

## CONNECTING AND ENGAGING THROUGH BIBLIOBOARD

Does your organization have its archival records digitized and online? Are you thinking of uploading your content online?

Over the past nine months the Craigleith Heritage Depot in the Town of The Blue Mountains has been able to highlight items in the archival collection and more using a great platform to reach people around the world and build new connections both near and far.



The following paper provides colleagues with a taste of the possibilities with BiblioBoard to engage and connect with audiences by providing an overview of the platform, of Craigleith Heritage Depot's experiences as a case study, and other possible uses of BiblioBoard.

### ABOUT THE CRAIGLEITH HERITAGE DEPOT

The Craigleith Heritage Depot is a museum and archives located in a historic train station in The Town of The Blue Mountains, roughly between the towns of Thornbury and Collingwood on South Georgian Bay, and within the boundary of Treaty 18 region of 1818, which is the traditional land of the Anishnaabek, Haudenosaunee and Wendat/Wyandot/Wyandotte peoples. The Craigleith Heritage Depot is also a branch of the Blue Mountains Public Library and operates as a local tourist information centre. The Blue Mountains Public Library is the overarching organization, and it manages the GLAM: an art gallery, library, archive and museum for the local community and visitors.

### WHY BIBLIOBOARD?

In 2016, after changes in administration and operation of the Craigleith Heritage Depot, the Craigleith Heritage Depot united with the L.E. Shore Memorial Library and Gallery under the new umbrella of the Blue Mountains Public Library. At that time there was an online collection of historic photos from circa 2005 and a community history project started in 2014. We had a library catalogue system and an internal museum catalogue (Past Perfect) as well. There was a need to put the resources on equal footing so that library users, museum researchers, and people around the world could discover the fascinating resources that we have to offer.

There was also a desire to curate the resources rather than have an inventory of listings, and do so in an attractive way that augments the user experience. In addition, we wanted the community to be able to respond to the resources and to submit items of their own. BiblioBoard also offers appealing features for indie writers. It was decided that BiblioBoard could meet these needs and more.

### ABOUT BIBLIOBOARD

According to BiblioBoard, "in partnership with your library, [BiblioBoard] is dedicated to providing communities with powerful tools to create, share, and discover local content. You can use BiblioBoard's

community engagement tools to showcase local history collections, feature local artists, support local authors, and so much more, all with instant, unlimited, multi-user access.”<sup>1</sup>

For institutions like ours, it is a platform to engage with curious minds near and far. BiblioBoard is willing to work with any organization, not libraries solely, but generally an organization would be paired with a library.

As touched on, BiblioBoard offers several services, including **e-publishing services for writers** (Pressbooks, SelfE) and ways for the public to find readers through programs like the Ontario Author Project. These tools could be useful for genealogists or local historians who wish to publish their work and make it available online.

BiblioBoard also has **custom creation tools** to make *curations*, where you can bring in a wide variety of content united under a theme, or *anthologies* where content is created by uploading material such as pictures, book information, film clips, items in the public domain, digital copies of archival material, pictures of artifacts, and more.

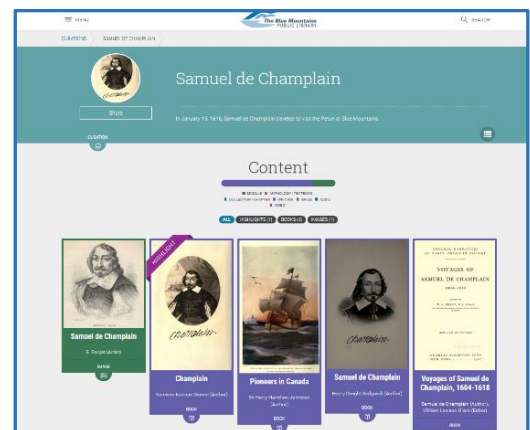
BiblioBoard also offers the ability to create **customized submission forms** to accept digital submissions, which can be tailored to your unique projects.

## HOW WE USE BIBLIOBOARD

At the Craigeith Heritage Depot we **create content** using BiblioBoard’s content creation tool, Creator, and we’ve published four anthologies so far with our first, about children’s illustrator Walter Trier, launched in September 2018. We started with topics that are in demand, for which we have stories ready to go, or that required minimal additional research. We are uploading images, movie clips, textual stories, and book information with a goal of uniting the total collections including archival material.

For particular anthologies we have created **custom submission forms** and are seeking digital contributions to stories. BiblioBoard offers a custom submission form as part of its package. Customized by the participating institution, it is a readymade online form that prompts a user to upload an item and share available details. The process also prompts the user for an acknowledgment that they own copyright or that it is in the public domain. This is not a donation process to us, but a virtual contribution to an online project.

