My partner institution for this assignment, The Heckscher Museum of Art in Huntington, NY, is a small, American art museum that does a good job of utilizing technology to connect to their patrons. Their website is intuitive and organized, allowing patrons to explore the collection, past/present exhibits, and different educational programs available at the museum. The program guide for current exhibits is available in a virtual, interactive format that allows users to plan their visit ahead of time. The website also features links to different social media platforms like Facebook and Pinterest, which serve to expand the reach of their collection beyond the walls of the physical museum. The Heckscher uses social tagging techniques like hash tags to direct users to their “Long Island’s Best” program for young artists. This strategy links each of the young artists’ works into one location, on each platform (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), so that users
can digitally access this special gallery. This is a fantastic way of using social tagging to promote interaction with the museum, as well as the talented young artists.

(Utilizing social tagging and user interaction)

Vote for your favorite work of art!
Museum visitors will determine who receives the Grumbacher Visitors Choice Award to be presented to one young artist at the Closing Reception on April 9. Vote at the Visitor Services Desk through April 2.

Follow the Museum on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter and celebrate #hmalibest!

In the case of my specific object, George Inness’ *Venice, Italy 1873* (which isn’t a part of any current exhibitions), the Heckscher website utilizes a function of its Collections Management System “Advanced Revelation” to make its cataloged collection available to the public on the front-end via search. During my visit with the Heckscher, I was given a rundown of the use and limitations of this CMS. Overall, the museum uses this platform for its collection because its basic functions allow them to build and maintain their collection in a fairly simple and inexpensive manner. The downside to this system is that in the 2017, it leaves much to be desired in terms of depth, extras and aesthetics.

(Front-end visual of the Heckscher’s search function)

As a comparison, I used the information our class gathered from The Frick Collection in New York City, where we were introduced to their Collection Management software, The Museum System. Compared to Advanced Revelation, The Museum System is superior. The aesthetic of The Museum System is a lot friendlier than Advanced Revelations,
promoting a less clunky interface, as well as easy navigation; it looks more akin to a program created for today’s technology. The Museum System is also deeper and more geared toward museums, whereas Advanced Revelation was a tool used in the shipping industry to manage stock. With this being said, I think it’s important to acknowledge that the needs of the museum play an important role in how collections are presented to visitors. The Frick has a larger collection and therefore needs a more ‘complex’ CMS to handle its operation, whereas the Heckscher can manage its collection with its current CMS and focus on spending money in other more pertinent areas.