

Image Explosion: Outreach and Instruction Beyond the Arts

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In the last five to ten years, we have seen an unprecedented explosion of digital images available on the Web (some behind locked doors, others not). For a telling contrast, in 1997, the Art Museum Image Consortium with twenty-two charter partners (later growing to forty or more) took eight years to painstakingly build a digital library of over 120,000 images (<http://www.amico.org/>). Compare this noble grandparent of image services to the young whippersnapper Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/>). Weinberger, in his 2007 book *Everything is Miscellaneous*, estimated that Flickr had approximately 225,000,000 images uploaded by users with almost 1,000,000 being added every day, not to mention the 5,700,000 tags applied, a total of 540,000,000 times. "We are rapidly miscellanizing our world, breaking things out of their old organizational structures, and enabling individuals to sort and order them on the fly," according to Weinberger. With the world doing image collection development and cataloging, how are art librarians and visual resources curators to keep up with this explosion of image resources and bring archive, library, museum, and kindergarten through university patrons along for the ride? Weinberger suggests: "If they don't allow their users to structure information for themselves, they'll lose their patrons. If they do allow the patrons to structure information for themselves, the organizations will lose much of their authority, power, and control."

In addition, we're not only dealing with traditionally image-intensive patrons in art history and studio art, but with the full array of arts and humanities disciplines as well as emerging populations from all corners of our institutions and surrounding communities. For example, the University of California (UC) at Irvine rolled ARTstor (<http://www.artstor.org/>) out last fall and to our astonishment, we had more initial queries from the Sciences and Medicine than from the Arts and Humanities. Using images for research, teaching, and learning has almost become a minimum educational standard. Therefore, whether image users are coming to the library or departmental visual resources collection for assistance or not, it is going to take an agile team of professional staff to meet the demand for images effectively and to insure that patrons are finding what they need, when they need it, and they can figure out how to use, manage, and preserve images once they have them.

In 2004, when the California Digital Library (<http://www.cdlib.org/inside/projects/image/>) first federated licensed and UC owned digital image content in Luna's Insight software (<http://www.lunaimaging.com/>), I started partnering with Irvine's Art Librarian on *Finding and Using Images* workshops. UC Irvine's Visual Resources Collection (VRC) is located in and supported by the Schools of the Arts and Humanities rather than the Libraries, but I found a terrific ally in Rina Vecchiola. We have published information about our collaboration in *Art Documentation*. We spent one-third of the workshop time on open access Web resources, one-third on Library licensed resources such as the Associated Press Photo Archive, and one-third on the UC collections in Insight. These workshops continue, but now with a component on ARTstor added to *Finding and Using* as well as a new completely separate *Introduction to ARTstor* workshop.

Although still using some traditional bibliographic instruction techniques to teach workshops, we learned early on that to engage attendees with digital images these sessions had to be hands-on in a computer lab, should be very flexible in addressing the goals of the attendees, and should have authentic outcomes. One of the first questions asked is "What do you want to do with digital images?" If the workshop is small enough, it can be very focused on the learning outcomes thus identified and attendees leave with

a substantial packet of information as well as the images they need for the task they identified.

At least two workshops are offered per quarter and I keep a running list of attendees with e-mails so I can update the image-interested with any image news. In this table, you see a summary of four years of workshops in which over one hundred people have attended, notably almost equal numbers of faculty, students, and staff.

Campus Group	Number of Workshop Attendees	Number of Disciplines	High Attendance	Low Attendance
Faculty	44	13	English and Comparative Literature (10)	Studio Art (0) Art History (2)
Graduate Students	43	12	English and Comparative Literature (12)	Studio Art (1) Art History (4)
Staff	38	15	Computing (11) Library (7)	Biomedical Engineering (1) Dance (1)

Although not originally intended for staff, the staff response has indicated that quite a range of people on campus are being asked to deal with images. The unexpected outcome of staff attendance has been better communication with faculty and students since the department managers now send the image-interested to the VRC. It's interesting to see the poor showing of the most image-intensive disciplines of Art History and Studio Art versus the high numbers of English and Comparative Literature attendees. It is also notable that a high number of other disciplines are turning out—Business, Classics, Dance, Drama, History, Languages, Sociology, Women's Studies, etc.—and the prevalence of librarians and computer staff interested in images.

