

**Art Libraries Society of North America, 33rd Annual Conference
Hilton Americas, Houston, Texas, April 1-6, 2005**

**Session III: Providing Visual Information in the New "Smart" University:
The Cross-Campus Development of Digital Image Libraries
Sunday, April 3, 2005, 10:00 – 11:30 AM**

Organizer: John Taormina, Duke University

Moderator: Mark Pompelia, Rice University

Speakers:

Roberta Blitz, Digital Collection/Art Research Librarian, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, "Columbia Image Bank: Digital Visual Resources for the Campus."

Carole Ann Fabian, Director, Educational Technology Center, University of Buffalo, "Democraticizing Camus Collections: Collaborating for a Universal Asset Model."

Amy Lucker, Head of technical Services and Slides & Digital Imaging, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, "Sharing the Bridge: From Analog to Digital Without Falling In."

Ann Baird Whiteside, Director, Fiske Kimball Fine Arts Library, University of Virginia, "Charting the Unknown Path: Collaborative Digital Collection Building at the University of Virginia."

John Taormina, Director, Visual Resources Center, Duke University, "When 'East' Meets 'West': Developing the Digital Image Base at Duke University."

Recorder: John Taormina, Duke University

Summary:

As more and more colleges and universities are bringing the digital format into all areas of the academic community, the traditional boundaries between the art library, the visual resources collection, and instructional technology centers are blurring. Successful implementations of digital image archives across campuses now often involve close collaborations between those who have traditionally managed text/book collections (in libraries) and those who have managed image collections (in departments). With the transition to the digital image, collection managers and patrons are no longer restricted to locale or administrative unit.

Roberta Blitz, Columbia University, began by explaining that the Columbia Image Bank is the overall name of the University's digital imaging initiative. The immediate goal of this project is to support the instructional and research needs of the Department of Art History and Archaeology; the broader purpose is to provide images to the entire campus community. It is a truly collaborative effort on the part

of the Libraries and the Art History Department. And it is explorative as well, since there is no precedent for this type of project at Columbia.

A number of factors were in place that allowed Columbia to undertake such an initiative at this point in time. The Libraries purchased an image management system, Luna Imaging's Insight software. All components of Luna's software were implemented: Insight as the presentation tool, Inscribe as the cataloging utility, and the collection building tool Studio for the mass uploading and linking of images and metadata. The Art History Department had a local database containing over 50,000 images and catalog records but was concerned about the long term capacity of its Visual Culture Database, as the expertise needed to sustain this type of resource goes beyond the expertise of any individual academic department. The idea behind the Image Bank is that the Libraries would provide the technical infrastructure while the Art History Department would provide the highly specialized content. Ultimately the entire University will benefit as access to image resources will be made available to the entire campus community.

At Columbia they have faced and are still facing a number of challenges. Perhaps the most daunting are the technical issues as the technology is very much bleeding edge. Workflow is another area of concern as this is the first time the library is accepting content from a non-library unit. The Image Bank is a project born of informal discussions, but there is now the need for formal policies and procedures, thus they are working on a statement of collaboration.

Amy Lucker, Harvard University, spoke about how they are working at Harvard to balance the library's need for a shared resource with their users' needs for the images they want when they want them. The gap that they are attempting to bridge is that between the library's vision of what is good for the whole of the institution and their faculty's teaching goals.

The art history image collection is part of the library and not administered by an academic department. Although the primary clientele is the Department of the History of Art and Architecture, there are regular users from other academic departments as well as from the Harvard University Art Museums. As part of the Harvard College Library organization they participate in library-wide activities and contribute to library-supported, university-wide systems. One of these systems is VIA, or Visual Information Access

<http://via.harvard.edu:9080/via/deliver/advancedsearch?_collection=via>.

Participants in VIA include the Fine Arts Library, the library of the Graduate School of Design, the Houghton Library, the Schlesinger Library, and many other Harvard University libraries. VIA is for their visual holdings what HOLLIS is for their print holdings; that is, a union catalog. They are committed not only to submitting their cataloging into the Harvard union catalogs, but also to submitting cataloging that conforms to available standards. These standards include national, such as Library of Congress subject headings and call numbers, and local, such as those that control most of our image cataloging. These controls, and this complexity, are important for a shared system, where participants come from a variety of libraries that had a variety of manual cataloging processes.

At Harvard they build library systems to provide access to information for their users. At the same time, it is crucial for the library to maintain enough controls on what goes into a database to maintain consistency and integrity of the data over

time. But this is also where library needs came into conflict with the users' needs. And while most library users truly appreciate the benefits that an orderly and controlled catalog gives them, they are not willing to sublimate their needs to these benefits.

One of our goals at the Fine Arts Library has been to try to convince the users to depend on them, rather than to build private collections. The notion of the collective good, of the shared resource, resonates with users. The issue is when users are told that the library cannot provide everything in the time needed because of the need to comply with cataloging and procedural standards.

