

## Editorial Review: Cataloging Software for Map Collectors

By Joe McAlhany

Old World Auctions believes strongly in the value of cataloging a collection and keeping records of purchases and sales. Although OWA has developed its own proprietary software to manage consignments and auctions, this option is not feasible for the average collector. The deeper a collector becomes involved in building a collection, the more important it is to maintain a catalog of his or her prized inventory. Beyond just tracking what you own, a catalog can be useful in organizing your collecting interests, preserving the history of how the collection was built, keeping financial records, and determining the value of what you have. Many collectors create lists in programs like Word or Excel to capture their collections in digital form, but there is software out there that is specifically designed to catalog valuable collections. We have tested a handful of cataloging software programs, and selected two programs to review based on their user-friendliness and applicability to map collectors. And to assist you in starting your collection catalog, OWA gives you access to your purchase history and Certificates of Authenticity for any of your purchases directly on our website.

*Please note that these reviews are unbiased and were conducted at the sole initiative of OWA. OWA does not own or have a stake in either company or its products, and OWA has neither received nor been promised any form of compensation for these reviews.*

### **RECOLLECTOR**

Recollector is available for download for both Mac and Microsoft operating systems at [www.collectingcatalog.com](http://www.collectingcatalog.com). The site provides a fully-functional free preview that allows you to create and save up to 25 records. If you wish to expand your database beyond 25 items, you can purchase the program for a one-time fee of \$49 that includes any future updates.

Producing a collection database is simple thanks to a "wizard" that pilots you through the naming of the collection, the selection of the template, the fields to include, the currency and dimension units you wish to use, and the location where the file will be saved. There are numerous templates for a wide range of collection types, including art, books, records, stamps, watches, et cetera, and since the templates and fields are customizable, you could conceivably use the program to catalog any sort of collection imaginable. The map preset comes with seventeen fields: ID Number, Map-Maker, Title, Date, Region, Dimensions, Description, Condition, Source, References, Image, Location, Date Acquired, Acquired From, Price, Value, and Valuation Date. Since it is easy to add other fields, map collectors may choose to add fields such as Color, Place of Publication, or Repair Costs, just to provide a few examples.

Add Date

Search

ID #:  Assign next ID # case

Map-Maker:

Title:

Date:  Region:

Height (in.):  Width (in.):

Description:

Condition:

Source:

References:

Image:  Delete Text

Location:  Date Acquired:

Acquired from:

Price (\$):  Value (\$):

Valuation Date:  Color:

OK and Ask Another

Copy Fields... Paste Fields... Cancel Help

Recollector: Input Screen

Cartophilia (7 records) [ID # = 001] \* [Demo Mode]

File Edit Search Subset Options Windows Help

List Image Gallery Item Details Item 1 of 7

**ID #:** 001

**Map-Maker:** Jo Mora

**Title:** Evolution of the Cowboy

**Date:** 1933

**Region:** California/Cowboy

**Height (in.):** 30.6

**Width (in.):** 23

**Description:** One of Mora's most enduring creations, this sheet was originally used as a promotional item for the Salinas Rodeo.

**Condition:** A

**Image:** 

**Location:** US West Drawer

**Date Acquired:** July 19, 2007

**Acquired from:** John Q. Dealer

**Price (\$):** \$750

**Value (\$):** \$1000-1400

**Valuation Date:** 7/19/2007

**Color:** Printed

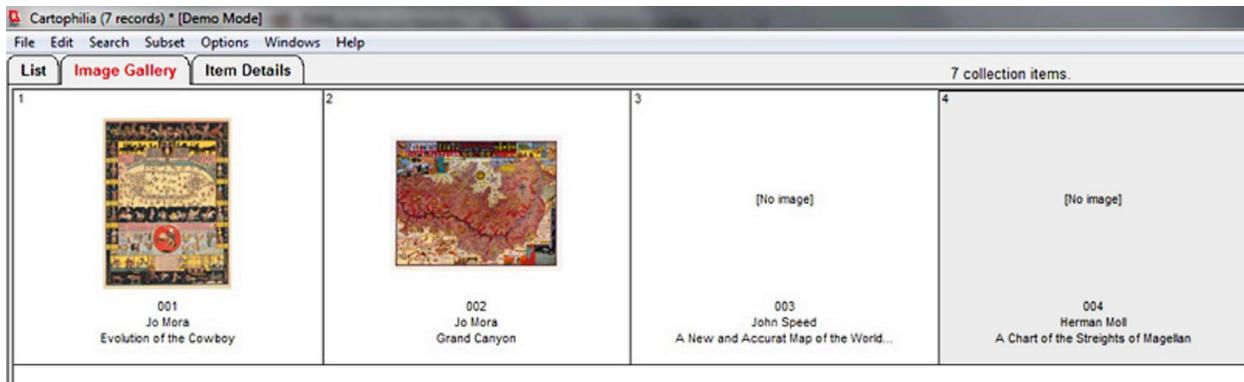
Recollector: Item Detail View

Once you have established the sort of collection database you want, adding items is self-explanatory; you just fill in the fields with the correct information. There is an option to create "picklists", which enable you to generate a pull-down menu with a number of options for certain fields. For example, you could fill the "picklist" for the Region field with the most common geographies you collect so that it is not necessary to type out California or South America every time you catalog a map of those regions. Unfortunately, "picklists" only work with short text fields, so one cannot make a "picklist" with the preset Map-Maker field.

