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GETTY CONSERVATION INSTITUTE AND WORLD MONUMENTS FUND RELEASE ARCHES SOFTWARE TO HELP SAFEGUARD CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES WORLDWIDE

LOS ANGELES—The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) and World Monuments Fund (WMF) today announced the public release of [Arches](#) (version 1.0), a user-friendly, open source information management software system built specifically to help heritage organizations safeguard cultural heritage sites worldwide.

Arches has been created to help inventory and manage heritage places, and by incorporating a broad range of international standards, meets a critical need in terms of gathering, making accessible and preserving key information about cultural heritage.

"Knowing what you have is the critical first step in the conservation process. Inventorying heritage assets is a major task and a major investment," said Bonnie Burnham, President and CEO of World Monuments Fund.

Cultural heritage inventories are difficult to establish and maintain. Agencies often rely on costly proprietary software that is frequently a mismatch for the needs of the heritage field or they create custom information systems from scratch. Both approaches remain problematic and many national and local authorities around the world are struggling to find resources to address these challenges.

The GCI and WMF have responded to this need by partnering to create Arches, which is available at no cost. Arches can present its user interface in any language or in multiple languages, and is configurable to any geographic location or region. It is web-based to provide for the widest access and requires minimal training. The system is freely available for download from the Internet so that institutions may install it at any location in the world.

"Our hope is that by creating Arches we can help reduce the need for heritage institutions to expend scarce resources on creating systems from the ground up, and also alleviate the need for them to engage in the complexities and constantly changing world of software development," said Tim Whalen, Director of the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles.

In developing Arches, the GCI and WMF consulted international best practices and standards, engaging nearly 20 national, regional, and local government heritage authorities from the US, England, Belgium, France, and the Middle East, as well as information technology experts from the US and Europe. The contributions of English Heritage and the Flanders Heritage Agency have played a particularly important role during the development process. Data provided by English Heritage has been valuable for system development, and it is incorporated as a sample data set within the demonstration version of Arches.

The careful integration of standards in Arches also will encourage the creation and management of data using best practices. This makes the exchange and comparison of data between Arches and other information systems easier, both within the heritage community and related fields, and it will ultimately support the longevity of important information related to cultural sites.

Once the Arches system is installed, institutions implementing it can control the degree of visibility of their data. They may choose to have the system and its data totally open to online access, partially open, accessible with a log-in, not accessible at all, or somewhere in between.

"Shared understanding of cultural heritage sites is essential for their successful management and for their enjoyment, too. English Heritage has been really proud to contribute to the development of Arches, and believes it to offer a fresh and readily applicable solution to the challenges of data management. It's been a great international partnership, and has overcome real complexities," said Dr. Gillian Grayson, Head of Heritage Data Management at English Heritage.

The GCI and WMF are committed to providing resources to support the Arches open-source community during its formative period.

Arches is not the first joint initiative for the GCI and WMF. The partners previously developed the Middle Eastern Geodatabase for Antiquities, or MEGA, to help the Kingdom of Jordan manage archeological sites. In 2010, MEGA was deployed as Jordan's National Heritage Documentation and Management System.

Different from MEGA, Arches has taken advantage of new semantic technologies and that it is designed to help inventory and manage all types of cultural heritage information, not only archaeological sites. As well, Arches is intended for application anywhere in the world rather than simply one geographic area.

Arches has been developed by the GCI and WMF in conjunction with Farallon Geographics Inc., who also provided expertise for MEGA.

For more information or to download Arches, visit www.archesproject.org.

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The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Malibu.

The Getty Conservation Institute works internationally to advance conservation practice in the visual arts—broadly interpreted to include objects, collections, architecture, and sites. The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) serves the conservation community through scientific research, education and training, model field projects, and the dissemination of the results of both its own work and the work of others in the field. In all its endeavors, the GCI focuses on the creation and delivery of knowledge that will benefit the professional conservation community through scientific research, education and training, model field projects, and the dissemination of the results of both its own work and the work of others in the field. In all its endeavors, the GCI focuses on the creation and delivery of knowledge that will benefit the professionals and organizations responsible for the conservation of the world's cultural heritage. www.getty.edu/conservation

World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world's most treasured places. For over 45 years, working in more than 90 countries, its highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to preserve important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF inspires an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York, WMF has offices and affiliates worldwide. For more information, please visit www.wmf.org.

Farallon Geographics (www.fargeo.com), based in San Francisco, is a leader in the planning, implementation, and integration of GIS systems and software to support mission critical business functions. As systems integrators focused on geographical data, Farallon provides unique and unbiased strategic and technical implementation services for enterprise-scale GIS.