Spark 6: Revisiting Spark 2

My Omeka page can be found at the following URL: http://rojorilewritings.omeka.net/

Omeka is a popular digital asset management system. The future of digital created materials lies in many hands. Regular people generate many digital objects, but lack information about how to preserve them. Recommendations for laymen is the same as for librarians, which includes to “locate everything to be saved, decide what to keep, organize the files, and save copies in different places and manage the collections” (Ashenfelder, 2013, 35). Omeka is a simple to use website to help teach people how to backup and preserve important materials. A digital collection on Omeka can be improved through the use of the available plugins. There are a total of 14 optional plugins at Omeka that can add nuance to an Omeka project. I examined seven of them.

The social bookmarking plugin allows for easy sharing on social media sites. Social media is an important developing aspect of digital libraries that appeal to diverse users. Users appreciate social media because “the ability of an individual or a community to comment on, create, upload and share digital cultural content demonstrates a growing demand for creative expression, the exploration of identity and for cultural participation” (Liew, 2014). Being able to share materials more easily can improve the amount of traffic on a website, and can improve the appeal of a personal digital collection. The plugin offers the ability to share many social bookmarking pages, which can be selected or deselected. The sites can be included on collection or item pages.
I had issues viewing the social bookmarking plugin on my Firefox browser, but it appeared on Internet Explorer.

Hide elements is an interesting plugin. Creators can provide a large amount of metadata for items in the collections, but choose what to share to the public and what to keep accessible only to them. This can help encourage first time creators to try their hand at metadata without having to make all of it easily open to scrutiny. Metadata is vital for preservation. A digital copy of materials does not fully capture the context of a physical object, such as its dimensions and where it is located in a house. That information can be important to a creator, but does not have to be seen by every patron.
Docs viewer is a plugin that makes the Omeka digital library look more professional. The standard Omeka page only includes an image of a PDF. Having a fully embedded, scrollable version of the document will help patron examine materials before downloaded it. If an item is a large file, then being able to preview it will help patrons not waste their time. Many current digital libraries include previews of downloadable content. The plugin is simple to use and can be easily taught to patrons at a library interested in created a personal digital collection.

The exhibit builder allows for creators of an Omeka collection to add exhibits. The website already has pages for items and collections. Creators can bring items together from different collections. It would be a good way to feature a particular format or person without repeating items in different collections. I did a simple exhibit of a few items.
LC Suggest is a good plugin for first time creators. Non-specialists, i.e. non librarians, may not know much about the Dublin Core and metadata. The Dublin Core makes uses of the controlled language known as the Library of Congress Subject Headings, LCSH. It is “an established list of preferred terms from which a cataloger or indexer must select when assigning subject headings or descriptors in a bibliographic record, to indicate the content of the work in a library catalog, index, or bibliographic database” (Reitz, 2014). Having standardized subject headings improves searchability and makes a collection more professional. Moulaison, Dyka & Gallant argue that “the creation of metadata for research and repository content is an essential part of the scholarly communication process and is necessary for the long-term access and preservation of our digital (and digitized) heritage. Metadata choices and practices affect the findability of resources in the online environment, and these choices, influenced by the content itself, also reflect the institutions, stakeholders, and users of specific repositories” (2015). The plugin helps creators of an Omeka collection make a more scholarly digital collection by suggesting terms for items. Creators can pick what standards and what elements of metadata they wish to get suggestions for. This lessens the work laypersons have and decreases errors.

The reports plugin is a plugin that generates HTML or QR Codes. It a good feature for creators to examine complete collections, a single item, items of a particular format, and many other things. It is quicker than manually searching through all items. The reports include metadata, and can be easily shared or printed.
The simple pages plugin is a great plugin for creators who want to add a page, but have little or no knowledge about programming or creating webpages. Creators can create main pages and then additional subpages. The plugin is good for adding more content to the page with ease. Creators could create pages for family members featured in collections or exhibits and then link to an exhibit or important items.

I created a simple page entitled *About the Collection* to describe what I was attempting to create with my project.
References


