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# A Tale of Two Digital Projects: Open Source Tools for Awesome User Engagement

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**Lauren Work**  
**Digital Collections Librarian**  
**10/26/2015**  
**2015 DLF Forum**

Good afternoon, I'm Lauren work, and I'm the digital collections librarian at Virginia Commonwealth University.

# Open Source Tools

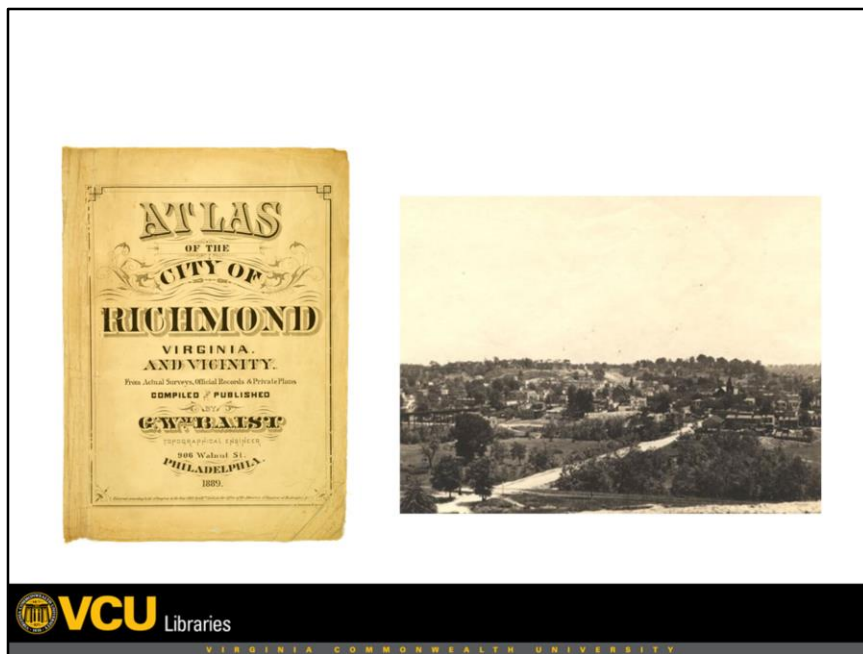
## for Awesome

### User Engagement



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And I'm talking about open source tools for awesome user engagement today.



Over this past year at VCU, we've had several digital projects that really allowed us to think about the ways we're providing access and encouraging further user discovery and engagement with our collections.

The two open source tools that worked well for us were initially used for two distinct projects, but have since been used for additional collections.

