

Technical Information



Almagest was designed to be a web-accessible database for describing objects, places and people and linking these concepts to media files used in teaching Art History, initially. This tool has since been applied in similar ways in many disciplines.

Images and their identifying information are delivered across the internet using standard web browsers. In addition to Almagest's support of rich data structures, basic slide databases are supported in a simple manner. More complex uses of the database build on an interlinked set of tables designed to describe and hyperlink works of art, literature, sites, bibliography, glossary and all manner of attributes.

Almagest is built on an Oracle9i database and delivered to the end user via Java and Java server pages using an Apache Web server with Macromedia's JRUN 4.



The Almagest database is supported by the Mediaworks Educational Technology and Faculty Support Groups.

Mediaworks staff offer consultation regarding planning and the development of Almagest projects.

For more information about the Almagest database, contact:

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Almagest

An
online
media
management
and presentation tool
for teaching and learning

Almagest

is a relational database for the storage, cataloging and display of images, text, video, sound and many other file types. The Almagest database was designed and developed by the Educational Technologies Center at Princeton University. The database is the result of more than a decade of development. In December of 2003 Almagest was brought to the University of California Davis where it will also be maintained and supported by the Educational Technology Group in Mediaworks. Faculty support will be provided by the staff at the Arbor and by Mediaworks.

Manages & Stores Media



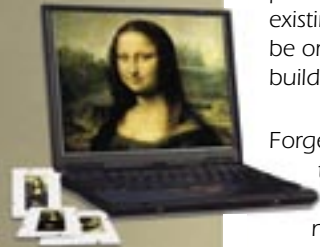
Files cataloged in Almagest are linked to other data records. New images and documents can be linked to related art objects that are already cataloged, greatly facilitating data entry. Any number of new records can be added to the database. A variety of search tools can be used to retrieve files and their relationships to other objects in the database.

Creates & Displays Digital Lectures or Presentations

Got slides? Get digital! The structure of the Almagest database can give you a head-start in converting your slide library to a digital image collection. Almagest has a built-in display tool that uses a light-table analogy to sequence and save presentations. Because Almagest is web-based, saved lectures can be shown in the classroom and used as an online review and study resource by students.

You are not limited to Image files in making your presentations: video clips, e-texts, external web links, even existing Microsoft PowerPoint, Excel, or Word files can be organized and displayed using the Almagest lecture building tool.

Forget the tiresome prospect of reassembling your slide trays quarter after quarter. In Almagest, your lectures and presentations are preserved for the next time you need them. They can be edited and updated at any time.



Annotates & Contextualizes Teaching Data



Are your students' skills in critical thinking equal to interpreting the information they find on the internet? You can give them better data.

In addition to the basic object record, the Almagest database has tools that enable you to deliver context-specific information to your students. For example, you can capture your own interpretation or description of a work of art and provide links to other objects and interpretations to inspire discussion. Invite your students to contribute their own comments, comparisons and research, and archive their work for future offerings of the course.

Project based content will not alter the basic object record used by you or a colleague in a different context.

2004 & Beyond?

Almagest has been in continual use for over a decade. In looking forward, we want to know what additional capabilities would most meet your needs. Here's what we are currently working to achieve.

Extended cross-platform functionality

Cross collection search functionality: explore library-based collections (ArtStor, AMICO) in addition to your existing database.

Expanded import and export options

Adopting standard art history import and export options, including:

- ARTStor
- VRA Core
- Dublin Core

Exporting lectures made in Almagest to third-party portable formats:

- Microsoft PowerPoint
- Macromedia Shockwave and Flash Players

Simplified user interfaces and authoring tools

- Extending the existing Flash/Java display modules to enable multi-layered image comparisons and to enhance the display and manipulation of maps.
- Collecting and displaying objects in a user-defined timeline.

