

# PEABODY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

The Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale University houses a diverse collection of some 14 million specimens and artefacts in the fields of Anthropology, Botany, Entomology, Historical Scientific Instruments, Invertebrate Paleontology, Invertebrate Zoology, Meteorites & Planetary Science, Mineralogy, Paleobotany, Vertebrate Paleontology and Vertebrate Zoology. The curatorial departments have been using EMu since 2005 when Peabody migrated its existing data en masse from legacy systems.

**“Two of the most attractive features of EMu for Peabody were the flexibility and extensibility of the system, and its capacity for managing digital multimedia assets.”**

**Lawrence F. Gall, Ph.D. - Head, Computer Systems Office  
Peabody Museum of Natural History**

The EMu infrastructure at Peabody incorporates a variety of locally written programs that expand upon standard EMu functionality, but because EMu integrates these programs seamlessly, end users are blissfully unaware that at times what they are doing is not “EMu per se.”

One such program that interfaces with EMu is a wireless barcoding application. It was used to track 150,000 objects in near real-time when the anthropological and osteological collections were moved into Yale’s new West Campus facilities.

Another program enables “hands-free rapid imaging” projects using various types of Copy Stands in the Anthropology, Botany, and Invertebrate Paleontology departments.





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As pictures are taken the camera operator uses voice recognition software to capture the camera image number, catalogue number of the object and any other relevant metadata in a spreadsheet, allowing the operator to focus exclusively on handling objects. At the end of the photo session, the program automatically resizes/crops the image files as necessary, uploads them into EMu, and links them to the respective Catalogue module records. Peabody is looking forward to increasing the number of images and other multimedia files in EMu substantially in the coming year.

In 2009, Yale launched a digital asset management system (DAMS) to serve as a central repository and discovery/distribution platform for the University's digital assets. Peabody partnered with the Yale Center for British Art and Yale Art Gallery, both of which use The Museum System (TMS) collections management software, in the development of a shared technical process for moving EMu and TMS assets to and from the DAMS. The DAMS is an exciting development: imagine doing a simple Google-like search for "Darwin" and simultaneously retrieving Peabody botanical specimens from the Beagle voyage, letters from the Yale Library's archives, and paintings from the Art Gallery featuring survival of the fittest themes!

KEY FACTS: EMu user since 2005 | 11 Curatorial Departments: Anthropology, Botany, Entomology, Historical Scientific Instruments, Invertebrate Paleontology, Invertebrate Zoology, Meteorites & Planetary Science, Mineralogy, Paleobotany, Vertebrate Paleontology and Vertebrate Zoology | Number of Users: 40 | Number of Records: 1,250,000 | Number of Images: 100,000 | Implementation Period: 1 year  
(from contract signing to going live)

