PlacePress: A WordPress Plugin for Publishing Location-based Stories and Tours

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Project Summary

PlacePress has concluded its initial two years of development with support from a Level II Digital Humanities Advancement Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The PlacePress initiative is based at the Center for Public History + Digital Humanities (CPHDH) at Cleveland State University (CSU), an urban public research university in Cleveland, Ohio.

PlacePress is a modern plugin for WordPress, the world’s most widely used content management system. Its purpose is to tailor WordPress for effective, inexpensive location-based digital storytelling, offering content creators a compelling and highly flexible alternative to other commonly used platforms for this purpose, e.g., Curatescape, ESRI StoryMaps, and StoryMap JS.

In 2019 CPHDH developed a rudimentary alpha version of the new plugin and then, with NEH funding, set out in the following year to expand and refine the plugin for wider use. During the grant period, CPHDH developed a fully functioning build of PlacePress, worked with teams with preexisting location-based project concepts who agreed to test the plugin as they developed content, engaged a remote user testing expert to recruit participants to test and report on their experiences using PlacePress, piloted the plugin for two CSU-based digital projects, undertook refinements to the plugin, and created an online user guide.

Project Origins and Goals

“PlacePress” expands upon more than a decade of practice in location-based digital history by the Center for Public History + Digital Humanities (CPHDH) at Cleveland State University. A 2011 NEH ODH grant supported the Center’s development of Curatescape, an Omeka-based web and mobile framework that remains one of the principal platforms for publishing location-based history projects. To date, nearly 70 known Curatescape projects are active worldwide. Using subsequent funding from NEH ODH grants awarded in 2014 and 2017, CPHDH developed and refined a prototype Curatescape plugin for WordPress as part of a research collaboration with Maseno University in Kenya. This project’s principal aim was to develop a Curatescape-like tool that was optimized for developing-world contexts where financial and technological constraints make a low-bandwidth, low-cost, low-maintenance platform necessary to encourage project sustainability. The project team tested the new plugin by building a Curatescape project called MaCleKi, a website to showcase place-based histories of sites in and around Kisumu, Kenya.¹

The Curatescape plugin added Stories and Tours as new content types in WordPress and introduced data-saving processes. The project’s custom theme was similarly tailored to conserve data usage in ways that are detailed in the 2017-18 grant white paper. The MaCleKi website continues to serve the Kisumu project, but as the latter grant period ended, WordPress introduced a radically different version that included the new block editor (nicknamed Gutenberg).² This new version’s release required our team to consider redevelopment as an assurance of longer sustainability. Accordingly, we applied for a new NEH grant to support a completely new plugin. The major changes to WordPress presented an opportunity to rethink whether our earlier approach to emulate Curatescape’s features was the best approach. We decided that it was not. Instead, we planned to create a plugin that would capture the essence of Curatescape (the ability to map locations and tours).

² For an interactive example of the block editor, see: https://wordpress.org/gutenberg/.
while respecting that WordPress is, for better or worse, a fundamentally different environment from Omeka.

Recognizing these differences is key to understanding the choices we faced in designing PlacePress. Omeka is conceptually centered around the needs and practices of archivists, librarians, and other primary-source researchers. Thus, it relies primarily on the use of standardized metadata fields, creating a consistent, controlled environment for publishing. WordPress, on the other hand, is designed for maximum flexibility. Especially since the addition of the block editor, users are given free rein to create whatever type of content they desire. There are few controlled/universal input fields. Instead, pages are designed visually using a “What you see is what you get” (WYSIWYG) interface. Content creation in Omeka involves filling out a predefined form and uploading associated files – visual design and page layout are largely beyond the control of content creators. In WordPress, content creators control not just the content of a page but also nearly every aspect of its layout and visual design. Further, whereas Omeka has a relatively predictable navigation scheme (there are certain pages that always exist), WordPress navigation is completely unpredictable. WordPress users may organize pages of many different types however they wish. Likewise, WordPress theme designers employ wildly varying implementation methods, meaning some themes may support certain features while others may not. Just because WordPress offers, say, a hook for plugins to modify a page header, doesn’t mean that hook will be available in every theme (or even most).³