There are three primary ways to view your catalog: in a list (or spreadsheet-style) form that can be arranged in alphabetical/numerical order by field, as an image gallery (if you have linked your database to your digital images, something that the "wizard" makes effortless), or as individual records, showing all the details for one map on the screen. The image gallery is one of the most appealing features of this program, as it allows you to look at your maps side-by-side. The image gallery can be sorted and filtered using the subset function. For example, you could filter through your collection by field, in order to see all your maps of a certain region at once, or all the works by a certain creator. You could further order the list chronologically or even tighten the focus of the subset to a certain decade to compare and contrast similar maps in your catalog. Since you can filter by numerous fields, the subset tool enables you to narrow down your catalog in very specific ways.

ID#	Creator	Title	Date	Region	Height (in.)	Width (in.)	Description
001	Jo Mora	Evolution of the Cowboy	1953	California/Cowboy	30.6	21	One of Mora's most enduring creations; this sheet was origi...
002	Jo Mora	Grand Canyon	1959	Arizona	14.1	18.1	This is the reduced and colored version of Jo Mora's splen...
003	John Speed	A New and Accurat Map of the World	1606	World	19.4	20.3	This desirable and beautiful double hemispheric world map...
004	Herman Moll	A Chart of the Straights of Magellan	1765	Southern South America	7.0	10.6	Detailed copper engraving of the Strait of Magellan with anc...
005	Arnibuid Furlan & Co	Mexico & Guatimala	1805	Mexico, Central America	17.5	0.0	A nicely detailed map that shows an early Texas as part of...
006	Hennicus Hondius	Poi Arctici et Circumiacentium Terrarum Descriptio Novissima	1656	North Pole	17.1	19.5	A very early edition of Hondius' important map of the polar re...
007	Jo Mora	City of San Diego	1928	California	27.0	21.8	This is a richly illustrated pictorial map of the San Diego by...