So what is being done to deal with some of these compromises? To the extent possible they are creating brief catalog records. Systems statistics have shown that users consistently search using keyword anywhere searches. The main exception to this is when they look for a specific artist name. One of the less efficient, but at times necessary, compromises they have made is to provide users with digital images on removable media (primarily DVD) prior to getting the information into VIA.

They are at a critical juncture at Harvard at this time. The image delivery system, VIA, has recently been reconfigured and presents users with image-centric results, arrayed in a grid display. Because the system is far more user-friendly than it was in the past more people are using it.

Ann Baird Whiteside, University of Virginia, started her presentation by indicating that during the 1990s the University of Virginia Library began setting up centers, based on format, for electronic media. The original intent was to create places in which faculty and students could create innovative projects using digital technology. The Electronic Text Center became a hallmark of the University.

As they moved into the new century, and as all faculty and students started using technology, they realized that technology, like other library services, could be and probably should be available in multiple places across campus, and in multiple libraries within our system. The faculty in art, art history, and architecture especially were interested in having local access to technology in the Fine Arts Library. They also felt that building a digital image collection for their teaching and research needs was something the Fine Arts Library should be doing, as had been done for analog collections.

In 2000, the UVA Library began the process of envisioning and then developing a Digital Library. One of the guiding thoughts for their Digital Library included the concept that digital collection building should be integrated into traditional collection building; that is, train the (traditional) book selectors to select digital materials as well as analog.

What was first established is that all digital materials have different technical issues that have to be taken into consideration. After a year of discussions, they did come to general agreement on what should go into the Digital Library for collections, but they had to deal with technical issues. Individually they understood the technical issues, but the questions were (1) how to get all the selectors across the libraries invested in building digital collections, and (2) how to get all selectors to understand the technical issues for a given body of material.

Another assumption set forth for the UVA Digital Library is that creation of digital material is to be done centrally, in their Digital Library Production Services Department (also known as DLPS). When DLPS was set up in 2001, its mandate was to be the center for digital production for all materials. They are a production unit that works only with library staff. Working with DLPS, they came to agreements about the role of DLPS and the role of Fine Arts Library staff. As DLPS began digitizing for them, DLPS and the library jointly evaluated the quality of their work.

Both the image collections in the Fine Arts Library and in the Art Department have built their analog collections without much interaction or collaboration, but in the digital world they realized that they must build the digital image collection collaboratively. The goal is to merge the two image collections virtually, something that cannot be done physically. They are focusing on collection issues, as well as on merging their databases so that ultimately, all image cataloging will be done in one database.

They have begun to realize the magnitude of image collections across the UVA Library. The Metadata Steering Group has begun thinking about the possibility of using one database in which to catalog all images in the Library system. Using one database across campus requires a firm commitment from all image collection managers to find someone to do the cataloging, and to apply standards.

Finally, John Taormina, Duke University, discussed the collaboration between the Department of Art and Art History and Duke's main library, Perkins Library, to create a digital Visual Resources Collection in the developing Duke Image Base, which is a part of the Digital Library @ Duke. The library purchased Luna Imaging's Insight software in 2002 and proposed that the Visual Resources Center provide one of two start-up collections using Insight. This collaboration is where the "East Meets West" component comes in. Duke is physically divided into a West, or main, Campus—where Perkins Library is located—and an East Campus—where the Department of Art and Art History is located. During spring and summer of 2002 Taormina worked with Perkins Library and Luna Imaging to develop the Insight template and image collection. The Image Base went live in fall 2002 and the department taught its first art history class completely digitally in fall 2003.

In addition to funding the purchase and maintenance of Insight, another positive aspect of this collaboration was that the library also generously funded the purchase of the Saskia images as part of their collection development program. During this same startup period the department applied for and received in 2002 the first of its two instructional technology grants for its new department-wide digital program. The granting office was the Center for Instructional Technology, administratively located within the library system. The second grant was received in 2004 to continue the work begun two years earlier. Between both grants the Visual Resources Center targeted fifteen courses for digital conversion over a three-year period; the ongoing development of a digital archive to support its two-semester Western Art survey; the purchase of a cataloging database, IRIS, Image Resource Information System; and additional student labor, digitization outsourcing, and imaging equipment.

As part of the Duke Image Base development, and probably one of the most important aspects of the collaboration, was the formation of a Duke Image Base steering committee in 2004, composed of members of the library's IT staff, a library metadata specialist, and various other librarians from Special Collections, Fine Arts, and Public Services; a representative from Arts and Sciences Computing; and

Taormina—representing the primary non-library Luna Insight collection on campus to date.

The steering committee spent the spring 2005 semester evaluating the Insight software presently being used to deliver images across campus. Since the library wishes to develop and maintain a comprehensive digital assets management system for their materials, they are looking to incorporate new systems that go beyond image delivery. The Visual Resources Center is now looking to implement the Madison Digital Image Database, MDID, to replace Insight for storing and delivering their images, to support the Art and Art History faculty's teaching needs. Future collaboration is planned between the two units as the library's new Image Repository develops.