MATRIX has developed an open source application that cultural and educational institutions can use to preserve digital materials and display them online. The application, KORA (http://www.matrix.msu.edu/kora/), is particularly well-suited for working with digital objects of all media types and for easily creating displays of these objects in multiple ways that enhance their educational and research value. MATRIX, a humanities computing research center at Michigan State University, has built and enhanced this application in the course of seven years of research with support from the National Science Foundation.

Designed for long-term preservation and access, KORA includes unique features that meet two important needs of institutions that have limited technological resources: (1) simple design of the digital repository and the ingesting of data, and (2) the ability to display digital materials online in diverse ways, such as image galleries, multimedia educational activities, or story chapters.

The KORA architecture is unique in that it can accommodate any set of metadata schemes (or tables) in individualized digital libraries. Users can easily create metadata elements (database fields) using a simple point-and-click interface, select the type of form control for each element (e.g., required formats for date, URL, audio file upload, etc.), and then determine whether the element is required for each record, whether it should appear in search returns, and other features. KORA then automatically generates storage structures, ingestion (data entry) forms, and validation requirements for each metadata scheme.

Because the back-end of projects can be created in minutes by people without technical training, the overhead for getting projects started is reduced immeasurably compared to beginning with a blank SQL or other database. And because KORA is an online application, multiple users can develop a collection from separate locations at the same time. Also, KORA can ingest materials from any standardized repository and can output XML that can be harvested by these repositories.

KORA also includes an easy-to-use “associator” tool for creating relationships that combine objects of various media types. As demonstrated by diverse websites built with KORA, many creative displays are possible using this open source application.

Overcoming Apartheid
www.overcomingapartheid.msu.edu
An educational resource with video and audio interviews, photos, maps, historical documents, narrative units, and student activities

American Black Journal
www.matrix.msu.edu/~abj
A growing digital repository of shows from the 40 years of this Detroit-based public television program, with additional multi-media resources

Community Video Education Trust
www.cvct.org.za
An archive of video footage from Cape Town, South Africa documenting resistance activities during the 1980s and early 1990s

The Quilt Index
www.quiltindex.org
A national online archive of quilt resources with thousands of quilts from partnering museum and library quilt collections

ExplorePAHistory.com
www.explorepahistory.com
A collaborative project weaving together historical markers throughout the state and other original material with lessons about Pennsylvania history for K-12 students