




WASHINGTON STATE

Queer Poetry
Anthology

MLIS 2024 Capstone

Drew Ahlberg, Helena Farrell, Kate Skow



As an effort to counteract **rising censorship of queer art and literature**, we partnered with the Washington State Poet Laureate and ArtsWA to launch an **anthology of LGBTQIA+ poetry** submitted by authors of all experience levels from across the state.

Team

We are a team of three online MLIS students with diverse experience:



Drew Ahlberg
they/them

CSS
Research
Indexing
Metadata



Helena Farrell
she/her

Database design
Communications
Development
Metadata



Kate Skow
they/them

CSS
Design
User Experience
Metadata

Sponsor



Arianne True
Washington State Poet Laureate

- 🌀 Solicits, reviews, and selects Anthology submissions
- 🌀 Communicates with and distributes survey to poets

With support from



Using **web development**, **indexing**, and **design** skills acquired through the MLIS program, our team built an online repository that blends the nuance of a special collections archive with the user-friendliness of a digital publication.



Objective #1

Research and recommend a platform that can support searching and browsing, is feasible in scope, and offers the necessary tools to create an appealing and user-friendly site.

Cost Projection

	Host	First Year	Subsequent Years	3-Year Projection *	5-Year Projection *
Basic Plans	Hostinger Premium 48-Month Plan	\$29.88	\$29.88 (+\$12.99)	\$119.52 (Four year plan)	\$220.59
	Hostgator Hatchling 36-Month Plan	\$45.00	\$45.00 (+\$12.99)	\$115.98	
	Bluehost Basic 36-Month Plan	\$59.40	\$59.40 (+\$12.99)	\$204.18	
Midrange Plans	Hostinger Business 48-Month Plan	\$44.28	\$44.28 (+\$12.99)	\$114.54	\$292.68
	Hostgator Baby 36-Month Plan	\$54.00	\$54.00 (+\$12.99)	\$133.98	
	Bluehost Choice Plus 36-Month Plan	\$89.40	\$89.40 (+\$12.99)	\$294.18	
Specialty Plans	Github Team Plan	\$44.04	\$48.00	\$140.04	
	Omeka.net Silver Plan	\$75.00	\$75.00	\$225.00	\$375.00

*Assumes no additional security or plugins purchased.

Platform cost analysis

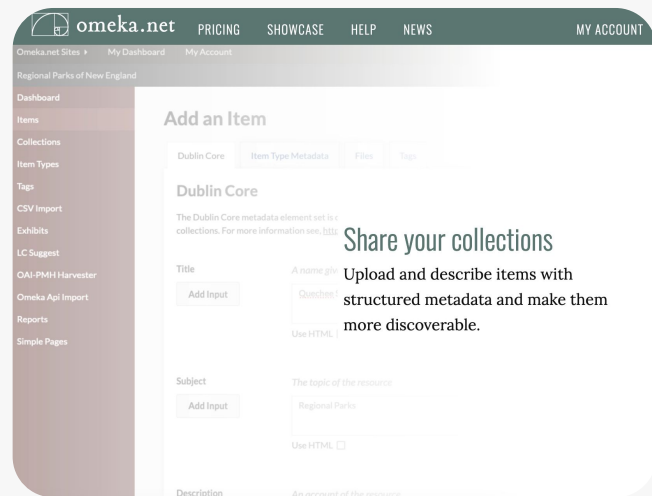
Approach

- 🐉 Meet with ArtsWA representatives to determine **project budget**
- 🐉 Produce and present a **platform pricing and features** report
- 🐉 Determine which features the sponsor wants to **prioritize**
- 🐉 Make **platform recommendation**



After reporting on our findings, we recommended **Omeka.net** as the best platform for the Anthology.

- Low price point to ensure site remains up after WAPL funding ends
- Enough **customizability** to create a strong brand identity
- Rich **advanced search** features



Omeka.net homepage



Queer Poetry Anthology Survey

Thank you for submitting your work to the WA State Queer Poetry Anthology! Your submission will be featured on the Anthology website along with your name and some information about you.

The survey below asks you to provide details about yourself, contains **three sections**, and should take about **ten to fifteen minutes** to complete.

