



# Art Documentation

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## Managing Contemporary Art Documentation in Museums and Special Collections

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### Abstract

The authors present their research on wiki software to supplement standard collections management databases for art documentation in museums and special collections. Many new forms of documentation, particularly for installations, media, and performance art, are not well accommodated by standard relational database applications. The Artist Archives Initiative, a research project at New York University, was developed in part to address this concern. The first undertaking of the initiative is the development of an information resource for the artist David Wojnarowicz. An interdisciplinary team of archivists, art historians, computer scientists, and conservators spent two years developing the David Wojnarowicz Knowledge Base. This article reports the research undertaken that led to the selection of open-source software for the resource and the project website, the technical details of implementing the project, and its theoretical and contextual basis in scholarly research on contemporary art.

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