Thus, a modern WordPress plugin must be adaptable to many use cases. Users must be able to place content blocks in any order on a page and control its layout and dimensions. The plugin must be functional and visually consistent within the context of any theme and in combination with any number of additional plugins. It must not be totally dependent upon a “typical” navigation scheme or design convention. And it must adapt to unknown factors such as whether a theme designer has included a particular hook for modifying an element that itself may or may not exist in the page. Finally, a block-based plugin cannot control how the user chooses to implement a particular block; the plugin developer must accept the reality that some users are more adept at crafting a visually and functionally coherent experience than others.

Project Team and Participants

The project team consisted of Dr. J. Mark Souther, Professor of History and Director of CPHDH at Cleveland State University, and Erin J. Bell, Web Developer and Project Coordinator at CPHDH. Souther’s expertise included scholarly specializations in urban history and the history of tourism and 15 years of experience directing public and digital history projects and digital humanities tool development. Bell’s expertise included graduate training in library and information sciences and more than a decade of experience in web, app, and software development with a specialization in digital humanities.

Grant participants included a remote user testing expert, Kate Thornhill, Digital Scholarship Librarian at the University of Oregon Libraries, who recruited and worked directly with twelve testing participants whose feedback was anonymized. Additionally, it included two content

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³ Hooks are a way for one piece of code to interact with or modify another piece of code at specific, pre-defined spots. They make up the foundation for how plugins and themes interact with WordPress. See: https://developer.wordpress.org/plugins/hooks/.
development directors for partner projects, Dr. Tracy Neumann, Professor of History at Wayne State University, and Dr. Aaron Cowan, Associate Professor of History at Slippery Rock University, both possessing extensive experience as urban and public historians. Two of their project partners were also named in the grant: Elizabeth Iszler of Wayne County Parks, who collaborated with Dr. Neumann and others on a digital companion to the Hines Heritage Trail in Detroit’s Hines Park, and Ed Petrus of the Lawrence County Historical Society, who worked with Dr. Cowan and others on a thematic digital tour of the historic district in New Castle, Pennsylvania. Graduate research assistants hired for these partner projects included Amber Harrison (Wayne State) and Philip Erdos (Slippery Rock). The grant also supported two external project advisors, each with public history and digital humanities expertise: Dr. Lindsey Passenger Wieck at St. Mary’s University of San Antonio and Dr. Jeffrey McClurken at Mary Washington University.

Project Activities and Outcomes

The PlacePress grant supported development of the new plugin by CPHDH developer Erin Bell in fall 2020. In our grant proposal, we created a series of user personas to narrow our focus around a series of prototypical PlacePress users. Our personas included a project manager for a state historical society, an outreach coordinator for a non-profit community development corporation, a high school social studies teacher, a local history librarian, a student in an undergraduate digital humanities course, and a public history professor at an urban university. These personas also informed our process for selecting participants for user testing.

The PlacePress plugin creates two new custom post types – Location and Tour. Each of these post types works the same as the default post type (called Post) but gives users access to additional PlacePress blocks. There are also a number of plugin-level configurations that determine how the plugin presents itself to content creators, how data is displayed to end users, and how it interacts with the active theme. Extensive documentation is available on the plugin settings page as well as on the project website, with relevant contextual information and links also readily available in the block sidebar within the editor interface.

In a Location post, users may add a Location Map block. This block adds an interactive map of a single location to the page. Users may customize the coordinates, caption, info window text, zoom level, and map type (e.g., street, terrain, or satellite). Adding the block also creates a reference in the database so that the location may be displayed in aggregate on additional maps. Additionally, users may add a Location Type (which works the same as the default Category) and a Location Image (which works the same as the default Featured Image). The Global Map block allows users to create a map containing all Locations and may optionally be configured to display only Locations with a specific Location Type. Like the Location Map block, the Global Map block may be configured to include a caption and use any of the predefined map types. Users may also configure the plugin/site so that a Global Map is included on the homepage and/or so that a map limited by type is displayed at the top of Location Type archive pages (i.e., when browsing a list of locations having a specific type).

