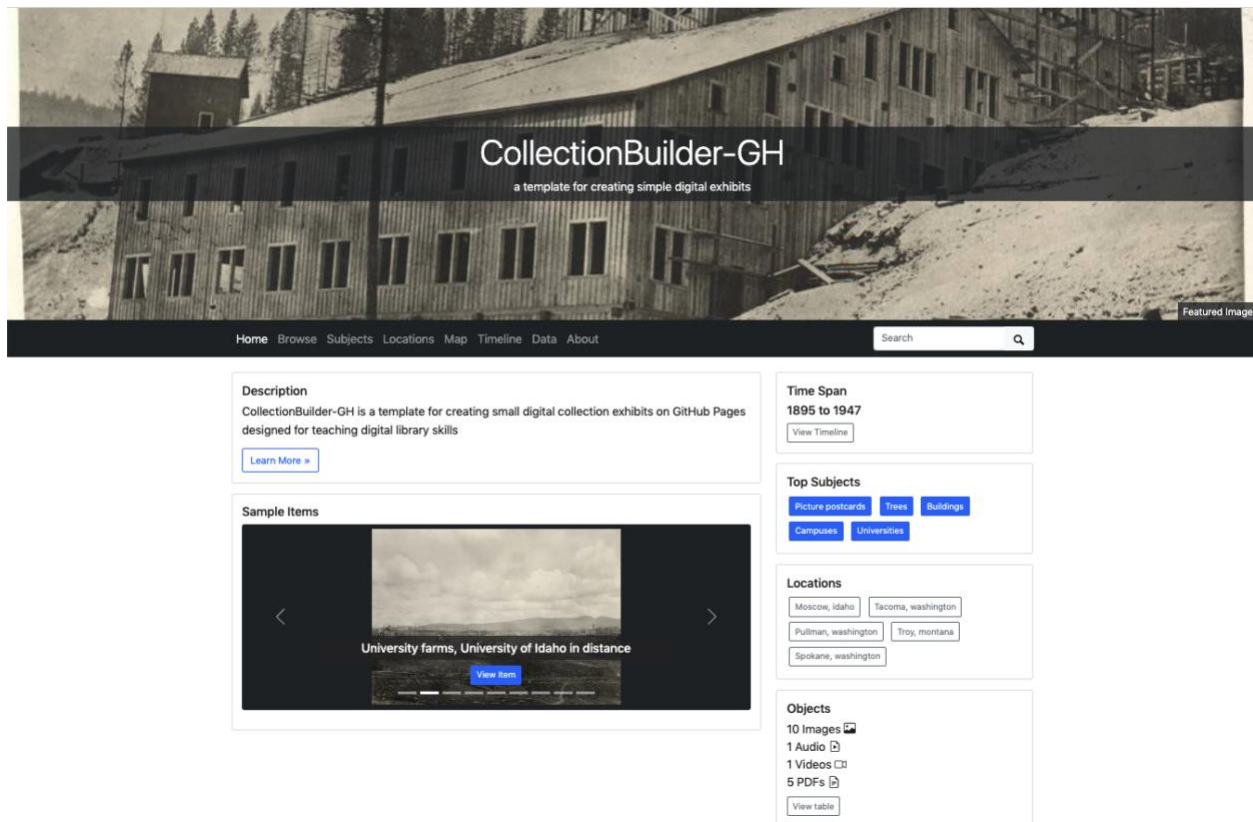# CollectionBuilder

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Screenshot of the CollectionBuilder-GH demo site.

CollectionBuilder offers open source templates enabling GLAM (gallery, library, archive and museum) institutions to create digital collections and exhibits without proprietary tools. This project seeks to simplify designing infrastructures and interfaces for sustainable, static sites in alignment with collections as data principles. While the idea of using open source tools like GitHub and Jekyll may be

daunting to some, the CollectionBuilder documentation is written in a friendly, understandable tone. The project is managed by librarians in the University of Idaho Digital Initiatives department, who use what they describe as [Lib-Static](#) methodologies to offer three public templates through GitHub with two more in development. While the projects produced using these templates are intended for general audiences to engage with collections, the site itself is designed to support GLAM staff creating these digital collections or online exhibitions.

As a general introduction to CollectionBuilder, the site employs a conversational FAQ format explaining the goals and methodologies of the project. An overview of each template offers a brief description, a list of its best uses, and a link to use the template. The Github and CONTENTdm templates additionally provide a demo version users can explore.

GH - Github Pages

A Lightweight framework to get you started.
Build a digital collection totally online using GITHUB AND GITHUB PAGES for all configurations and object storage.

CollectionBuilder-GH Starter Site
built with GitHub Pages

Best for:

Classroom Projects

Serverless Omeka

Small Collections

Learning about Git, Static Web Technologies, web development and design

Use this Template!

Check out a Demo Version

Take an Online Workshop

Summary of Attributes For the Github Template Option

Even with these top-level introductions, staff with no prior experience using GitHub or Jekyll may find viewing the templates overwhelming at first glance. However, for those concerned about engaging with new systems, the asynchronous workshops and documentation pages offer in-depth, robust directions and suggestions, allowing users with various skill levels to work through the development process at their own pace.

