RESPONSE TO THE MEDIA ASSET DISCUSSION PAPER
Museum Of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

Te Papa has been using the existing Media Asset functionality for a couple of months now (we went live in June), and have migrated from our previous system over 600000 Collection object records, 100000 Media Asset records, including 30000 digital images. Te Papa has added over 1000 new digital Media Asset records using the current functionality to relate them to Collection objects. In our previous system our Photography Collection records and Media Asset records were combined, so we have first hand experience at the confusion that mixing Collection Records and Media Assets records can cause.

For Te Papa, the biggest distinction is between Collection and Media, not between Digital and Analogue. Our Media Assets are comprised of digital and analogue photographs and Digital and Analogue video. In our Collection we also have digital Photographs, digital components to Art installations, and digital text files in our collected Archives. We expect an increase in the collecting of artworks and Historical and Archival objects that are entirely or partially digital. The ability to maintain the long-term needs of both analogue and digital objects is important whether they are Collection items or Media Assets. What we do not want, is to have information about Collected digital works recorded in the same place as digital Media Assets, and not with the rest of the Collection; or to have Analogue Media Assets stored with the Analogue Collection objects. Collection objects must be treated as Collection objects, regardless of their format.

What is important is the legal and ethical considerations that apply to Collection items (Objects that have been collected by the museum because of its historical, aesthetic, scientific or other significance, and have been through a formal acquisition process) as opposed to Media Assets (which are essentially Museum records or research created or used to *support* the collections access and preservation and the Museums activities). Te Papa feels this distinction is more relevant than a difference in an objects material or composition. For example a chair made of wood, an 1880s glass plate negative, a painting, and a digital component of an art installation all have different description, storage, display and preservation requirements, but as collection items, they have in common the ethical and moral requirements that apply to items that have been identified as significant to the nation.

Media Assets do not share the above requirement, but as records created or used by the Museum to *support* its activities, do require a certain level of management and maintenance, and we do have responsibilities under acts such as the Archives Act 1956 (under revision), and Official Information Act 1982, just like another other documentation or research the institution generates. Managing these Media Assets in EMu means we can manage their relationships to objects. Media Assets could also been seen as a process, such as conservation or a loan, which are recorded in their own modules.

SOME COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED MODELS:

Option 1: All Media Assets in the catalogue. Our current situation. However this does *not* mean we consider them part of the Collection. As analogue Media Assets require location tracking, sometimes conservation, and all Media Assets require better cataloguing tools than the Multimedia Module could offer, the catalogue was seen as the only available place to manage them. We also record Accessories in a third section of the Catalogue, i.e. crates, frames, object supports and Capture devices (Digital Cameras, scanners etc). These are also *not* Collection items, but the catalogue was again the best place to record this information.

This does mean, however, that for digital objects (Collection or Media) two records are required, one in the catalogue (as a Collection item or Media Asset) and a Multimedia record, to actually add the file to the repository. This is duplication of effort, and in some cases, duplication of information. Users can get quite confused and frustrated by this. Also when attaching a new media asset record to a Collection object, two catalogue windows and a

Multimedia window are often open at the same time. These two catalogue screen can look very similar (and the both say catalogue at the top of each window) and this has also been confusing for some users.

For Media Assets that represent something other than a Collection object (e.g. a digital photograph of an exhibition opening, an official portrait of the CEO, or a detail of a conservation treatment) the only link that record has to its particular process module (respectively Events, Parties, Conservation), is through attaching the thumbnail to the record in the module. However a photograph OF an exhibition is very different to a photograph IN an exhibition, so there needs to be a way to clarify this link.

We have not had any significant querying issues with this model. We have however had access control issues, but this should hopefully be helped by record level security.

Option 2: Collapse all Multimedia into the Catalogue. This would help with the problem of having to create a Catalogue record and a Multimedia record. Not sure how this would work with attaching Multimedia references to other modules though? Don't see any issues with "levels" of images, if the institution only requires maker and title and a link to the conservation treatment (for example), this would essentially be the same as creating a Multimedia record now. This would mean that ALL media would be manageable from one module, which I would see as a big advantage. Due to the current limitation of the Multimedia Module, Te Papa does not have any Multimedia records that do not have at least a skeletal Media Asset record. Avoiding the duplication of this whilst retaining the benefits of the catalogue would be very useful.

Option 3: All Digital Representations in Multimedia Module. This would mean that collected Digital objects would be catalogued amongst Digital Media Assets and Analogue media assets alongside non-digital Collection items. This is not the type of separation Te Papa wants to make. Te Papa wants to manage Collection items together, regardless of format, and Media Assets together, regardless of format.

Option 4: Separate Digital Asset Module. This would probably have the same affect as option 3, with also needing to have a multimedia record as well. Again not an option we would consider taking up, for the same reasons as option 3.