The information you provide will be used to help readers find your poem and poems by other authors on the Queer Poetry Anthology website, as well as to help us connect your poem to similar works based on shared identity and personal background.

Survey sent to all accepted authors

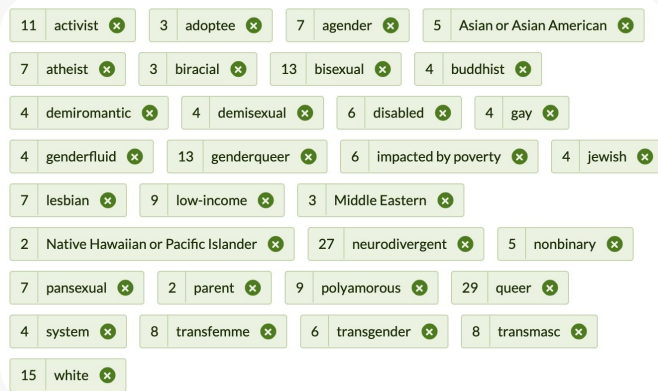
Objective #2

Assess the collection and survey all poets to determine how best to represent each work and enable easy browsing and discovery.

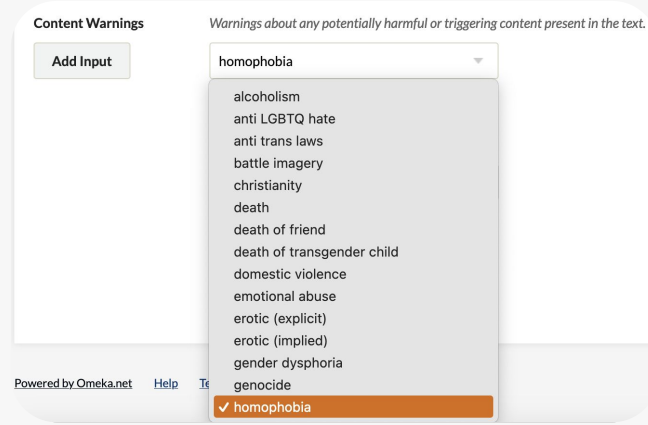
Approach

- 🐉 Create a **survey** to be sent to all accepted authors
- 🐉 Use survey data about **theme and identity** to inform site tag structure and organization
- 🐉 Develop additional controlled vocabulary for **content warnings**

Based on data harvested from survey responses and analysis of accepted poems, we created **two controlled vocabularies** to enhance ease of use.



Browsing: Controlled vocabulary for “identity” item tags



Filtering: Controlled vocabulary for “content warning” item element

Objective #3

Design and implement the digital anthology as a fully-featured, navigable, and accessible website using the selected platform.

Configure Plugin: CSS Editor

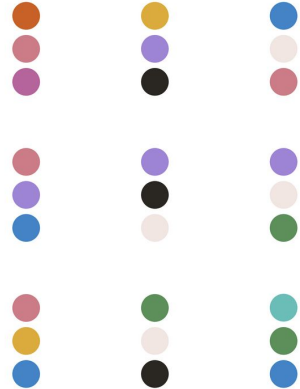
CSS

The custom CSS you would like to add.

```
#item-citation .element-text {  
padding-left:0;  
text-indent:0;  
font-size:14px;  
}
```

```
#poem-  
#dubl  
displ  
}
```

```
#cont  
text-  
font-  
}
```



Ongoing site development


Approach

Site structure

- 🐉 Analyze Omeka.net customization features
- 🐉 Determine which **item types** and **elements** to use
- 🐉 Build **user-facing website**, emphasizing plain language and easy navigation