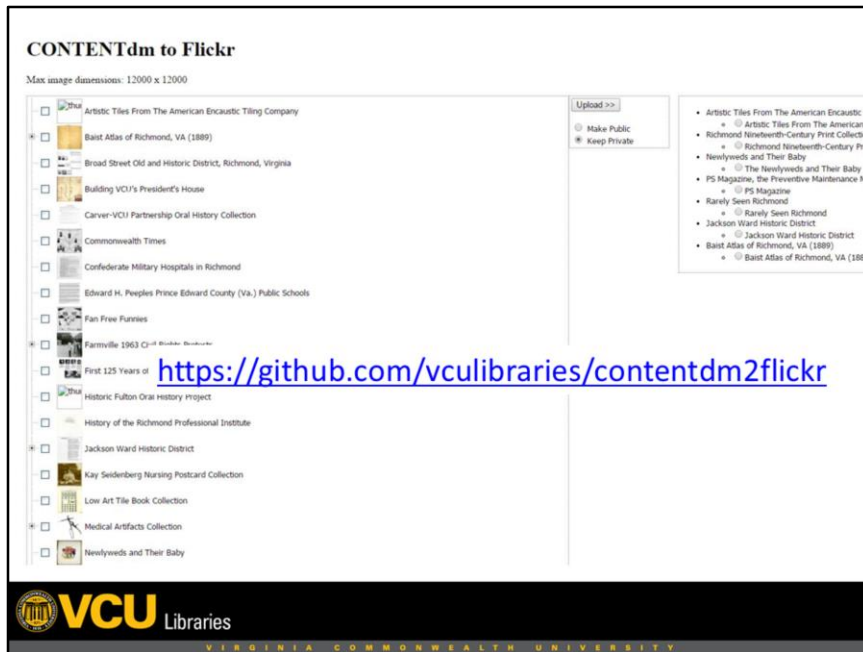
# Tool #1

## CONTENTdm to Flickr Uploader

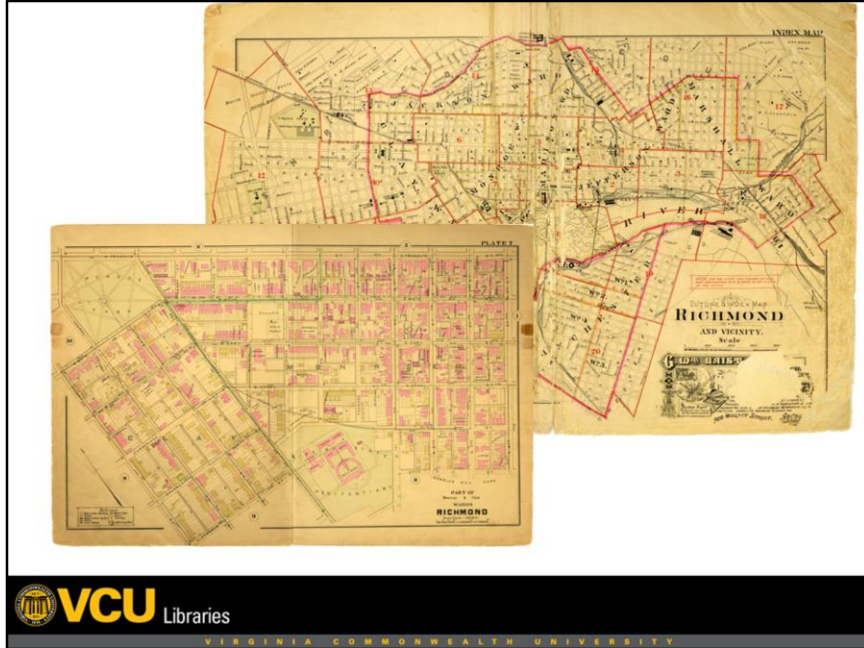


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The first open source tool is the CONTENTdm to Flickr Uploader, which was adapted for use by VCU's Web team, led by our great Web librarian Erin White, from work at the Miami University of Ohio.



We're currently working with CONTENTdm as our main digital asset management system, and this tool allows you to easily grab your content and push it through to Flickr via the Flickr API, your CONTENTdm OAI harvest and PHP.



This tool was used in conjunction with the digitization of a fantastic historic Richmond resource owned by VCU Libraries. The 1889 Baist Atlas of Richmond was a great candidate for digitization – it's within public domain, had not been fully digitized or made available elsewhere, and was in fragile physical state.

