



# Museum Object Acquisition System

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Otago Museum holds approximately 1.8 million items of which 1.6 million are held in their storage area. The public are not allowed into the storage area but there needs to be a way that the public can get an appreciation of the extent of the collections held there and to showcase selected items of interest. The public should also be able to see how the items are stored and cared for. It should be noted that the high number of items in storage is not a result of a backlog of processing but a duty of long term archival care.

The Museum Object Acquisition System (MOAS) was taken on as part of the third year project for the Bachelor of Information Technology (<http://site.tekotago.ac.nz>). Otago Museum project was chosen because it is big enough in scope for four people, it contains a number of different elements of Information Technology, It will be challenging but not beyond our capabilities, has commercial potential and lastly (but not least): it appealed to the group. The task is being accomplished using a software development lifecycle approach. Prototypes, both physical and virtual are being utilised in the identification of functions and in testing feasibility.

The approach is twofold. A virtual tour of the storage area is being created. Users will be able to explore the basement and enter the different rooms, opening cupboards, drawers and freezers at will. They will also be able to pick up objects and examine them in detail. To do this a 3D capture system has been developed. This is an automated system whereby real world objects can be captured in digital form and displayed on a screen to a user who can rotate the object to view it.

Ancillary to this will be database entries that will be automatically generated to enable users to enter details about the objects. Long-term archival practices for data structures have been adopted.

While the system is being constructed for the Otago Museum, for their purposes, it is generic in nature and will be able to be used in many other situations. We have already received expressions of interest from a number of parties with applications in engineering, fine arts and fashion.