Visual identity

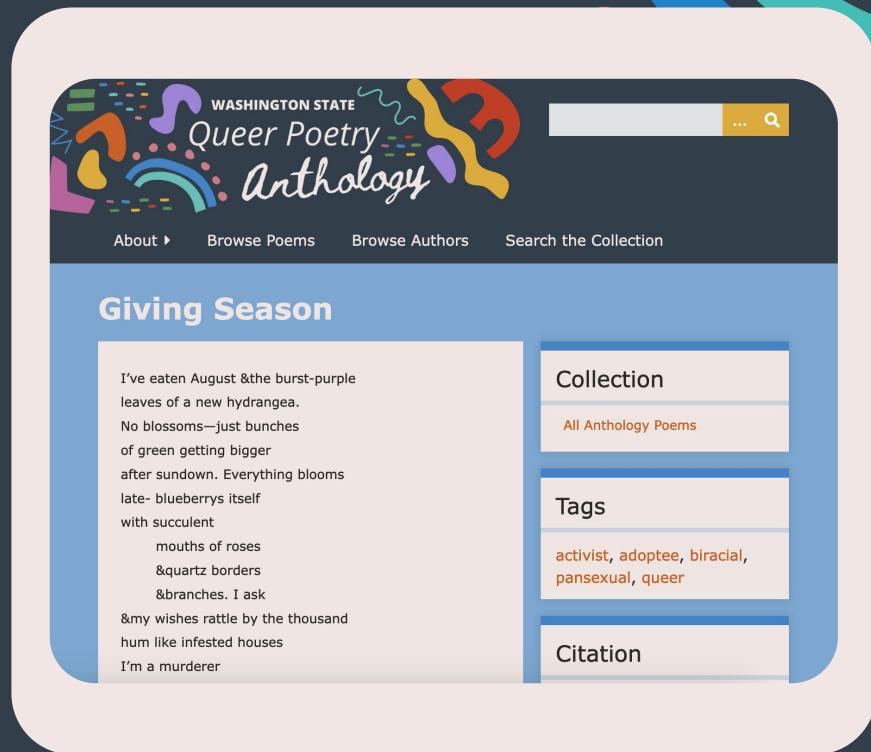
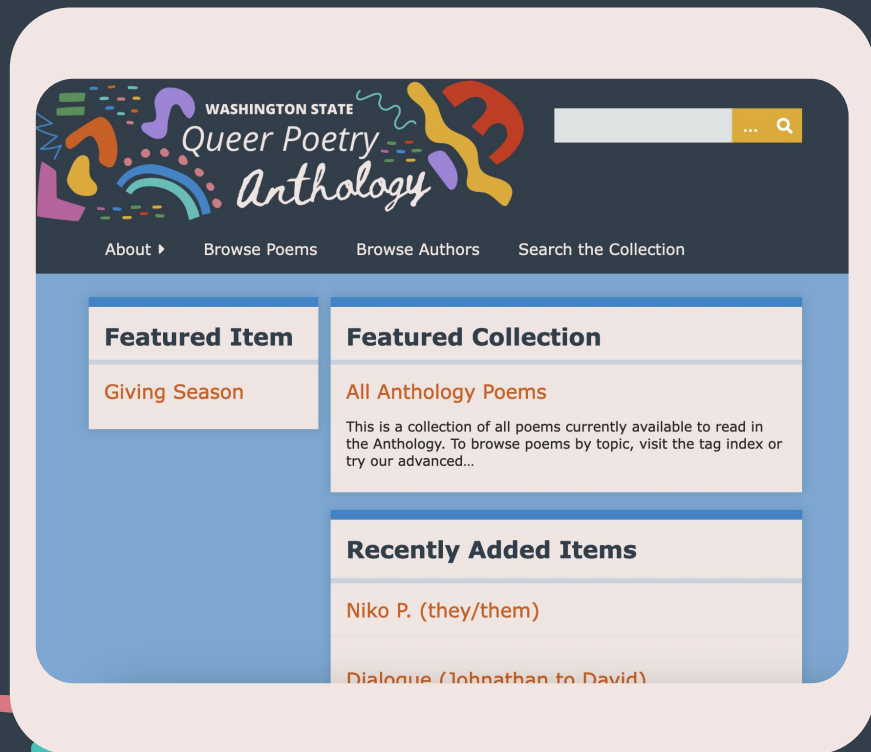
- 🐉 Develop **color palette** and site look and feel
- 🐉 Create **header image** and **graphics suite**
- 🐉 Adjust site appearance using **CSS plugin**



We developed a compelling graphic identity and made adjustments to our Omeka.net site's code to enhance usability.

For our final Capstone deliverable, we published an **initial collection of browseable, searchable Anthology poems** to the site.