TE PAPA'S PREFERENCES

Addition of Media Asset Module, collapsing of Multimedia into Catalogues and Media Assets Modules

What we would prefer is a combination of some of the above models. We would like a stronger distinction between Collection Object and Media Assets (perhaps a Media Asset module), whilst retaining the ability to catalogue Digital and Analogue objects in each area, and the functionality of the Multimedia Module merged into each of these areas.

The hierarchical relationship of Collection Objects to Media Assets, and Media Assets to Media Assets is working very well, so we'd like to see that retained. What would need to be improved, particularly if the Multimedia Module was merged into Catalogue and Media Asset Modules, is the relationship of Media Assets to Events, Parties, Loans etc.

(We would of course also like EMu to read more information from files e.g. EXIF, XMP in order to cut down on data entry time, and for EMu to be able to deal with 16 bit images, cieLAB, CMYK etc, but that's a separate issue).

This would mean:

- Strong distinction between Collection and non-Collection
- Digital Collection items not separated from the rest of the collection object records
- Digital technical information auto-captured by functionality in each module
- Access restrictions should be easier to specify?

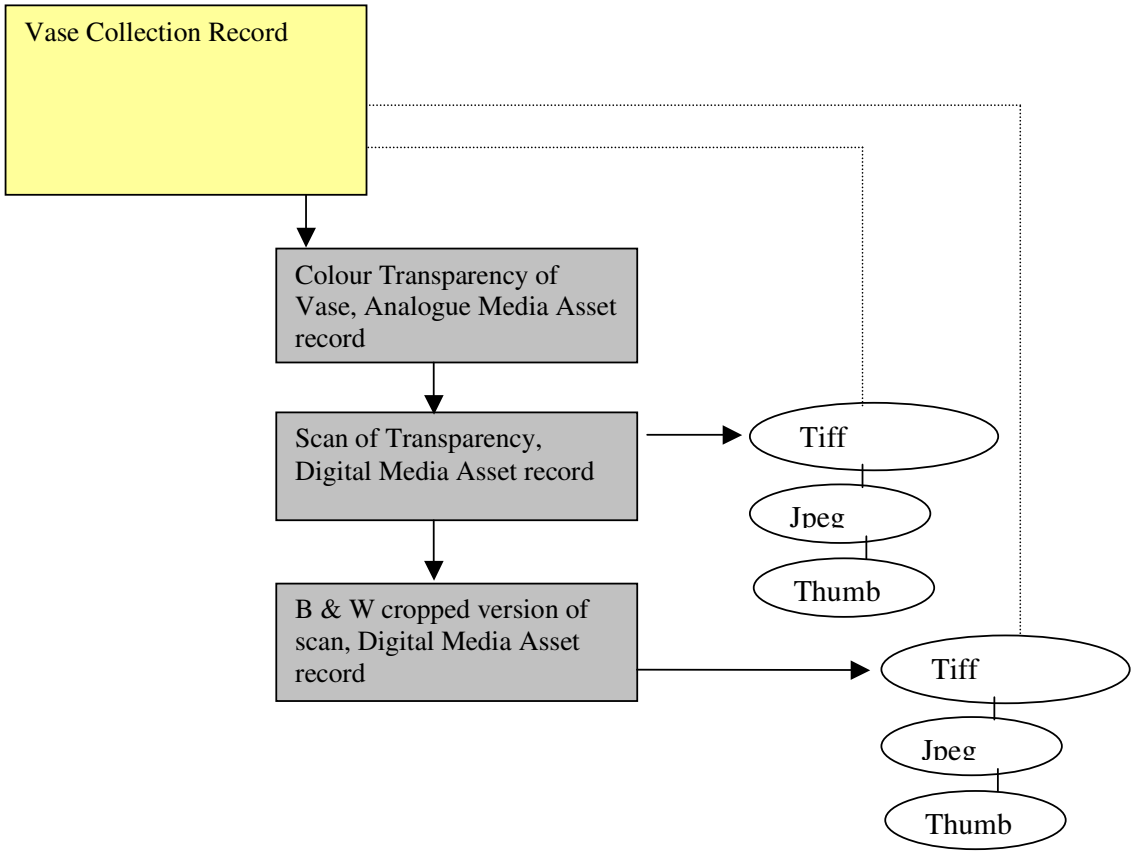
- Different levels of Media Assets could be catered for, from Digital Preservation Masters through to temporary snapshots, with appropriate levels of documentation
- No more need to create two records (one Catalogue and one Multimedia) for digital objects
- Media Asset module could be tailored (sub-classed) for each institution

But would require:

- Hierarchical relationships of Objects to Media Assets and Media Assets to Media Assets would need to be retained
- Most Cataloguing tools would need to be available for Media Asset module

