Creating a web-based digital photographic archive: one hospital library’s experience

1 The Challenge
- Preserving institutional materials to document its work, goals, activities and values to help understand its role in the community
- 100s of photographs, with little or no documentation
- Selecting appropriate photos to tell the story of Cedars of Lebanon and Mount Sinai Hospital and their merger to create the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

2 The Goal
- Design an easily accessible, budget-friendly, web-based digital archive
- Create an interactive database with many access points to allow for research or promotional activities without the original photographs being touched repeatedly
- Streamline the process of answering archival reference questions

3 The Action: A Three-Prong Approach

Selecting the software
- We chose Omeka to manage our collection.
- This is an easy-to-use package that uses Dublin Core. It has great display features and users can create exhibits featuring selected photographs.
- We stored our collection on an Omeka server for an annual fee of $299.00 per annum for 5 Gigabytes of storage

Engaging Library Science Interns
- Interns from San Jose State, UCLA and USC Library science programs assisted in the project

Selecting the photographs
- Selecting the photographs was the hardest thing to do.
- We started with early photographs of the two hospitals: Cedars of Lebanon and Mount Sinai.
- We included groundbreaking, fund raisers and their physicians, staff and donors who were part of the vision to create a first-class medical center

Left: Governor Ronald Reagan and Nancy Reagan and Former First Lady Betty Ford at the 1973 Groundbreaking

4 The Impact: 900 photographs digitized with metadata

- Decreased amount of time looking for photographs for archival reference questions. Users can be sent the link to look for themselves and to download pictures
- Decreased handling of original photographs
- Created a more robust finding aid

Mount Sinai Hospital for the Incurables 1918-1930, it later became Mount Sinai Hospital

Kaspare Cohen Hospital 1902, it later became Cedars of Lebanon

http://cedars-sinai.omeka.net/