

April 14, 2021
Keio University

Launch of the Keio Object Hub (v1.0 Verdure) Portal Site to Promote Art and Culture at Keio University

The Keio Museum Commons (KeMCo) is set to launch the Keio Object Hub (v1.0 Verdure), a Japanese and English bilingual portal site that will promote the cultural collections held at Keio University alongside on-campus cultural activities such as exhibitions as part of its Digital-Analog Fusion Project. The Keio Object Hub will go live on April 14, five days before KeMCo finally opens its doors to the public on April 19.

URL: <https://objecthub.keio.ac.jp/en/>

1. What is the “Keio Object Hub”?

Over the course of its 160-year-plus history, Keio University has accumulated a vast collection of cultural artifacts from a diverse range of academic spheres. These collections are held and used not only in Keio’s libraries and research institutes but also at its undergraduate faculties, affiliated schools, and various other locations on campus, and a rich array of databases for the collections have been compiled reflecting the expertise of these respective institutions. Now, KeMCo has developed the Keio Object Hub portal site, which provides a comprehensive overview of art and culture at Keio University by linking these databases together and tying them in with the culture-related activities taking place at the university, including exhibitions and lectures. As the first public release, v1.0 Verdure will be launched prior to the grand opening of KeMCo on Wednesday, April 14, 2021.

The Keio Object Hub is so named as it was conceived both as a “hub” to facilitate encounters and interactions between people and the cultural artifacts (objects) accumulated by Keio University, and to connect to a global network of museums and universities domestically and internationally through digital space. At the time of its launch, the portal site includes information on approximately 11,500 cultural assets, and more collections are to be added in the future.

2. Features of Keio Object Hub

The portal site not only provides basic information about cultural artifacts or objects but also explains the various collections at Keio, and it has been designed to fully capitalize on its functions as a digital archive. Furthermore, the site is packed with features and innovations, creating opportunities to encounter other cultural artifacts at Keio through links to related artworks and an AI-powered suggestion function.

The images are compatible with IIIF standards (*1), making it possible to utilize these not only on the Keio Object Hub but also in various systems and applications. It is intended for content to eventually incorporate other formats as well, including video, audio, and 3D models. Furthermore, support for Linked Open Data (*2) and a linkup with Japan Search (a cross-disciplinary integrated portal that allows users to collectively search metadata of diverse contents held in Japan) are planned for the summer.

Additionally, to build a communicative cultural hub, introductions to the process of publishing in digital archives, initiatives concerning the utilization of archive data, and information on exhibitions and events will also be widely archived and released going forward.

3. Main sections and functions of Keio Object Hub

Top page:

Thumbnails of Keio’s cultural assets will slowly stream across the top page, both to exemplify the diversity of the collections at Keio and to create chance encounters with different materials—something that is usually quite difficult to achieve with a digital archive. Selecting a thumbnail takes you to a detailed page about the object.

Database (object descriptions):