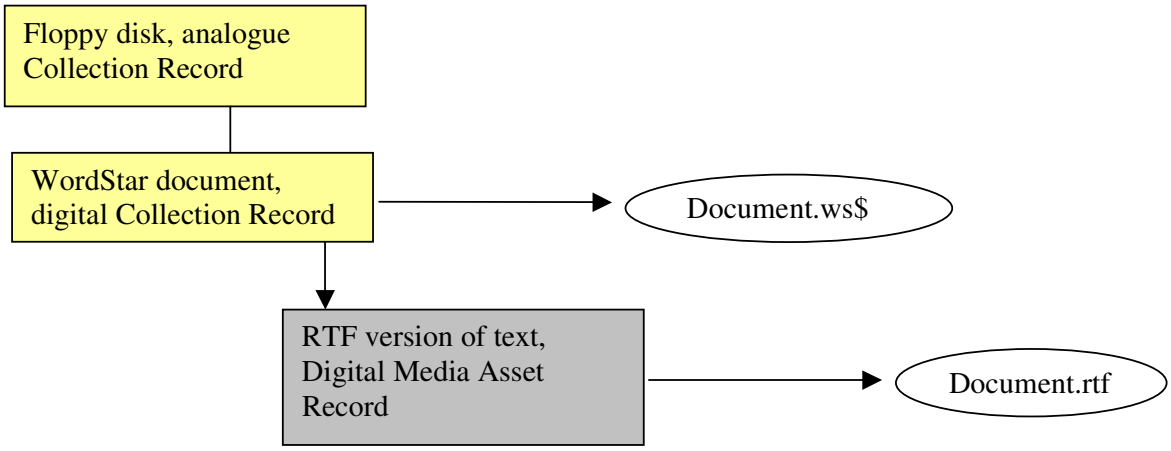
EXAMPLES

Below is the simple model outlined in the discussion paper of the Vase, the analogue photograph of the vase, and the scan of the analogue photograph. The key is the same as the discussion paper (pale yellow is the catalogue), but in this version, grey is for the Media Asset Module.

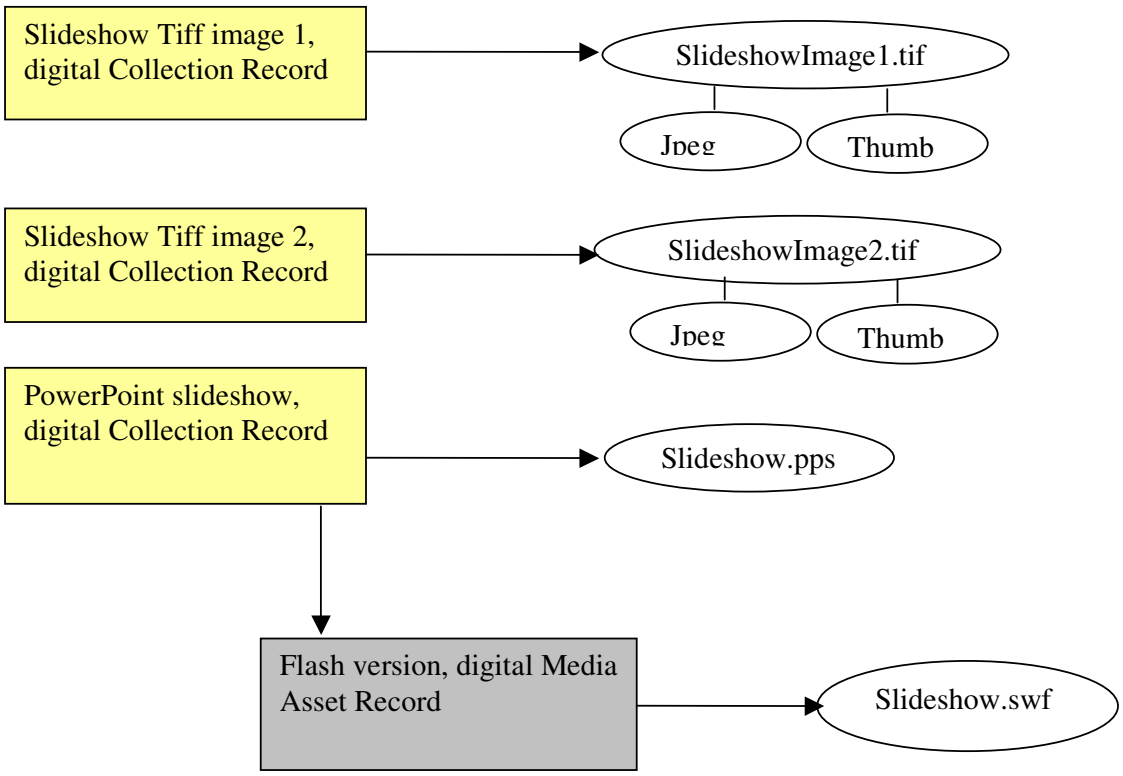


The complex model of the video of the Steam train, and the Corporate Photo model would look the same as **2. Collapse all Multimedia into the Catalogue** for each example in the discussion paper, except all the green boxes would be grey, as all the records are for media Assets, and therefore contained in the Media Asset module.

