Open Source tools for DH projects. CollectiveAccess and Omeka use cases

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At KU Leuven several digital humanities projects started using CollectiveAccess and Omeka as part of their research projects. Both software's are open source and allow users to describe, manage and publish datasets according to their wishes. While CollectiveAccess focusses on the creation and management of complex relational datasets, Omeka allows publishing the data online for other researchers to access. Together they provide researchers a complete environment for managing and publishing their datasets, but they can just as well be used separately or integrated with different systems. LIBIS provides support to researchers interested in using these tools for their projects. The demonstration will showcase the different research environments currently using CollectiveAccess and/or Omeka:

IDEM

The Integrated Database for Early Music (IDEM) was launched in August 2015. The database and online portal where constructed as part of a Hercules project. Since there where only limited funds available for this part of the work, the Alamire Foundation in collaboration with their technical partner LIBIS, decided to use existing tools where possible. LIBIS was already using CollectiveAccess and Omeka for the descriptions and publication of museum and heritage collections. After thorough analysis of the Alamire requirements concerning the management of their datasets, it appeared that the flexibility of CollectiveAccess concerning the creation of new data models, search and display templates, made the system ideally suited for this type of project. With the launch of the project it was decided to provide access to the basic metadata and digitized manuscripts in Omeka. Researchers interested in getting access to the full research dataset can request a log-in for the CollectiveAccess database.

NaBuCCo

The research group of Near Eastern studies had similar requirements towards their research database. With the objective to make available a large corpus of archival documents from the first millennium BCE Babylonia to historians and Assyriologists, they needed a custom made datamodel defining all the complex relations between tablets, people, archives and places mentioned in the texts. LIBIS worked closely together with the researchers to create this complex data model. For the first time the relationships between different types of records were also implemented on Omeka. The CollectiveAccess database is ready and descriptions are currently under preparation. The Omeka portal, providing public access to the archive, will soon follow.
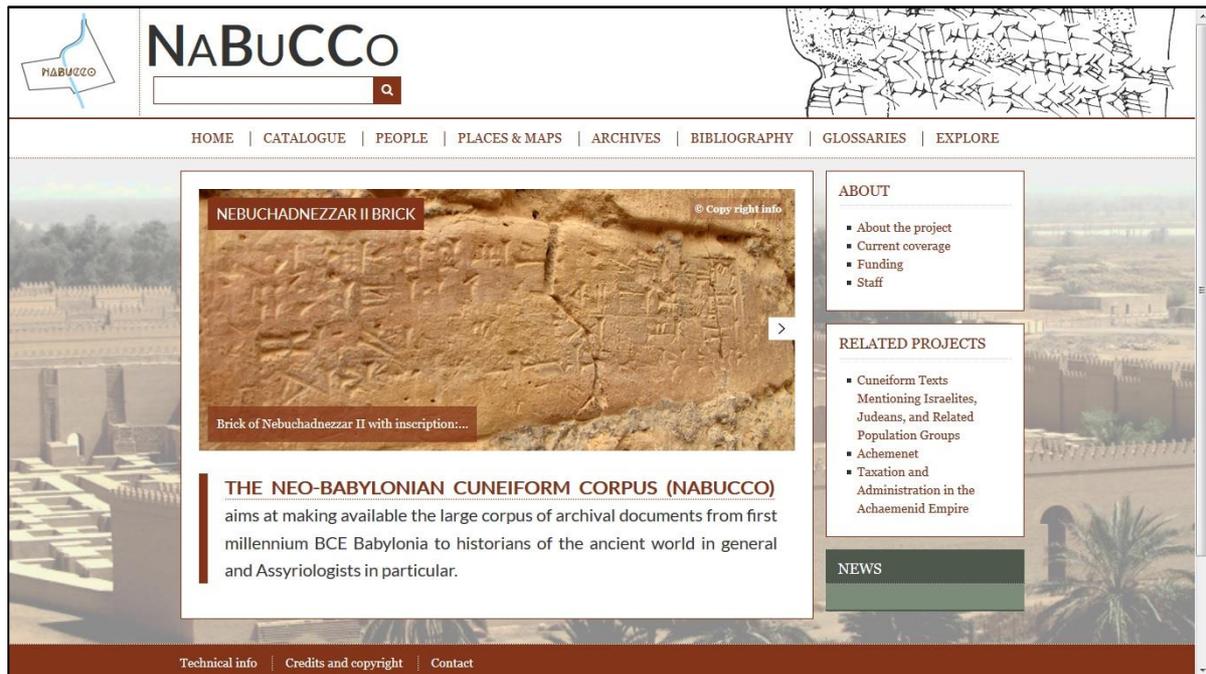
Figure 1: NaBuCCo website created with the Omeka software

Magister Dixit project

The Magister Dixit project offers access to lecture notes digitised by the LECTIO research group. The metadata is managed in a different system, Alma. This data is synchronised to Omeka to provide a rich and easy to search platform for researchers.

Two other projects are planned using the CollectiveAccess and Omeka software: DigitalHusserl will make available the archive of the German philosopher Edmund Husserl ; The Chinese Christian Texts Database (CCT-Database), a research database of primary and secondary sources concerning the cultural contacts between China and Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, will be moved to CollectiveAccess for managing the research bibliography and Omeka for making it available to other researchers.