In a Tour post, content creators may add multiple Tour Stop blocks to curate a geographical and/or thematic tour. The Tour Stop block combines a representative image for a tour stop location with a map of the tour stop location, and it also serves as a section header. As the content creator adds multiple stops, the requisite data for creating a map of all stops is stored on the page. When the end user visits the tour page, a minimized floating map of all stops is added near the bottom of the page.
This tour map can be expanded by clicking on it and it automatically updates to show the location of the current stop as the user scrolls down the page. Users may also click on the Tour Stop block to expand the map and open it to a specific stop. Like Location posts, Tour posts may be given a Tour Type and a Tour Image.

While the design and functionality surrounding locations emerged somewhat organically from our prior experience with Curatescape, the user experience for tours was perhaps the most difficult aspect of PlacePress to re-conceptualize. While we would have liked to create a less linear structure for tours, we had to keep in mind the vast differences between WordPress themes as well as how a given interface might work on smaller mobile device screens. A minimized map that floats near the bottom of the screen was determined to be more practical than, say, an interface where the map was the center of attention and the locus of interaction. There was also the question of how much freedom users should be given to design the page and/or how much the plugin should – explicitly or implicitly – guide page design. We could have given each tour stop a dedicated (predetermined) place to add, say, a text description or an audio narration file. This would have given us an opportunity to further refine the visual presentation of tours, but it would have come at the expense of flexibility.

Some less critical features of PlacePress (such as maps on archive pages – a feature that is disabled by default) require the use of a compatible theme. We have documented these limitations on the plugin settings page as well as on the project website. In most cases, a beginner-level web designer can address compatibility issues with minimal code changes/additions. This is not generally necessary since the core functionality is limited in its scope by design. While we developed PlacePress to be beginner-friendly, it’s always a good idea for any digital project team to include a member with a bit of technical and design know-how.

Since its initial release, we have issued 17 software updates to end users. These range from simple compatibility updates and bug fixes to major feature additions and enhancements to existing features. We have also built out the project website (https://wpplacepress.org/), adding demos, a user guide with videos, an accessibility statement, and more. In addition to the official WordPress plugin forum (https://wordpress.org/support/plugin/placepress/) and website contact form, we have also used the PlacePress Twitter account (https://twitter.com/wpplacepress) to field inquiries and support requests.

Remote User Testing

Concurrent with plugin development, we partnered with Kate Thornhill of the University of Oregon Libraries to design and implement a user testing program. This program, approved by the Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) at Oregon and CSU, involved recruiting participants with a range of backgrounds and technological expertise and asking them to report their experiences using PlacePress to complete a series of predefined content creation tasks. The twelve participants were categorized into three groups – novice, intermediate, and advanced – based on their self-reported familiarity with WordPress. All represented user personas that we had previously developed. Our goals were to assess the user experience and to guide ongoing development and feature refinement.

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4 For a full change log, see: https://wordpress.org/plugins/placepress/#developers.
We created a model site that used PlacePress to document locations on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Participants were given basic instructions on how to replicate the model content on 12 preconfigured WordPress websites that we provided for this study. Each participant was instructed to review the settings page and to recreate one Location and one Tour using a content script including the necessary text, images, etc. After completing the tasks, each participant was prompted to complete an online survey to document their experience. Finally, participants shared freeform feedback during focus group sessions.

The survey answers and focus group comments ranged from very positive to somewhat mixed. Most participants were able to complete the assigned tasks with relative ease. The median reported time spent completing the tasks was “around 20 minutes” and the difficulty rankings for the overall experience as well as for each discrete task showed that using PlacePress was “somewhat easy” for most participants. Nonetheless, participants did have questions, concerns, and suggestions for improvement.

We took this feedback seriously but noted that some of the reported issues were outside the scope of the plugin. For example, the theme we used changed the background color of the editor (from white to light beige), leading to contrast issues with some (gray) placeholder text. Some participants gave negative feedback for aspects of the built-in block editor interface, which was still new at the time (WordPress has since refined the experience, though it remains divisive). One user reported issues when copy-pasting from a Word document, a common problem in WordPress and other CMSs. It also appears that some participants did not thoroughly review the plugin settings page as instructed, leading to requests for features that were already in place. Generally, these issues did not lead to an overall negative impression and participants understood how to use the plugin after a short period of use.

