1. Evaluate existing metadata structure
   - Reviewed our current metadata, checking it against the Dublin core standard
   - Added “Location”, “Format”, “Collection”, and separated “Keywords” from existing “Photo Description” field and “image title”

2. Select a new content management system
   - Drupal is a very flexible and powerful platform which was necessary for AIP’s diverse needs and audiences
   - Our internal web development team could handle the configuration and customization that Drupal required

3. Evaluate current metadata quality; pricing structure
   - Cleaned up fields before migration
   - Made sure only LOC-authorized terms were included in our “Keywords” and “Location” lists
   - Verified and deleted all duplicate name authority, “keyword”, “location” entries
   - New fields: “Location”, “Format”, “Collection”, “Keywords”, “Photo Description”, “Image Title”
   - Separated “Photo description” from “Keywords” field

4. Design a CMS that fits your needs
   - Redesigned our cataloging and digitization workflows on the new CMS
   - New image uploading process designed as a “one-stop shop”

5. Improve user search capabilities
   - Chose Drupal modules that would enable advanced search feature
   - Grouped images into themed galleries
   - “Keywords”, “Location”, “Date”, and “Categories” fields were hyperlinked under each image record, bringing users to an aggregated page of results

6. Formulate a migration strategy
   - Updated new metadata fields (20,000/25,000) before migration
   - Created an Excel spreadsheet with all the data fields and how they would map from Access database to Drupal content
   - Worked out what needed to be translated (comma-delimited lists of keywords, personal names, etc.); wrote functions to translate into new format for content management system

7. Migrate data
   - Migrated a small test set of records (A through B); verified the migration results (approx. 1,000 records)
   - Evaluated results by testing: Batch upload > testing > evaluate, then repeated process
   - Eventually, completed final migration of 25,000 image records

Top Tips from Lessons Learned
- Final migration means final: Be clear about when the final migration is happening. If any metadata is updated in the interim it will be lost by next migration. Never update in between migrations.
- Document tasks and team progress: We had a Drupal “Basecamp” in which we communicated goals, progress, and deadlines. Use Google, a personalized wiki, or blog to record the choices made. If not, you will forget the thousands of steps you took during the migration process.
- Write down or record all verbal decisions: Phone and Skype conferences are good tools—but miscommunications can happen in big projects when deadlines and to-dos are based on memories, not print.
- Test user accounts from every angle: Be sure to try as many different user scenarios for searching and ordering as possible. There are exceptions to the rule you need to plan for—before they occur.

Our Timeline

2013
- JAN Research begins
- MAR Planning begins
- JULY Development begins
- OCT First migration
- DEC Final migration

2014
- MAY Final stage: Launch

https://photos.aip.org