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Escape Velocity: What We Built (Digital Collections Infrastructure)

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Why Hydra?

We need to go further with our digital collections. Back in the Fall of 2012, Wayne State University Libraries began furiously building a new platform to replace its aging DLXS infrastructure. This new platform, built around Fedora Commons (3.6) and Solr, was entirely custom built in Python. Our development approach allowed us to quickly prototype and implement a system. During our building process, important features were inspired by Hydra, and so we have always had affinity to Hydra, but never had the need to switch. And, for a while, our approach served our purposes. Our platform is now in production, and we are finishing migrating our existing collections as well as adding new ones; however, interest in our platform is growing within our institution, and we need a more robust system, one that is strong, preservation-focused, and supported by a strong community of users and developers.

Escape Velocity: What We Built

- Fedora / Solr backend, Python middleware, PHP / JS front-end (Hydra Inspired!)
- Python middleware enforces content modeling throughout ecosystem (Hydra Inspired!)
- Internal & Front-facing API built with Python based Twisted Server and Flask
- Ability to handle new content types and collaborate with new university partners
- New platform resulted in new buzz around digital collections and momentum for DPLA integration
- Moved us away from “turn-key” installations towards managing our own stack



*“If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.”*



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