Digital Collection item example1:
An archive was collected from a prominent New Zealander, including correspondence from the 1980's, word processing documents in WordStar format, stored on a 5 ¼ inch floppy. The files is copied from the disk in its original format, and converted to Rich Text Format for readability.



Digital Collection item example 2:
An artwork has been acquired in the form of a PowerPoint slideshow of 48 images, originally designed to be projected on a wall in a gallery as an installation. The artist has also supplied high resolution Tiff versions of all the images should they be needed for reformatting into another slideshow format in the future. For an online "exhibition" the artist has agreed to have the slideshow converted into flash format for easier web viewing.



DISCUSSION PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:

Unlike physical objects, DAs can be reproduced many times at little cost. Each is an exact copy of itself.

If it's a duplicate. Te Papa sees no need to store more than one copy (other than backups) of exactly the same thing. However I'm assuming its quicker for EMu to retrieve a previously created derivative for thumbnail and screen display than create them on the fly? Hence the storage of derivatives?

DAs can also be transformed into other formats. So the media can change, but the thing being conveyed might not. Or it might.

Its possible that the time and effort taken to create a CMYK version of an image for publication printing from its original RGB version is significant enough that it outweighs the cost of storing it. ie the institution may decide the CMYK version is worth keeping. If so, the institution should consider the information they will need to manage that digital object over time.

Digital objects can also be modified from their original content, e.g. dust spots removed, tone levels and curves adjusted etc Te Papa sees this a very different object from the original, particularly if the original was captured at the specified Digital Preservation Master standard, i.e. was an accurate representation of the object. That would mean the modified version is not an accurate representation, but of course may be more appropriate for research purposes, or for exhibition. They are definitely different objects, so should be recorded as such, and their relationship to each other and to any collection object should be evident.

Are the problems in managing these assets restricted to digital ones, if they are can we separate the two types. If not what are the overlapping points that EMu currently doesn't handle?

Te Papa's view is that the distinction should be between Collection Object and Media Assets, and not between analogue and digital. The Multimedia module does not have the capability to record information required to manage analogue Media Assets, and the catalogue does not have the ability to ingest digital files into the system or to harvest technical information. Digital object (Collected or Media) currently require the creation of a catalogue record and a multimedia record to get around this.

If you have a CD with many digital files on it, is that CD a (multi)media asset, or a holder location. And similarly, is a tape a holder if it contains more than 1 digital video? What if it contains more than one analogue video?

Depends. If a digital Artwork (for example a PowerPoint slideshow of digital images) was collected, the CD would probably be considered to be simply a transportation device. The artwork is what was purchased and that would be catalogued (as a digital Collection object, possibly in parts or parent/child) and the file ingested into the system.

If it was a series of images that were not going to be catalogued or stored on EMu, the CD would be catalogued as a analogue Media Asset, with a description of its contents.

If copies are made of a digital file, are these copies Media Assets in their own right?

If it is a duplicate, or a smaller version made directly from the original, and does not need to be stored, no, there is no need to create an MA record. If the new file is sufficiently different to the original that the institution wishes to keep it, it should be recorded as a separate MA.

In the current functionality, multiple resolutions are generated from each original asset. Should these be considered digital assets in their own right? If they are not what is their relationship to a cropped version?

If EMu was able to quickly generate thumbnails and screen viewable version on the fly, there would be no need to store these small versions. However as things stand they are simply smaller access copies required for fast image viewing, and shouldn't

be considered assets in their own right. If for some reason the automatically generated derivatives (the thumbnail and 640 x 640) we lost, they are easily replaceable. The original is not.
If a version was cropped only, we probably would not keep it, its easier to crop it again if necessary from the original.

CONCLUSION

Te Papa would like:

- To manage Collection Object records separate from Media Asset records, but record relationships between these records when appropriate
- The ability to manage digital Collection Object records in a way that acknowledges their status as Collection items, alongside analogue Collection Object records, and allow for appropriate documentation and access
- To manage Media Assets (both Analogue and Digital) in the same module, with the appropriate functionality to describe and manage both to a high standard
- To record information about digital objects without having to open modify or create 2-3 records. The merging of Multimedia into the catalogue, and if created, a Media Asset module should achieve this.
- If a Media Asset module was not created, better management tools to keep Collection and non-collection records in the Catalogue separate for department access and security etc. would be appreciated.