

Collaboration in Cataloging: Islamic Manuscripts at Michigan



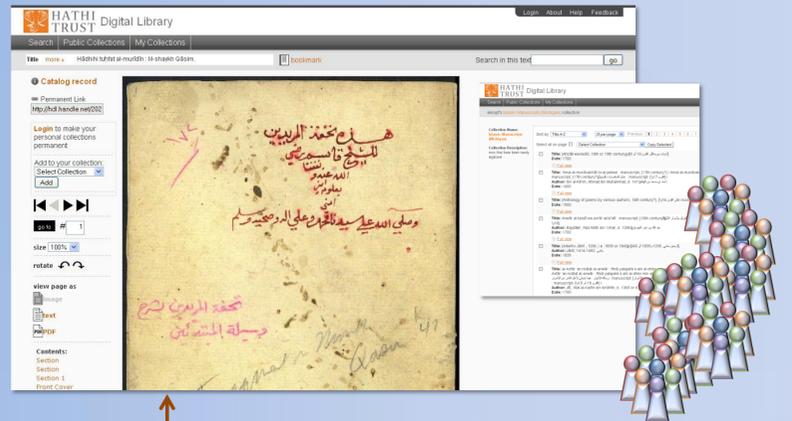
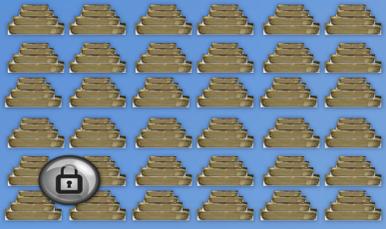
المشاركة في الفهرسة : المخطوطات الاسلامية في جامعة ميشيغان



Jonathan Rodgers, Principal Investigator | Martha Conway, Project Manager | Evyn Kropf, Project Cataloguer | Nancy Moussa, Project Web Developer

Our project leverages a web-based "crowdsourcing" approach to facilitate the full cataloguing of our Islamic Manuscripts Collection via a process of record creation, manuscript digitization, website development, physical examination and record enhancement. By involving the widest possible scholarly community in a process of iterative enrichment for the manuscript descriptions, our project makes the best possible use of an aggregate of expertise that is uniquely positioned to help us overcome the challenges inherent in traditional manuscript cataloguing.

MANUSCRIPT DIGITIZATION



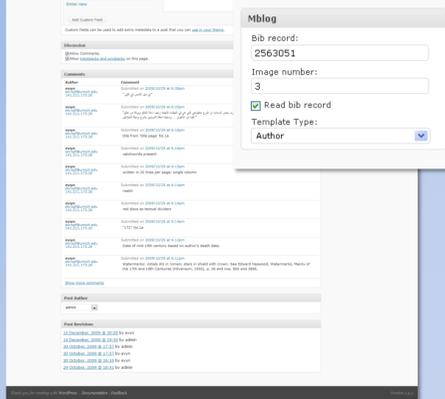
A digital surrogate is created for each manuscript, accessible to all users via the Hathi Trust Digital Library (HTDL).



Islamic Manuscripts at Michigan

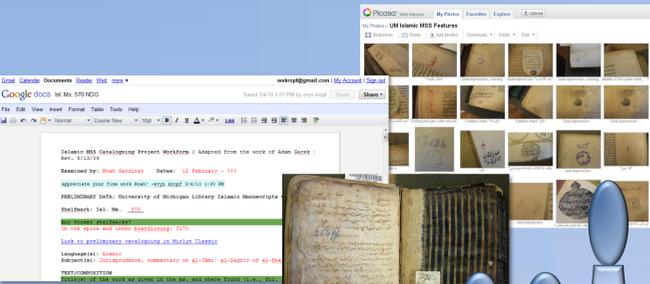
WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

For each manuscript, an ingenious application harvests descriptive elements from the preliminary records as well as HTDL digital object information and posts them as a representative description to the project website.

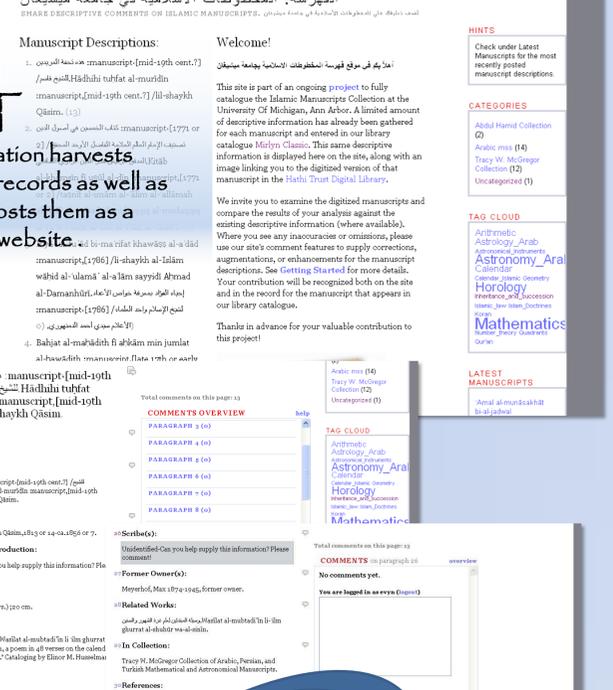


RECORD CREATION

Inventory cataloguing data in card-format handlist is enhanced and converted to preliminary records by project cataloguer and staff.



ISLAMIC MANUSCRIPTS AT MICHIGAN في المشاركة في الفهرسة : المخطوطات الاسلامية في جامعة ميشيغان



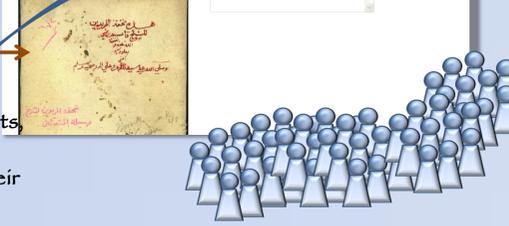
PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Project staff examine manuscripts for those descriptive elements that cannot be evaluated in the digital environment.



RECORD ENHANCEMENTS

Scholars world-wide join project staff in examining the manuscripts, submitting the results of their analysis via the project website. The project cataloguer reviews, refashions, and incorporates their contributions as enhancements to the cataloguing records - eventually achieving full cataloguing.



LESSONS LEARNED

- Unexpected challenges often lead to unexpected productivity ~ find creative ways to proceed when faced with stalled workflows. In our case, project staff were able to make considerable progress via physical examination when issues with digital surrogates arose.
- What you expect to be the most difficult to implement may actually come out being the simplest and vice-versa. Our project web developer wowed us with her skill and efficiency; the project cataloguer and her staff created and entered the 871 preliminary records in less than four months; digitization went smoothly; ingest of digital images hit a few snags.
- Leverage collaborative software to engage project staff and the wider scholarly community (on and off-site). Our project relies heavily on Google Docs, Picasa web albums, and of course blogging software (WordPress).

FULL CATALOGUING