Other questions were more substantial and led us to reconsider design decisions and/or make significant changes. One user expressed the desire for a more map-centric user interface for tours and others expected a more prescriptive content creation experience (e.g., using tabular data, having predefined fields for tour text, etc.). Several users found that the geocoding lookup was problematic in that it sometimes returned no results (an issue that is nearly always present when using open source – rather than commercial – geocoding services). Several users noted that they wanted to customize the text in the map info window. Naturally, users also reported minor bugs. After the user study concluded, we fixed bugs, added the ability to customize info window text, and made changes to the geocoding lookup form to improve accessibility and better communicate when data has been saved. We also improved the documentation, both on the settings page and in the block options sidebar menu.

**Partner Projects**

As user testing proceeded, the project also worked to support two partner teams that provided additional testing opportunities with real-world projects. One was based in a regional park and the other in a local historical society, both of which were among the types of organizations we had identified as potential PlacePress adopters. Importantly, each fit into preexisting public history

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5 PlacePress uses Open Street Maps and Nominatim ([https://nominatim.org/](https://nominatim.org/)) to look up coordinates. Commercial services such as Google Maps yield better results but come with onboarding barriers such as the need to create an account, obtain an API key, and provide payment information.
collaborations that could benefit immediately from the use of the new plugin. One of these projects was the digital component of the *Hines Heritage Trail* in the Greater Detroit area. Wayne County Parks and the Wayne State University Public History Program, in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Michigan History Center, developed a thematic walking tour in Hines Park, a 17-mile greenbelt in suburban Detroit. The digital tour used both the Tour and Location post types and highlighted themes such as natural history, park history, industrial history, and Native American, African American, and Arab American history. The tour was designed to complement (and potentially expand upon) physical signage in the park. Wayne State graduate student Amber Harrison worked with Dr. Tracy Neumann to curate location-based content and then use PlacePress to build a website for the initiative. These collaborators viewed the Hines Park project as a potential pilot for a broader use of PlacePress to develop similar tours at other planned Michigan heritage trails. (See *Hines Heritage Trail* at [https://hinesheritagetrail.com](https://hinesheritagetrail.com).)

The second project was based in New Castle, Pennsylvania, a small city outside Pittsburgh. The Lawrence County Historical Society had a preexisting online tour of historic houses in New Castle on its WordPress-based website but worked with the Slippery Rock University Department of History to redevelop the tour to connect more clearly to a strong humanities theme. Slippery Rock graduate student Philip Erdos worked with Dr. Aaron Cowan to develop and add the tour using PlacePress. The resulting tour, “Freedom Fighters” of the North Hill District, used the Tour post type along with accordion blocks to permit expanding longer tour-stop interpretive texts on a single page while maintaining easy recognition of the tour structure. The tour “tells the story of New Castle citizens who helped defend American freedoms, and to expand access to freedom and equality for all,” using local historic sites to explore themes that include the Civil War, abolition, European immigration, and women’s suffrage. (See “Freedom Fighters” of the North Hill District at [https://www.lawrencechs.org/tours/freedom-fighters-of-the-north-hill-district/](https://www.lawrencechs.org/tours/freedom-fighters-of-the-north-hill-district/).

