

**Review of Our Digital World <http://ourdigitalworld.org> Accessed 18 March 2013.**

Our Digital World (ODW) is a not-for-profit organization, based in Ontario, Canada. It provides support for libraries, universities and other organizations that maintain digital content for the public.

The ODW website contains numerous links to helpful websites that supply information about digitization projects, such as planning, delivering content and sharing digital collections. More specifically, the links provide details such as estimating project cost, long-term preservation issues, and copyright concerns. ODW also provides links to information regarding use of the various metadata standards, so that users are readily able to find an organization's content.

Additionally, ODW offers consultation and training services, including planning and implementation. Work may be completed on site (presumably in or around Ontario) or virtually. ODW also provides access to digital content especially Canadian newspapers and government documents as well as a service for cultural institutions, the VITA Toolkit.

**VITA Toolkit**

ODW's flagship product for archivists is the VITA Toolkit, **a cloud-based tool for building, managing and displaying digital collections.** The toolkit product allows archivists to upload digital objects, create descriptions and display them with search, browse and other interactive features. The toolkit also permits archivists to create photo essays, virtual exhibits, educational resources and displays. Archivists can group records into sub-collections for highlighting special collections or themes.

The website<sup>1</sup> lists a number of VITA Toolkit customers and provides links to their websites. For example, the website for Rosseau Lake College Digital History has a search function, three featured collections, and a number of other options. Search results can be refined by type of object sought, contributor, year or geographic location. The three featured collections in this particular digital history are Historic Documents, Historic Images and Yearbooks. Users may generate connections between documents through the use of keyword searching. For example, an unlimited search for the name "Smith" shows 21 items associated with three item types, from 21 different contributors, over four date ranges.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://vitatoolkit.ca/showcase/vita-sites>

ODW claims the toolkit customer is able to customize the website's style with banners, graphics or themes. However, a brief review of other customers' websites reveals that their homepages look fairly similar, with rather utilitarian-looking buttons for the available options.

The user is able to interact with the collections by creating connections between images by supplying their own additions or comments. User comments can facilitate building the historical record. Users are able to name, date, and more fully describe digital objects that contain no or inaccurate identifying information. It is in this manner that the VITA Toolkit connects and tells the story between documents and records, their data and the record creators. The nodes are photographs, newspapers and other documents, which are joined by links or the geographical or temporal relationships between them. The user's experience can also be enhanced through links between records and either internal or external resources. These linking opportunities allow users to more fully follow their own interests.

The VITA Toolkit provides documents and the essential tools to allow users to build connections and frameworks. By utilizing the concepts of archival communities, and demonstrating the story between documents, data, and creators, the product affords a cohesive user experience.

Elizabeth Pepper