Through a **curation** feature, we are able to curate broader themes, which can be useful for researchers and students. We not only have access to content that we have uploaded to BiblioBoard, but also public domain content to which BiblioBoard provides access, and content that other creators have uploaded. In a curation of Samuel de Champlain, for example, we used solely public domain material that we pulled in from elsewhere on BiblioBoard.



<sup>1</sup> According to Emily Gooding, Community Engagement Manager, BiblioLabs. 22 Apr. 2019.

BiblioBoard also acts like a **visual finding aid** for materials across branches.

There is an **increased potential for visitors** through our doors due to BiblioBoard. We encourage people to visit us in person in much of the text that accompanies uploaded materials.

### **BENEFITS OF BIBLIOBOARD - for staff**

Being **online based**, staff in different locations may access the platform with an internet connection. For example, museum staff at the Craigleith Heritage Depot may add content, and a library manager at the L.E. Shore Library can access or make additions to content.

The platform provides us with a way to **thematically link** archival materials and museum artifacts to library books and more. It provides us with a way to link materials across branches, reach a greater audience with a ready-made platform with very helpful support.

**Creator** is BiblioBoard's online-based content management software, and it makes adding and describing content user-friendly and **straightforward**. Creator includes built-in fields for **search engine terms and specific target audiences** so the web marketing team can help people find your content. We can also keep content changing so it doesn't get static. We can change which items are highlighted, order and re-order the placement of curations on the webpage itself, make additions or edits quickly and easily.

Through other fields the platform provides opportunities to **acknowledge contributors** and owners, and **copyright and image usage rights** must be acknowledged when uploading content.

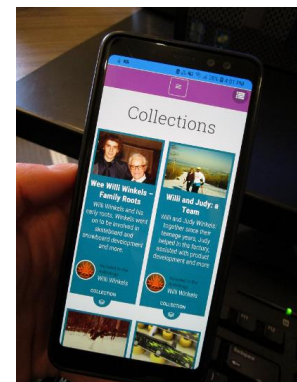
BiblioBoard is also **MARC** (or "Machine-readable cataloguing") compatible. This makes it very easy for a staff member to import the record of an item into a catalogue. For example, a link to the BiblioBoard online resource about illustrator Walter Trier can be located through a keyword search on our library's online public access catalogue. This enables library users to find this resource along with other books on the same topic. For organizations not affiliated with a public library, there is opportunity to build a partnership with one in your community. MARC records can be provided to the library to share on their public access catalogue, which increases chances of the information being found and builds a stronger rapport between organizations.

### **BENEFITS OF BIBLIOBOARD – for Users**

BiblioBoard offers a platform for collections in a **user-friendly way, attractive way** that is contemporary and intuitive to use.

Much of Biblioboard's content is available to anyone in the world using **Open Access**, which means that a wider audience has access to the uploaded content. There is an option for subscribing members (for example, the Blue Mountains Public Library which includes the Craigleith Heritage Depot) to choose to restrict viewership to local viewers only, however.

Users can perform **keyword searches** for material, as they would in a regular web browser, and they can refine searches in a variety of ways. They can view details, zoom in, make a note, make a comment, and share on social media. This makes it easier for a user to search across organizations and increases the likelihood of someone finding material from across the world.

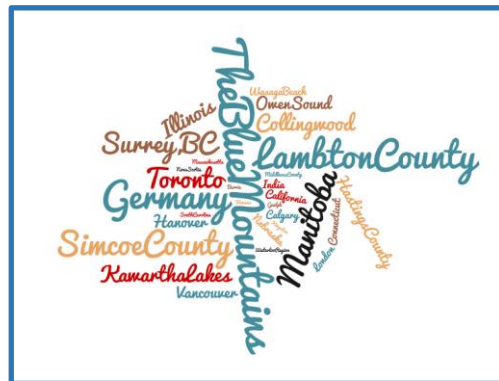


A **BiblioBoard app** is available for devices, which means that we can bring our collections into a popular method of content consumption. To quote BiblioBoard, “These elegant, digital products work on the Web and native Apps for iOS and Android devices, including the iPad®, iPhone®, Kindle Fire® HD, and Android tablets & phones.”<sup>2</sup>

### OUR SUCCESSES WITH BIBLIOBOARD – a case study:

Based on stats received from BiblioBoard, it is apparent that people from all around the world are accessing BiblioBoard content, from places such as: Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia, various US states, Germany and India, and usage is on the upward trend.

In creating content over the past nine months we have been able to reach out to people and organizations with which we would not otherwise have made a **connection**, including a local conservation authority, Art Gallery of Ontario, a regional magazine *Mountain Life*, the Czech community in Toronto, and even former pro skateboarders.