*CPDH Project Content Development*

In addition to partners’ projects, we tested PlacePress by migrating content in our own *Cleveland Walks* project, a set of tours with audio narration of tour stops, from Posts to Tours. (See *Cleveland Walks* at [https://clevelandwalks.net](https://clevelandwalks.net).) A CPHDH volunteer with extensive experience using Curatescape but no prior WordPress experience developed a new tour on that site and reported on his experience. We also used PlacePress late in the grant period to develop a separate new project called *Green Book Cleveland: Black Entertainment, Leisure, and Recreation in Northeast Ohio*. Using the Location post type, *Green Book Cleveland* has begun curating the 130 sites in Cleveland and several other cities and towns in Northeast Ohio that were listed in Victor Hugo Green’s *Green Book* guides for African American travelers in the late 1930s to mid 1960s, as well as selected additional sites of Black leisure during that era. The project, an initiative of CPHDH in cooperation with the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Conservancy for CVNP, Cleveland Metroparks, Summit Metro Parks, Canalway Partners, and the Trust for Public Land, began as a research project in Souther’s Introduction to Public History course in fall 2021 and has since expanded to include community collaborators with plans to connect with additional organizational collaborators in the region. The project has involved research in the Black press, other newspapers, legal and property records, census data, and oral histories and has benefited from the growing scholarship on Black leisure and

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recreation.7 To date, the project has mapped and added at least basic information for 267 sites, with more than 60 of these reflecting more thorough research.8 (See Green Book Cleveland at https://greenbookcleveland.placinghistory.org.)

Audiences

The “PlacePress” grant also directly or indirectly reached diverse audiences that included content creators and public users who used PlacePress-based web pages or websites, and people who attended public lectures and conference panels in which PlacePress-based projects were shared.

Through the remote user testing, twelve participants reflecting our user personas became thoroughly acquainted with the plugin. In addition to working with thirteen students who developed location narratives for Green Book Cleveland, project director Mark Souther worked with a CPHDH volunteer who developed a new digital tour of Franklin Boulevard on Cleveland Walks. Project partner Aaron Cowan and project advisors Lindsey Wieck and Jeffrey McClurken encouraged students to develop tours using PlacePress in their digital history courses. One of Cowan’s students used PlacePress to create a digital tour of 1970s-80s punk scene in Pittsburgh, and Wieck’s students created mini-projects about a bakery, an airport, community murals, and regional foodways for San Antonio StoryScapes in collaboration with the City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation. McClurken reported that the University of Mary Washington’s digital learning center sufficiently impressed with PlacePress to add it to the tools they recommend to students, faculty, and staff.9

CPHDH shared occasional news about PlacePress on its blog and social media channels. Most publicity about PlacePress during the grant period, however, revolved around a specific project developed using PlacePress. Green Book Cleveland engaged thousands of people as demonstrated by its more than 17,000 unique page views between November 2021 and June 2022. Souther publicized PlacePress directly or indirectly through numerous presentations and media appearances revolving around the Green Book Cleveland project. These included panels at the American Association of State and Local History, American Historical Association, Ohio Local History Alliance, Leadership Cleveland’s “Culture and Belonging” symposium, and Maine Preservation’s Annual Meeting; public presentations for two local history and arts organizations; and media appearances in The Plain Dealer and Cleveland.com (Cleveland’s major newspaper and its website), Cleveland Scene, Spectrum News Ohio, and on The Sound of Ideas (a radio show on Cleveland’s National Public Radio affiliate). The

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The article alone was shared more than 2,300 times on Facebook and Twitter. Media coverage led many members of the public, most of them African American, to email, call, and even write letters to applaud the project, proffer content suggestions, share personal stories, or express interest in working on the project in various ways.

As the grant neared its conclusion, CPHDH began to increase dissemination of the plugin. Using a list we had developed in 2019 of Ohio historical societies using WordPress on their websites, we contacted all of these to introduce the plugin and offer to assist if desired in using it.

Project Evaluation

At the end of the grant period, our project partners, their collaborators, and our project advisors provided evaluation letters about their experience using PlacePress. They reported finding PlacePress either somewhat or very easy to use, sentiments that likely reflected varying levels of prior experience using WordPress. In addition to relative ease of use, everyone was appreciative that PlacePress is “budget friendly,” which as one evaluator observed is “especially valuable for small and mid-sized organizations with limited capacity in terms of funding and technological capabilities.”

One evaluator also commented on the “great flexibility” that PlacePress affords content creators of projects that do not require more regimented metadata.