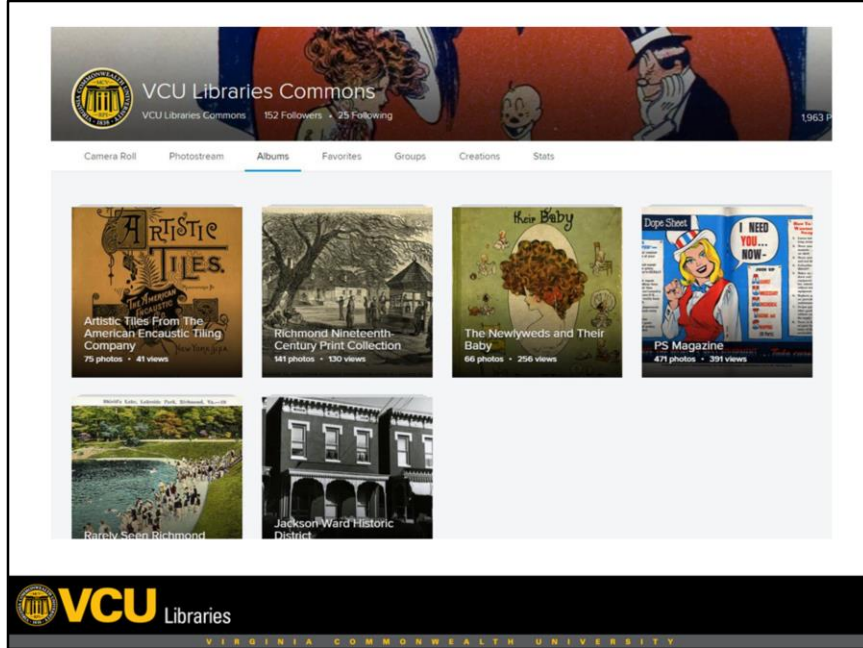
VCU Libraries Baist Atlas Project

<http://labs.library.vcu.edu/baist-atlas/>

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In addition, we not only digitized the atlas, but also built an interactive site with a full street index, historic photos, and map overlays to allow further use of this object as a great research resource.





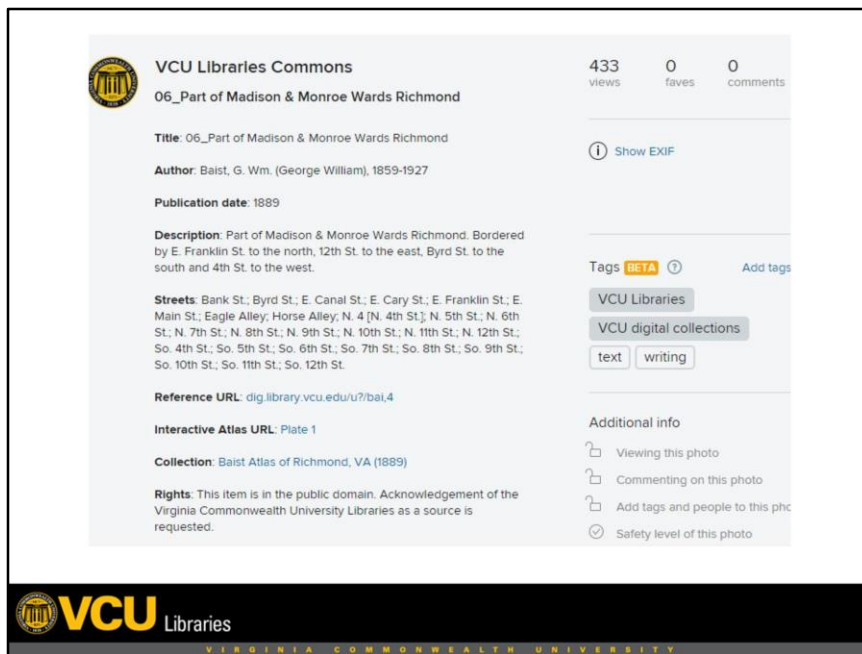
So, what's so great about this open source tool for this project?

There were a few things

First, this is a unique visual resource that we wanted to showcase to as many users as possible.

We had recently joined Flickr Commons earlier in the year, and wanted to ensure that this and other visual collections from CONTENTdm were made as widely available to users as possible. Participating in this large public domain project via the ease of uploading through this tool was a great way to do that.

Additionally, Flickr recently updated their interface, which makes scrolling through and looking at visual content extremely fluid and user friendly, which is something that is not a great strength of CONTENTdm. We've had great engagement from Flickr Commons, and have seen traffic and views increase our collections.