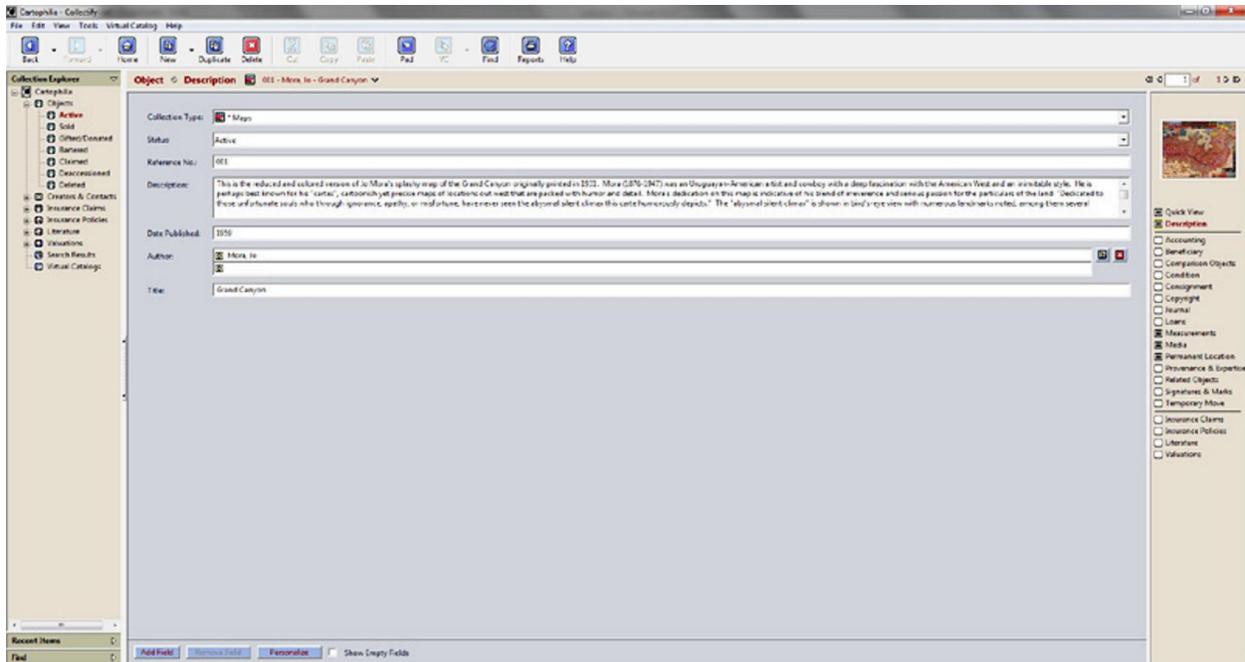
Recollector: List View



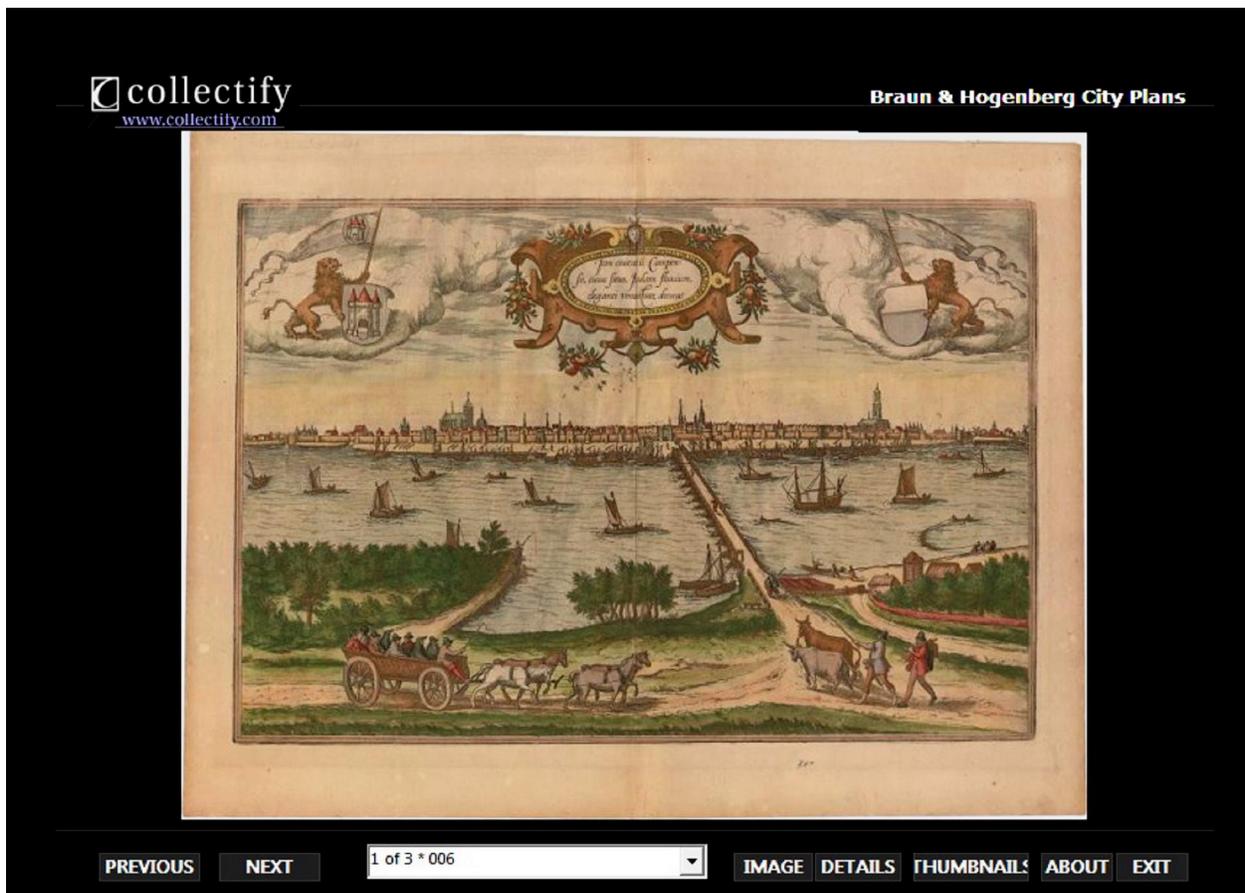
Recollector: Image Gallery View

In addition to the many features discussed above, Recollector offers a free mobile app for those who wish to reference their catalog on the go. The program also has import/export functions so that you can transfer existing Excel spreadsheets into your Recollector database or download your Recollector database into a spreadsheet to share it with others.





Collectify: Item Detail View



Collectify: Slideshow View

For those accustomed to viewing their catalogs as a spreadsheet, Collectify is emphatically not the route to go - the program is designed to be navigated like a web page. (However, for the collector looking for a change who already has his or her collection cataloged in Access, Excel, or a similar program, there is an "Import Wizard" that can transfer the information into Collectify.) But even with the staggering amount of information you can choose to input, the software's excellent search function makes it easy to find what you're looking for. You can also customize how you organize your collection by creating collection sub-types. Although not as intuitive as Recollector, Collectify is not intimidating.

Casual or novice collectors may find Collectify's myriad features overwhelming or superfluous to their needs, but the program is almost perfect for a passionate collector with a sprawling, unwieldy inventory. Users can monitor the financial aspect of their collections, recording insurance information and valuations or drawing up automated reports dealing with accounts, estate planning, sales, and more. You can share images from your collection with prospective buyers or fellow collectors with the elegant slideshow tool. There is also a literature section where diligent researchers can store sources, excerpts, and scans. This wide range of tools make Collectify a worthy investment for collectors who may be interested in selling off part of their collection or who simply enjoy cataloging and researching their collections in depth.