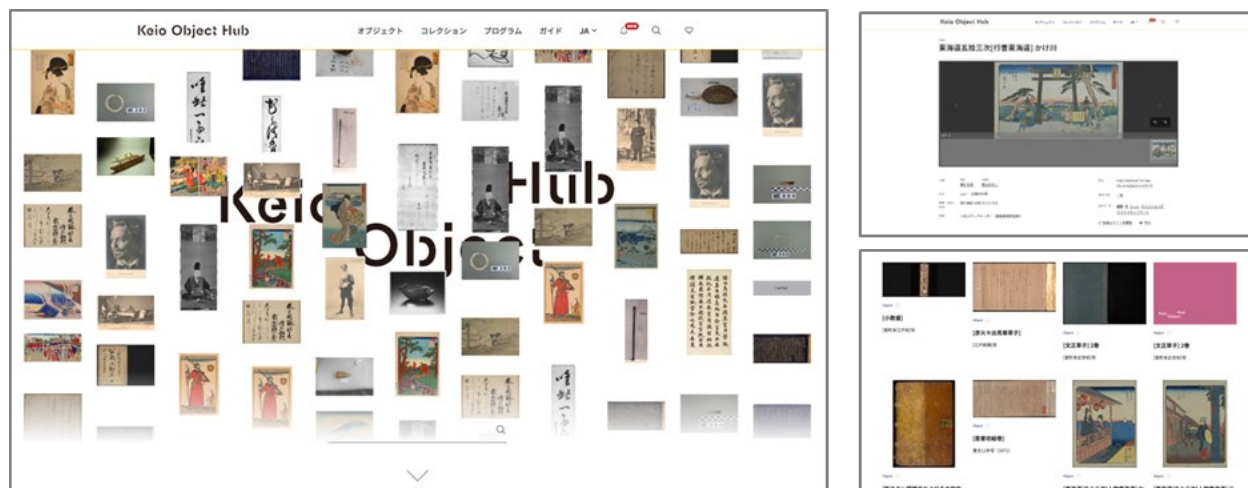
These pages contain basic information about the works (object), descriptions (metadata), images, and other media data harvested from the databases of the specialist departments in possession and making use of cultural artifacts.

Search:

Combining keyword searches and filters, we offer a simple and easy-to-use search engine with a detailed search function that will also satisfy the needs of researchers. Additionally, the search page is equipped with an “AI Suggest” function to support the discovery of materials (objects) using keywords.

AI Suggest:

As a prototype feature, the Keio Object Hub uses AI (machine learning) to generate keywords for searches and filtering. For the first launch, Google Cloud’s Vision API will be used to analyze the images of each object and automatically generate keywords.



4. Collections in the Database

Department Name	Collection	Number of items (approx.)
Keio Museum Commons	Century Akao Collection	2,300
Fukuzawa Memorial Center for Modern Japanese Studies	Keio University and War Archives	900

Department of Archaeology and Ethnology, Faculty of Letters	Melanesian Ethnic Materials	2,000
Media Center	Keio D Collections	6,000
Keio Art Committee	Keio Art Collections	300

Artworks and research materials of various other departments will continue to be added, including from the Keio University Art Center, the Komonjoshitsu at the Faculty of Letters, and the Keio Institute of Oriental Classics (Shido Bunko).

5. Extra features

Exhibitions and Events:

The culture- and art-related activities taking place at Keio University are themselves considered to be important candidates for archiving on the Keio Object Hub, and information regarding the exhibitions and events held on campus will be broadly archived and made public in addition to the cultural artifacts (objects) accumulated by Keio.

Behind the hub:

KeMCo StudI/O is a creation studio at KeMCo that is well-equipped with digital fabrication equipment and constitutes a focal point of the museum's activities. "Behind the hub" presents how digitization unfolds while explaining the process of publishing objects in the archive.

Open Data Design:

The Keio Object Hub not only advances the openness of data, but through inquiries into what kinds of "experiences" can be designed through the utilization of open data, it promotes initiatives regarding the use and application of open data in conversation with students, faculty and staff members, and external researchers. Open Data Design introduces these activities.

<Explanation of terminology>

***1: IIIF (International Image Interoperability Framework)**

An international standard for the interoperability of digital content, including images (data).

Digital content published in compliance with IIIF can be viewed and shared across archives by using standard APIs.

***2: Linked Open Data**

Linked Open Data refers to a mechanism and technology for interconnecting and "linking" data by describing various attribute information (metadata). Based on the Semantic Web technology that enhances the machine-readability of content, it enables both the publication of data and the integrated handling of distributed information.

*Please direct any requests or inquiries to the contact information provided below in advance.

Inquiries regarding this press release:

Keio University Office of Communications and Public Relations (Ms.Toyoda)

Tel: +81-3-5427-1541 E-mail: m-pr@adst.keio.ac.jp Website: <https://www.keio.ac.jp/en/>