Jackson County Historical Society

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Tech Solution Evaluation

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Preface

We have approached this evaluation from a hybrid standpoint. The technical solutions to these needs involve both a CMS as well as the scaffolding with which to support it. For this reason, we have divided our suggestions into 5 categories: scanning hardware, OCR software, cloud and hardware storage, CMS, and plug-ins.

Needs:

- Platform for building an online compendium of Jackson County Iowa Historical Society materials
  - Must accommodate short or long text articles, lists, photos, other media etc.
  - Preferably indexed
  - Ability to apply a metadata schema would be a plus, keyword searchable, tag-able
  - Preferably allows use of organizational branding & some visual customization features
  - Meets standard web accessibility and usability guidelines.
  - A data-entry interface that is user-friendly/easily teachable—much of the data entry will be done by volunteers, some with limited technology expertise
  - Relying on staff and volunteers to transcribe; may be able to encourage the community to read and transcribe

Evaluation Criteria

We evaluated each of the five categories based on the criteria listed below:

- Price
- Ease of learning platform, especially for non-tech savvy
- Ease to maintain
- Patron accessibility
- Flexibility to interact software
- Storage scaled appropriately to needs

Recommended Solutions:

- Scanning Hardware/OCR
  - Epson Duplex Desktop Document Scanner
- Price: $270, optional flatbed attachment $110
- User friendly, requires minimal prior knowledge, tech support available if needed
- Little to no maintenance required
- Can be set up to route scans into specified folders.

- Cloud and Hardware Storage
  - Google Drive 2 TB of Storage & 8 TB WD External USB Hard Drive
- Price: For 2 TB of cloud storage there are two options for purchasing. First is paying a monthly fee of $9.99 per month or $99.99 annually where you would save 17% on the price
- The 8 TB External USB Hard Drive is $199.99. There are smaller ones for cheaper however, this offers room to grow for the future and not having to transfer/upgrade later.
- Set up for both the cloud and hardware storage is easy to set up and maintain

Recommended Solutions cont'd:

- Content Management System (CMS)
  - Omeka (example)
  - Offers four paid plans
  - Requires very little tech experience
  - Easy to maintain - Omeka updates the site for you as updated versions of software is released
  - W3C & 508 compliant
  - Omeka's plugin API makes development of plugins to suit the needs of project quick & easy
  - Storage depends on plan chosen

- CMS Plug-ins
  - DIY History by the University of Iowa's Digital Library (view)
  - Free to use/access
  - There is a learning curve, but the team that created the engine is still active at the UIowa Libraries
  - Easy to maintain
  - Easy to access for patrons
  - Only compatible with Omeka
  - Storage is dependent on hosting