

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Almagest was designed to be a web-accessible database for describing objects, places and people and linking these concepts to image files used in many different courses to provide course-related resources.

Images and their identifying information are delivered across the internet using standard web browsers. In addition to Almagest's support of rich data structure, simple 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 and literature, sites, bibliography, glossary and all manner of attributes.

Almagest is built in an Oracle 9i database and delivered to the end user via Java and Java server pages using an Apache Web server with Macromedia's JRUN 4.

For more information about the Almagest Database:

<http://www.princeton.edu/~almagest/opensource/>

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The Almagest database (© 2003 Princeton University) was designed and developed at Princeton University by Kirk Alexander, Kevin Perry (perry@princeton.edu) and their colleagues. Almagest is maintained by the Educational Technologies Center (ETC) at Princeton University. In 2003, ETC joined with IET Mediaworks at UC Davis (under the direction of Kirk Alexander, kdalex@ucdavis.edu) as a contributing partner in the ongoing development of the Almagest database. Almagest will soon be available as open source software, and it is hoped that an Almagest user community will develop to expand and improve the functionality of the database.

Almagest

Open Source

A database for teaching & learning



Almagest 2005

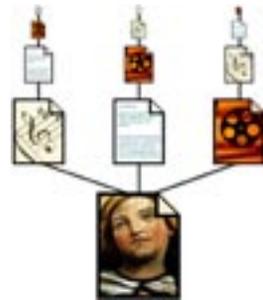


Almagest is a relational database for the storage, cataloging and display of images, text, video, sound, and many other file types. The database is the result of more than a decade of development and has been used as a tool for teaching and scholarship at Princeton University for the past nine years.

“Almagest gives faculty a tool for contextualizing, managing, and presenting digital media for teaching and research.”

MANAGES AND 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 AND DISPLAYS DIGITAL LECTURES AND 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 your 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. Offline presentations can be created by using the ‘Publish to PowerPoint’ tool.

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

“Almagest is both a digital image database and a sophisticated presentation tool, providing users with a powerful and elegant solution for teaching and study.”

ANNOTATES AND CONTEXTUALIZES DATA FOR TEACHING

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, capture your own interpretation or description of a work of art. 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.

(This project-based content will not alter the basic object record used by you or a colleague in a different context.)

— Trudy Jacoby, Director, Visual Resources Collection, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University

ALMAGEST, 2005 AND BEYOND?

Almagest is in the process of development. 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: search library-based collections in addition to your existing database.

EXPANDED IMPORT AND EXPORT OPTIONS

Exporting lectures made in Almagest to include 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 art objects in a user defined timeline.

-Simplifying data upload and cataloging tools for end users.