The main concern that two evaluators raised was that the relationship between Tour Stops and Locations was not immediately clear. Having used the Omeka-based Curatescape framework, in which one builds Tours by selecting some number of Items (the rough equivalent of Locations), they saw the Tour Stops and Locations as a liability rather than an asset because it represented the potential for redundancy and repetition of work. Conversely, our user testing participants did not report this concern, perhaps because they approached PlacePress as novel users who also had no intimate understanding of Curatescape. To be sure, however, we contend that many users will find a degree of liberation in the fact that PlacePress enables one to write two different narratives about a place—one as a Tour Stop that connects thematically and/or geographically to its Tour, and another as a standalone Location that is not freighted with this responsibility. Viewed in this way, a functionality that can seem perplexing is also reflective of the software’s extreme flexibility; a PlacePress site may use only Locations or only Tours or both. Its design, in short, is not presumptive or prescriptive, as is that of Curatescape.

A secondary concern that one evaluator noted was that while PlacePress’s general ease of use makes it an excellent tool for engaging beginners in digital storytelling, its extreme flexibility can also make it a rather difficult tool to use for projects that are online collections of many individuals’ or groups’ content because it may be harder to enforce design standards that create a more uniform or cohesive user experience. In choosing the path of freedom and flexibility for content creators, we gave up some level of control over the effectiveness of the visual design. For example, the content before, after, and between Tour Stop blocks is fully under the control of content creators, for better or worse. Similar issues are present in Location posts – a content creator may always choose to design a crowded, misaligned page – but the underlying functionality is largely unaffected. With Tours it is critical that the creator understand and embrace the structural and aesthetic implications of the Tour

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Stop block. It seems that tours in particular work best when the content is simple (e.g., a paragraph of text for each stop and maybe an audio file) and presented within a minimalist theme (i.e., one without busy sidebars, preferably having a single column layout and a well-designed typographic scale). The nature of – and differences between – Tours and Locations (as well as other post types) was also not always as obvious to creators as we had assumed. Some users created tours that contained only one tour stop. Others created tours with custom “next” and “previous” buttons pointing to a mix of blog posts, pages, and location posts.

Next Steps

CPHDH will continue to update and refine PlacePress and to seek opportunities to spread awareness through communications with organizations and in outlets that reach the likeliest users matching the project’s user personas. We will add exemplary projects to the PlacePress Project Showcase as another way of inspiring others to adopt the plugin. We will also continue to develop content and refine the appearance and functionality of Green Book Cleveland as the flagship PlacePress project. We may also use PlacePress in the context of seeking grant support to scale the Kisumu history project to other cities in western Kenya with additional content partners at regional universities and museums.
Appendix 1. Elements of the PlacePress Plugin

Locations
The Location post type is used to store standalone locations and is the only post type in which you can use the Location Map block. Adding the Location Map block to a Location post makes that post appear on the Global Map. Location posts can use the Location Type taxonomy.

Global Map
The Global Map block can be used on any standard post or page. It displays all content created using the Location post type and Location Map block. Optionally, the map may include a dropdown menu for filtering markers using the Location Type taxonomy.
**Tours**

The Tour post type can be used to create a geolocated list of locations and is the only post type in which you can use the Tour Stop block. The Tour Stop block is like a section header that provides a) a visual representation of each location on the tour and b) the map details for each location on the tour.

Learn more about Locations, the Global Map, Tours, and Plugin Settings in the [PlacePress User Guide](https://wpplacepress.org/about/getting-started/).
Appendix 2. User Personas

**Kathleen** is a project manager for a state historical society that operates several properties, including historic sites, museums, and interpretation centers spread throughout a large geographic area. She is looking for ways to raise awareness of the historical society’s critical role in regional tourism and heritage education. The historical society’s WordPress-based website lists each property on one of its pages, but Kathleen would like to visualize all the locations using an interactive map on a new landing page and also create individual detail pages for each location. Kathleen would prefer to use a custom post type to keep locations separate from page- and post-content. If she finds a plugin that does what she needs, she'll need to get it approved and installed by the historical society’s systems administrator.

