This month’s Muse-ing comes from Corinne Freeth, a MA student in History and Museum Studies at UD. She shares her experience redesigning a valuable online resource for small museums: the Sustaining Places website.   
  
Last Fall, my classmates and I had the unique opportunity to re-design and update the [Sustaining Places](https://sustainingplaces.com/) website, an online encyclopedia for small museum management. The website started back in 2013 as part of a large grant for training museum volunteers and students, awarded by the [Institute for Museum and Library Services](https://www.imls.gov/). Since then, graduate students at the University of Delaware have updated sections of the site every year. But this year, the site received its first complete design overhaul.

My group selected and customized the website’s new design template from the range of options offered by WordPress. With limited experience in website design, we read articles about design and accessibility. We also tinkered with font color and font styles to make the site more compliant with accessibility standards. Although younger web surfers may scoff at WordPress, we stuck with it because of its portability and flexibility. Still, no template is completely perfect, and this holds true for our choice as well. There were issues with color contrast that “looked cool,” but made the new homepage hard to read. I watched countless “Coding for Dummies” YouTube videos and even dared to enter the wild world of Reddit for how to change font color using CSS code on a WordPress template. After several meetings with our University’s Digital Scholarship Librarian, (a truly wonderful and essential help to this project, and the kind of professional you should always seek out!), we ultimately improved some of the homepage’s accessibility problems, while enhancing the site’s overall navigability and giving it a look that complemented its encyclopedic intent.   
  
As a new graduate student in their very first semester, this was not only an impressionable learning experience, but it also highlighted the importance of creating accessible and effective websites. As Sustaining Places debuts its new makeover, I am reminded that it is a great hands-on learning tool, as well as a resource that reaches a greater audience than just the small confines of my classroom. Tailored to small museums, it shares the latest in an evolving literature of best practices within the GLAMPE sector, recognizing and sharing ideas from across the worlds of galleries, libraries, archives, museums, and public engagement.   
  
Small museums are tasked with daunting obstacles as we slowly and hopefully emerge from a global pandemic. Whether searching for disaster preparedness resources, exploring digital storytelling as an avenue of outreach, or reviewing facilities management and legal obligations, Sustaining Places is designed to inform a museum’s operations from top to bottom. We hope the redesign will expand on the site’s previous use by all-volunteer museums from across the country. As you scroll through Sustaining Places’ new look, I urge you to consider how accessibility affects your life and peruse the site’s many resources. You never know what you may learn! Share your thoughts about the newly redesigned Sustaining Places site with us by commenting on our [suggestions page](https://sustainingplaces.com/2018/12/11/got-suggestions/).

Have you had an experience related to training, work, job searching, or hiring, that would benefit MuseWeekly's almost 10,000 subscribers? If so, send an email to [*museumstudies@udel.edu*](mailto:museumstudies@udel.edu?subject=Muse-ings). Muse-ings are capped at 600 words.