The
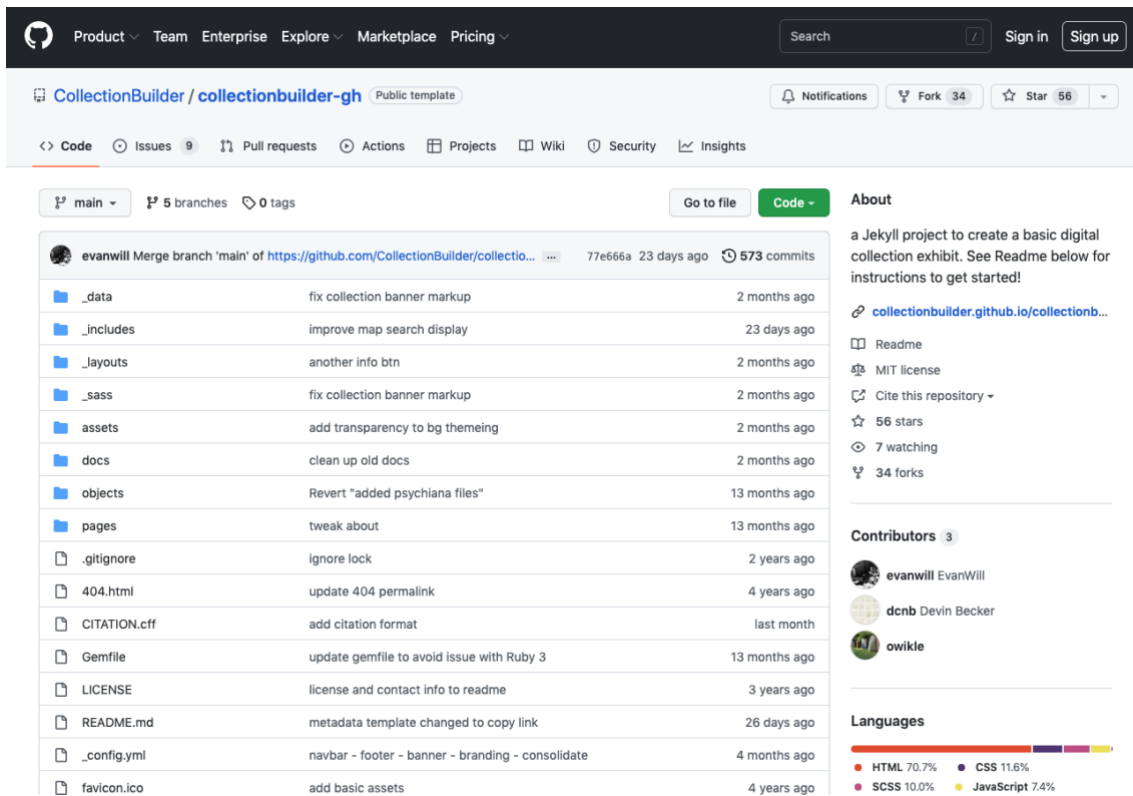
Screenshot of the collectionbuilder-gh GitHub page

While the trade-off is less out-of-the-box usability than options hosted by third-party vendors, CollectionBuilder templates offer GLAM institutions complete control over content and data. Each CollectionBuilder project has three main components: metadata in a spreadsheet, digital objects, and the GitHub template. Preparing the metadata and organizing digital objects are likely familiar tasks, but those less familiar with GitHub or Jekyll will require the documentation when configuring and deploying the site. Additionally, the developers host a CollectionBuilder GitHub Discussion Forum, and welcome direct feedback on making the tools more usable. They also invite development collaborators, noting four partner institutions at the time of this review.

Several dozen digital collections produced by various GLAM institutions using CollectionBuilder are featured on the site, and many have a familiar look and feel when compared to other small digital collections. As shown in the CollectionBuilder GitHub Pages template demo site, the landing page offers top-level navigation with multiple avenues to explore the collection. The digital materials are browsable and searchable, and visualizations could additionally include maps, timelines, word clouds, and infographics. The about page can offer audiovisual elements alongside text thanks to the flexibility of Markdown and Bootstrap. In addition, the CollectionBuilder templates are designed to support the collections as data movement by offering users options to download the dataset powering the site.

While the documentation doesn't have a section addressing accessibility specifically, the Lib-Static methodology means the resulting site should meet accessibility standards and improve experiences for users with less bandwidth. An explanation of how these templates address various accessibility needs could be more clearly laid out in the documentation for those beginning to engage in designing a site without vendor support.

CollectionBuilder is useful for GLAM institutions interested in gaining more control over the presentation, usability, and technological support of their digital projects. This could require staff time in order to learn the processes and tools, but could save the institution money and time needed for migrations in the long-term. The Lib-Static methodology additionally makes this option ideal for faculty creating online collections with classes, as many of the outcomes support Open Pedagogy best practices. CollectionBuilder offers GLAM workers the opportunity to learn and apply new skills with helpful documentation to support this growth, and ultimately helps to produce sustainable digital projects that should be easier for institutions to preserve.