**Demetrius** is an outreach coordinator for a non-profit community development corporation in the Rogersville neighborhood. He developed a guided walking tour to introduce visitors to the neighborhood's many interesting businesses and public spaces during the Rogersville centennial celebration. The tour was a success but now that the event is over, he's thinking of developing an online version of the tour. Demetrius is pretty good at setting up WordPress-based websites but is not confident writing code. He has picked out a theme he likes and now he’s looking for a plugin designed specifically for walking tours. If he has time, he might even record audio narration for each stop on the tour.

**Justin** is a high school social studies teacher in a rural school district outside Chattanooga. School administrators are encouraging teachers to incorporate digital projects into the curriculum. Justin has decided to create a website that documents nearby sites in the history of the US Civil War. He will be using the WordPress Network provided by his school’s IT Department. The school does not have a budget for field trips, so Justin is hoping the website will help his honors students develop a connection with these historical sites by building the website collaboratively. Each student will write an essay about an assigned historical site. Students will then be asked to leave constructive online comments for their peers as homework, forming the basis for classroom discussions the following week. The students will be using the school's computer lab, which has seen better days, and requires students to use PCs running the outdated Internet Explorer 11 web browser.

**Amina** is the local history librarian at a public library in coastal New England. She is looking for a low-cost way to increase usage of local history resources. Most of the library’s archival items have been added to the online catalog, and the staff have maintained useful finding aids over the years, but Amina feels the collection would benefit from additional curation and promotion on the library’s local history blog. She has decided to start by building an online database of local homes that were demolished in 1967. Before demolition, each of the 170 affected homes were documented photographically, with textual descriptions as well as tax and title records. Home and family research is one of her department's most popular services and Amina is sure this database will be well-used both online and by staff at the reference desk.

**Hector** is an archaeology major taking an elective course in digital humanities. He wants to create a basic geographic representation of dig sites in the Columbia River drainage basin. He hopes to work for the Forest Service after graduation and plans to maintain and expand the site even after the course has ended. Hector is determined to document every dig in the basin, eventually adding photos, comprehensive descriptions of findings, links to further reading and more. So far, he’s aware
of about 30 sites, most of which relate to Paleolithic culture and Pre-Columbian American civilizations. He’s hoping to categorize dig sites according to several criteria, including geochronological era, tribal affiliations, and locale. If he can stick to it, he’s confident this research will help him get his dream job.

**Phoebe is a history professor** at an urban public university in Chicago. She is the public history program director in her department and has an ongoing collaborative community history project that draws together two disparate neighborhoods on the city’s North Side and South Side to work alongside her public history students to explore and historicize the divergent paths these communities have taken in the past 50 years. The project team has collected hundreds of photos, documents, and personal narratives in these neighborhoods and now wants to create neighborhood tours that reflect citizens’ perspectives on the assets and problems they see around them. Phoebe and her team are passionate about training their community partners so that they may take the lead in crafting the tours but has been delaying this next phase in the project out of concerns that available tools that enable mapping the tours are too complex and/or expensive. She longs for an intuitive user interface that permits ease of training participants.
Appendix 3. Use Case: PlacePress Demo

TOURING THE CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

Though a short distance from the urban areas of Cleveland and Akron, Cuyahoga Valley National Park seems worlds away.

By CSU Digital Humanities  November 19, 2020  No Comments

https://demo.wpplacepress.org
Appendix 4. Use Case: Cleveland Walks

Cleveland Walks

Euclid Avenue: The Spine of Downtown Cleveland
This tour explores downtown's most important street: Euclid Avenue. Your starting point for this experience is the southeast corner of Public Square, just past the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. Then our route turns east on Euclid Avenue. Walk on the sidewalk on the north (left) side of the street until you reach the East 17th...

Ohio City – Franklin Boulevard
Welcome to the Ohio City– Franklin Boulevard Tour. During this audio tour—roughly one and one-half hours—you will take a 2-mile walk on one of the most

Coventry Village
During this audio tour—roughly one hour—you will walk one of the Cleveland area's most beloved and historic neighborhoods: Coventry Village in Cleveland Heights. On the way

https://clevelandwalks.net
Appendix 5. Use Case: Green Book Cleveland

Green Book Cleveland
Black Entertainment, Leisure, and Recreation in Northeast Ohio

https://greenbookcleveland.placinghistory.org