Creating online anthologies with BiblioBoard can be a great project for a computer-savvy **volunteer**, with staff supervision. For several months this winter and spring, we had a volunteer who performed background research and sourced extra images, documents, and liaised with organizations on our behalf with success.

### CHALLENGES

We have had some challenges **receiving submissions** using the online submission form. For our first custom-created submission form, we had been encouraging people to submit any memories of Walter Trier and his artwork. Walter Trier died in 1951 and anyone who knew him or remembered his painting hanging in the local Ski Barn would be in their late eighties or nineties and less likely to share materials online. It requires some rethinking in who our target audience is for each project, and how to reach them.

Although I find the process of submitting material on BiblioBoard quite streamlined, we do need to look at how to make this process easier for those who experience computer skill barriers. There is a **tech barrier** for some people, and that means that we may need to gather stories in a traditional format as well. We are also considering creating a simple online tutorial video.

**Staff time** is an additional consideration. Before creating a dedicated position to manage content creation on BiblioBoard, the staff at CHD had many ideas and motivation to create anthologies on BiblioBoard but not the time to do it. The ideas and intentions were there but a new part-time position with a focus on BiblioBoard had to be created.

Although BiblioBoard does provide multiple digital media formats, some specific ones are not supported by the BiblioBoard platform, such as those connected to gaming media.

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<sup>2</sup> LLC, BiblioLabs. “Creator a BiblioBoard Solution.” *BiblioBoard Creator Login*, BiblioBoard, creator.biblioboard.com/. Accessed April 19, 2019.

Although not necessarily a challenge, we do need to be **creative about how to upload materials** at times. When uploading content using Creator, the fields are not exactly the same as those for archival description, which means descriptions need to be adapted to fit the available fields. Depending on an archives' needs, BiblioBoard could be a great complementary tool to an existing inventory-style finding aid online. BiblioBoard is streamlined so that there are a specific number of required boxes to fill out, and sometimes the choices don't match the information available. There are ways around it, and Museum Assistant Allison Brown can be reached for further comments and ideas.

### **INNOVATIVE USES**

Apart from specific file formats, BiblioBoard can handle most media in a variety of common formats. Which means it can accommodate a diverse array of storytelling media, such as: film, songs, audio recordings, digital print, ebooks, images. Other organizations have invited community members to submit art, music, and writing. The platform could be a great way to solicit contributions to and showcase an oral history project, short film series and more.

The custom submission form can be very handy for submissions or competitions. For example, if an archive wants to encourage submission of pictures, songs, stories for an anniversary project.

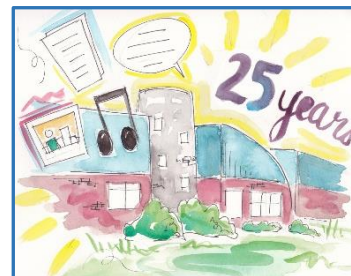
Community engagement success stories may be found at:

<https://createsharediscover.com/resources/success-stories/>

### **WHERE TO NEXT**

Staff at the Craigeith Heritage Depot will continue to share new stories on BiblioBoard while maintaining and adding fresh content to published projects. We will keep the links to our custom submission forms active.

With an easy-to-use upload tool, we look forward to using this new platform to share our Reel History film project series with new audiences in an easily-accessed way.



In 2020 we will use BiblioBoard to highlight the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the L.E. Shore Memorial Library through architectural drawings, textual stories and more, and we will invite people to share music and art, pictures and stories through custom submission forms in order to add to the story.

### **CONCLUSION**

Biblioboard allows us to reach out with wide arms, and invite people to share in community stories. We're excited about the possibilities and stories to share both near and far from the Town of The Blue Mountains. Some of you may be considering BiblioBoard or other platforms for digitized collections, and the ideas offered here may prove helpful for your consideration.

### **LEARN MORE**

Download the BiblioBoard app on your phone or tablet, and take time to search using Open Access on your computer: <https://library.biblioboard.com/home>

For questions regarding Craigeith Heritage Depot's experience using BiblioBoard, Allison Brown, Museum Assistant, can be reached at [depot@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:depot@thebluemountains.ca)

Cara Eakes, Support Specialist at BiblioBoard, welcomes people to contact her with any questions. There are also great tutorials online for Creator and BiblioBoard at:

<https://creatordocs.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/training/overview>

**Cara Eakes**

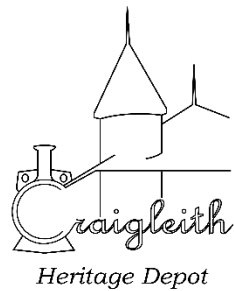
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**For Creator training:** <https://createsharediscover.com/support/live-trainings/>



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