The CONTENTdm to Flickr tool allows you to easily batch all of your metadata from CONTENTdm into Flickr, so you are maintaining controlled records without having to duplicate work. You can also easily link back to your content, or in our case, to our interactive site as well.

Finally, thinking about next steps for the project, we are thinking about crowdsourcing transcription of the many names seen on properties in the Atlas. While we may not ultimately choose Flickr over something like Scripto, it does give us an easy option and wider user base for testing.

## Tool #2

# Quotable



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Simply put, Quotable is an open source tool developed by NPR that allows you to create a shareable visual image of quotations.

**“I’ve made a huge mistake.”**

—G.O.B.

**npr**

<https://github.com/nprapps/quotable>

The New York Times @nytimes · 1h  
Hillary Clinton praises Biden after he decides against running for president  
nyti.ms/1OIWeWZ

“I am confident that history isn’t finished with Joe Biden.”

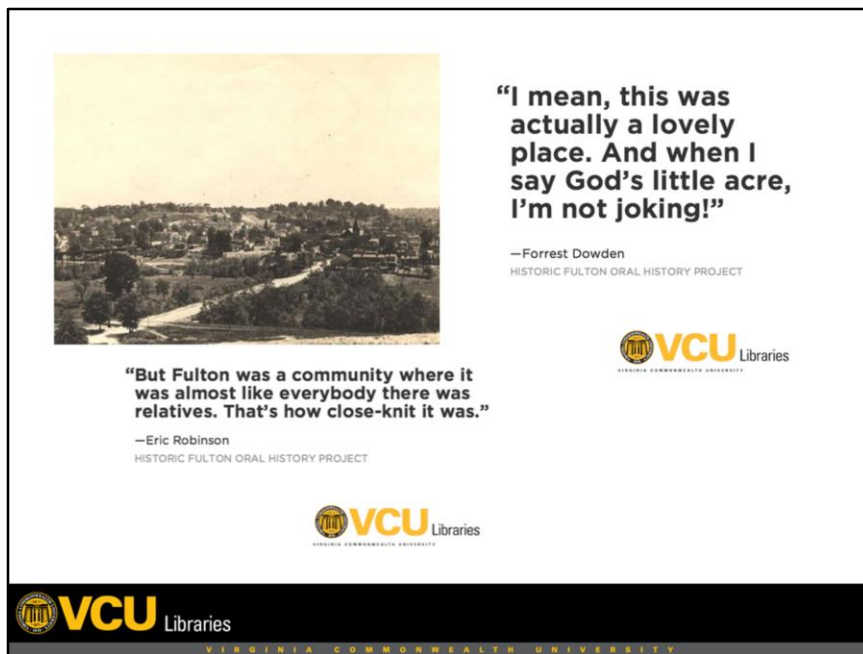
HILLARY CLINTON  
in a statement

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You’ve likely seen examples of this tool in action on Twitter, Facebook or Tumblr feeds as different news outlets have created their own versions for use, for both audio and text-based items.



Audio collections are something that can be difficult to express visually, and we saw an opportunity at VCU to incorporate this tool into a Richmond-based oral history project called the Historic Fulton Oral History project.



This oral history project focuses on recent, 1970s history in Richmond of the City's redevelopment plan for this historically African American neighborhood.

The community is still highly involved in these oral histories, with many of the participants still living in Richmond. So when the opportunity was brought to us to collaborate with the Valentine museum and the Fulton community on this project, we wanted to incorporate ways to both engage future users of the collection, as well as the community that created it.

So we worked with the Fulton oral history committee to pull quotes they deemed most reflective of the collection from the actual transcripts of the interviews, and then used the VCU-branded quotable tool to help promote and introduce the collection.

The Fulton community really liked the continued decision-making control they had over the context and discovery of the collection, and we found that the quotable tool really worked well for us to share non-visual materials.



I hope you've found these open source tools to be helpful, and I look forward to any questions you may have. Thanks.