainings, and in-depth and detailed discussions to work with you all on further explorations of projects and ideas to map

against the vision we mentioned earlier so that the initiative can enable you to create, find, share, and store your art information in a better way.

These other opportunities include a program we are in the middle of planning titled "Ask a Taxonomist...Between two Ferns" for this fall. A riff on the Between Two Ferns Youtube series in combination with the social media hashtag "Ask a Curator" - this will give everyone a chance--within and outside PMA--to submit any questions they have about being a taxonomist, taxonomy, and knowledge management with Bree. We will then invite internal and external colleagues to the live Q&A. Keep an eye out for more details and an invite to this event as well.

We encourage everyone to join us, and stay tuned for more updates as we move through Year 2!

Questions?

Stay Informed

artinformationcommons.github.io

Sharepoint: Committees and Projects

juliet.vinegra@philamuseum.org

Rosaspina's Drawing School (Rosaspina's Zeichnungsschule), Giulio Tomba, 1811, Etching and engraving and drypoint in wash manner with toolwork tone, 1985-52-22376.

We encourage everyone to check up on us between programs. We have a new external site you can browse----artinformationcommons.github.io.

We are using this github site to share our progress with outside colleagues to support our larger digital and cultural heritage community.

Please also continue to check in with our internal Sharepoint page, where this deck will be uploaded, and always feel free to email me with any questions, thoughts, feedback, etc.

Thank you!

Thank You!

We cannot *espresso* our gratitude enough.