


# The Museum's Online Searchable Database

**P**ENN MUSEUM IS MAKING INFORMATION about its collections more accessible than ever before with the launch of a new online database feature on its website that will allow the public to explore the Museum's Collection, including many objects that are not on display. This is made possible, in part, by new collections management software now in use at the Penn Museum that improves not just access to the Collection, but also the quality of the Museum's collections data.

The database will be available on the Museum's website, [www.penn.museum](http://www.penn.museum), where visitors will have the ability to search over 300,000 records by keywords or by specific details, including descriptions, titles, cultures, geographic locations, materials, and more. A selection of highlights from the Collection as well as a number of notable and representative objects from each of the Museum's Curatorial Sections will also be showcased for browsing on the site.

The launch of this new feature is a significant milestone in the Museum's broader plan for online collections. Staff members are working to improve the number and quality of records published with a focus on public access and use. Photographs of objects, many of which were previously stored outside of the collections database, are being added for viewing by users of the website. The online database will be updated regularly to ensure that changes and additions made by staff will be readily available.

After a multi-year selection and planning process, the Museum began using a customized version of KE Software's EMu (Electronic Museum) system in November 2010 to record object details and to track activities such as exhibitions, loans, and acquisitions. The new software is helping improve how objects are described, providing more detailed information both to staff and to online users. International language support in EMu, for example, is making it possible for many of the written inscriptions on objects to be entered in their native script as well as in English translation. Even some of the basic descriptors such as dates and measurements are being refined as a result of options made available in the new database, and as part of ongoing efforts to provide clear, useful details online about the Museum's Collection.

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Mike Slivjak is one of many Museum staff and volunteers who work on data entry and cleanup for the website launch.