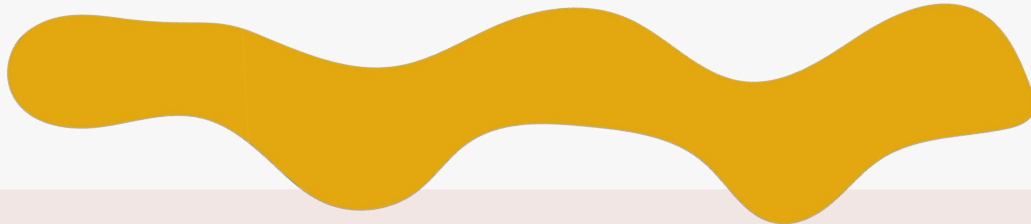
Anthology front page



Sample item page



In late 2024, the Poet Laureate will tour the state and **share the anthology as a teaching tool** in support of ArtsWA's mission to **make diverse art accessible** in Washington communities.



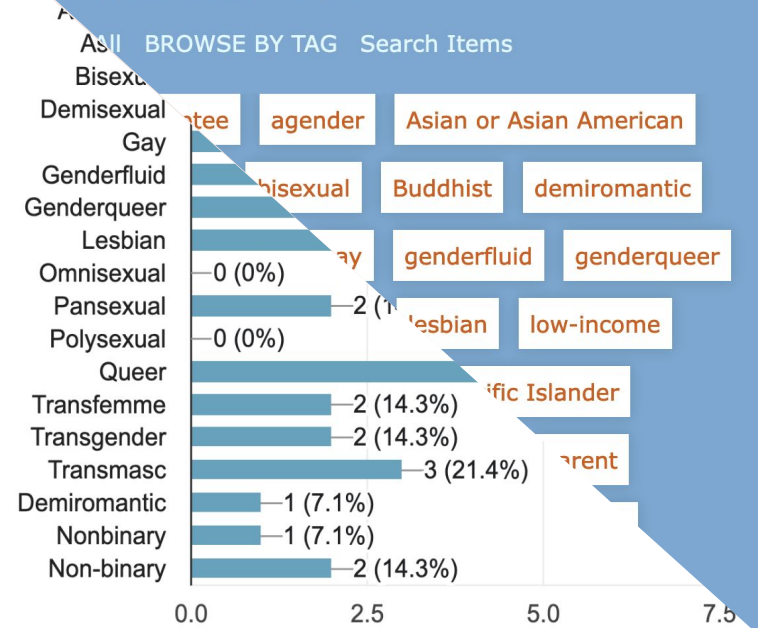
Challenges

- 🌀 **Budget constraints** impacted our platform decision and **limited our access** to certain features such as HTML editing.
- 🌀 Having so many **project stakeholders**, from ArtsWA to individual poets, created **timeline uncertainties**.
- 🌀 The **broad scope** of our project put us at risk of **losing focus**.

Challenges (cont'd.)

- 🦋 Friction exists between knowledge organization's emphasis on **categorization, labeling, and placement** and queer communities' embrace of **play and fluidity**.
- 🦋 In this project, we needed to find **middle ground** between *findability* and *flexibility*.

Browse Items



Findable: The site employs a tag system that can be browsed and searched on.

Flexible: The tag system is partially folksonomic—contributors can suggest new terms, changes, or definitions.



Evaluation

While the project is set to continue past our Capstone, we were successful in completing our objectives to build an initial product.


- 🐾 Creation of a successful poet **survey**
- 🐾 Application of **controlled vocabulary** and **tags**
- 🐾 Finalized **design** and **branding**
- 🐾 Implementing **site structure** to promote findability

Evaluation (cont'd.)

Much of our design process was done with users in mind, imagining interaction and experience with the website based on:

- 👉 Different age ranges
- 👉 Accessibility needs
- 👉 Familiarity with similar platforms

Weekly review at all stages of the design process by our ArtsWA stakeholders provided valuable insight about **potential issues** or **areas of need**.



Following the conclusion of our Capstone, our team will continue working with the Poet Laureate to process, upload, and tag over **800+ remaining poetry submissions.**





Once the project is complete, the Poet Laureate plans to **keep the site open in perpetuity**, referencing handover documentation produced by our team.





WASHINGTON STATE

Queer Poetry
Anthology

github.com/helenacanhel/queer-anth

