Playing with metadata

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Digitisation

• Increasing digitisation = more digital content
• collections.ed.ac.uk - collections portal
• How can this be made more discoverable and usable?
University image collection

- Large collection of digital images
- [http://images.is.ed.ac.uk](http://images.is.ed.ac.uk)
- Images mostly available CC BY at high resolution
Image metadata

- Good “volume level” metadata
- Data often says very little about what is in the image
- Makes it very difficult for user to locate!
How did we get here?

• No dedicated image cataloguer
• Size of collection
• Legacy content
• **Initial intention to improve description of collections items**
The Game

- Retro theme
- Simple interface
- “Say what you see”
- Open to all
Stage 1: tag

- Harvest initial tags
- Open text box
- No quality review
- Points for tags entered
Stage 2: vote

- Vote on quality of others’ tags
- Closed system – good / bad / don’t know
- Gain points for good tags; lose points for bad tags
- Important quality review stage
• Tags QA-ed and imported into image management system
• Distinction made between formal metadata and crowdsourced tags
• Link included to add more tags
What we mean by crowdsourcing

“--crowdsourcing not as extracting labor from a crowd, but as a way for us to invite the participation of amateurs (in the non-derogatory sense of the word)—those with every bit of the potential to be a Darwin or Mendel—in the creation, development, and further refinement of public good.”

What we mean by “the crowd”

• Crowd: large, anonymous masses of people
• Sourcing: outsourcing work and labour

• “Knowledge Communities” - volunteers, engaged citizens, peers
• Participation: production, development, refinement
What communities exist?

- Academic researchers
- Hobbyists
- Students
- Public
- Educationalists
- Self forming groups
- many more . . .
Why engage communities?

- Increased users
- Widening participation
- Feedback for improvements
- Frees staff to focus on other tasks
- Access to expertise
Metadata games for engagement

• Metadata Games “on tour”
• Integrated into other events on campus
• Ran events which coincided with exhibitions
• Events necessary for success
Motivation

- Altruism
- Display your skills/knowledge
- Entertainment
- Compound motivations
Information Services
culture of play
Tiltfactor: metadatagames

Zen Tag
A zen-like one player tagging activity — be as specific and accurate as you can to earn high scores. Ohm!

Nextag
In the “next evolution” of Zen Tag, you can tag audio and video clips, too. Plug in your headphones and get ready!

Guess What!
Work together with a stranger to identify images in this fast-paced guessing game. Give great hints and you’ll both score big!

www.metadatagames.org

18,000+ tags for UoE images
Who is mentioned on this page?

- Lady Grange (Rachel Erskine)
- Lord Grange (James Erskine)
- Charles Erskine
- Thomas Hope
- Other?
Can you classify this image

Animal  Vegetable  Mineral  Mixture  Text  None

You are working now on task: 1104805
You have completed: 0 tasks from 116
Pros and Cons

• Pros:
  • Hosted service
  • Easy to create an account
  • Easy to set up and play
  • Range of options – not just tagging
  • Easy to load images in from dropbox / Flickr

• Cons
  • Limited functionality for more advanced options e.g. translation / transcription
  • Crowdcrafting requires technical expertise for modifications
What we have learned

• Difficult to create engaging platform
• Combine with events / activities - target theme and collections
• Incentives / prizes help
• Considerable staff time needed
• Crowdsourced tags a compliment rather than substitute for formal metadata

http://libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/librarylabs/