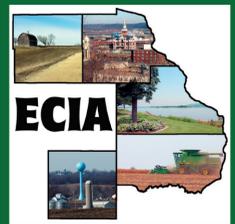


Edgewood Museum Project

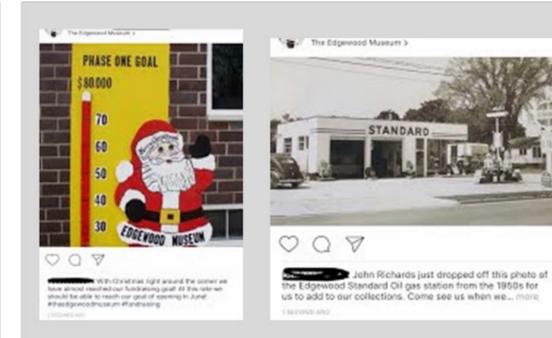
Recommendations for Content Management and Communications



PROJECT STATEMENT

The community of Edgewood has been working to establish the Edgewood Historical Museum, which will be the community's first opportunity to display their rich historical documents and items. A local non-profit group was recently gifted the use of a historical building in which to house the museum, and structural renovations are currently underway to make the museum a reality. The community desires to prepare exhibits for the new museum that provide interesting and educational interpretations of the documents and items they have to display.

Through the IISC partnership, students first conducted research to educate Edgewood Museum representatives about digital tools available for managing collections. Students developed a report that recommends a digital tool aligned with best practices in the field and the specific needs of the Edgewood Museum. For the second class initiative, students developed a comprehensive communications plan that includes social media. This plan will considered the Edgewood Museum mission and vision, audience, and communication strategies currently in use.



Top left: the future site of the Edgewood Museum; Top middle and left: Art Johnson visits with UI students during a site visit; Bottom: Examples of social media posts created by UI students.

Goals of this Report

Working in teams, University of Iowa students participating in the course *Museums in a Digital World* were charged with answering the question:
 • What collections management system would be best suited for the needs of the Edgewood Museum?
 This presentation synthesizes student recommendations while also outlining the following collection management issues:
 • rationale for developing and following a collection management policy that aligns with the Edgewood Museum mission
 • collection policy vs. collection management system
 • standards, ethics, and approaches

Tiering Collections

It is highly recommended that the Edgewood Museum develop a tiered collections policy in order to ensure objects acquired align with the museum mission.
 Tiers or ranks are assigned based on an object's connection to the mission, rarity, value and scarcity in this and other collections as outlined in the grid that follows. Each tier identifies guidelines for treatment, storage, documentation, handling, and use. All new acquisitions are ranked.
 Tiering can be a time consuming process but the work done up front can assist in making numerous decisions down the road, for example, having a tiering process may limit the number of artifacts that the museum must de-accession (remove from the collection) at a later date.

CMS Recommendations

First Choice: PastPerfect
 • although there is a cost, the tool is rigorous and appropriate for the types of collections
 • review and interviews support its user-friendly interface and multiple types of support (webinars, workshops, videos) provide extensive technical assistance
 • add-ons provide the ability to "grow" into the system that would like to providing online collection access to the public
Second Choice: Proficio (Re:Discover)
 • If Edgewood is looking to get away from a localized server, this might be an option
 • With no recommendations or connections to museum professionals who could speak through experience about this tool it seems a bit of a risk compared with PastPerfect

KEY ACTIVITIES & CONCLUSIONS

- Each student team developed a Google Site that a platform for professionally presenting the reports to the collaborating organizations as well as a digital portfolio for students' work.
- The top recommendation for a content management system is PastPerfect.
- A communication plan was designed to create a dialogue within Edgewood and the surrounding community about the museum. As the museum grows, the plan helps encourage active community participation in donating collection items and building exhibitions.
- "Heritage" and "History" are the two recommended themes for external communication. "Heritage" connects local residents to past residents and traditions, particularly for generational families. "History" focuses on sharing the geographical, social, and political history of the Edgewood area.
- An accompanying action plan provides and tasks for implementation.



Left: Three images of artifacts donated to the Edgewood Museum. Right: A post from the Edgewood Museum Facebook page.