

Du Chemin – Project Notes from Joe Gilbert 7/2011

1. Technical Issues
2. Architectural Issues
3. New Features

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Outmoded HTML/ASP/JavaScript design: future sustainability concerns
- Accessibility issues: content in images, etc.
- Difficulty updating content
- Restrictive layout and graphical design: fixed height, narrow width

Possible action items: Implement CMS (Wordpress) with a modern, HTML5-based theme, WCAG-compliant code, and refreshed design while deeply integrating the core site functions (search/browse).

ARCHITECTURAL/DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Help text not web-ready and on-hand for users
- Search and browse features differ greatly
- Some non-essay content stuck in PDFs or lost behind invisible links

Possible action items: Provide point-of-need inline help text for search and browse views and interlink as appropriate as part of MEI/TEI updates. Re-theme if possible to include obvious visual clues for links and navigation and improve overall readability in line with printed essay formatting. Move non-essay PDF content to web text as appropriate and add PDF icons to remaining PDF links.

NEW FEATURES

- User roles
- News/updates
- Admin documentation space
- Citation/juxtaposition

Possible action items: Leverage user permissions and blog features of chosen CMS. Use wiki plugin or separate and private blog for documentation maintenance space. Explore both upcoming MEI/TEI annotation tools as well as the approaches taken by visual editions such as the geometric/geographic annotations allowed by tools like MITH's TILE project (<http://mith.umd.edu/tile/>).

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Preserve established document display features while improving inter-connection of features and aiding user comprehension of site structure, purpose, and capabilities.
- Leverage the well-established editorial workflow, content creation, and user management capabilities of WordPress to facilitate site maintenance and growth as well as outside contributions.
- Establish a consistent, intuitive, and accessible visual design that better guides the user through the site and leverages standards to better ensure future sustainability.