There's more back story here than can be related summarily, but among the reasons for the high turnout of Humanities attendees is the fact that the workshops are sponsored by HumaniTech®, which is a department in the School of Humanities charged with being the intermediary between technology and faculty (<http://www.humanities.uci.edu/humanitech/>). They work closely with faculty to provide workshops, lecture series, and copyright guidelines as well as to connect Humanities faculty with all the other technological entities on the UCI campus. Although HumaniTech's workshop series anticipates faculty technology needs and promotes campus policy with things like copyright, it is primarily driven by faculty requests to learn about specific types of software and systems as well as to address current issues. So, the image workshops have been designed to fulfill a current demand and I have a meaningful partnership with an entity respected by the faculty.



Most visual resources curators would probably argue that one-on-one sessions with faculty are more effective than group sessions, a premise with which I generally agree, especially when it comes to intensive-image users. Above you see a classic quote from the ever-provocative art librarian, Henry Pisciotta at Penn State, jokingly engraved on one of the Farber gravestones freely available in Cartography Associates' Visual Collections (<http://www.davidrumsey.com/collections/>) by colleague Susan Jane Williams, to make this point. This suggestion has led me to believe that we have to work all the harder to reach any potential image users when it comes to using digital image services, such as Insight and ARTstor where images, metadata, and tools are bundled together.

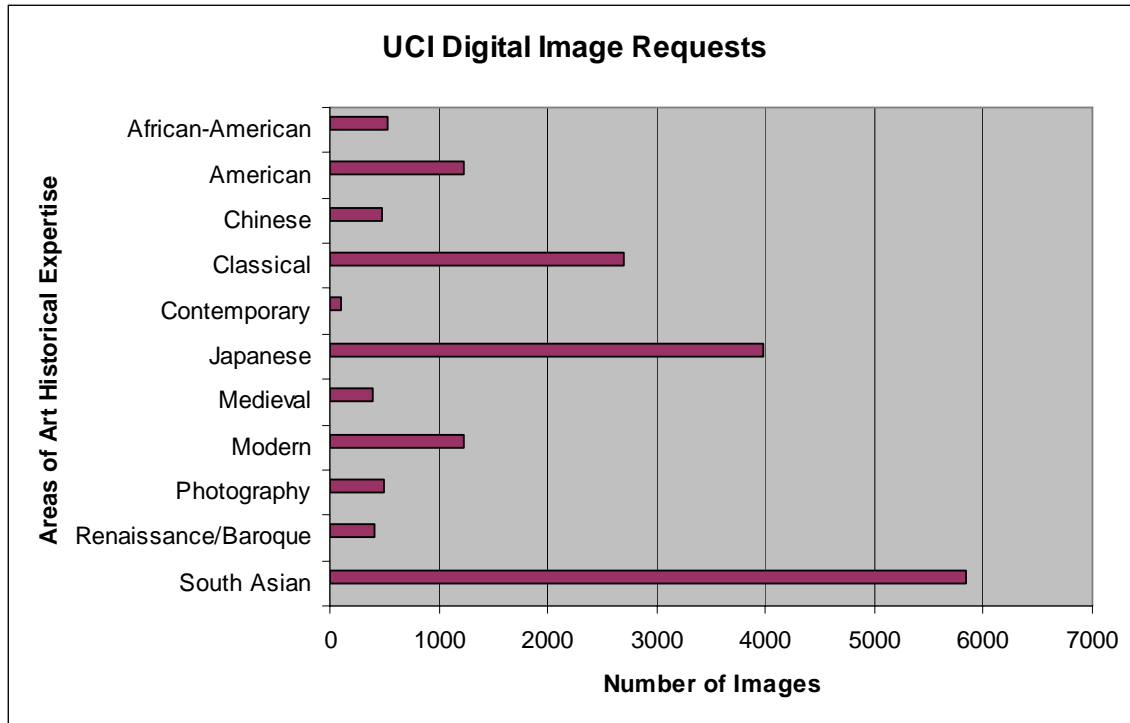
UC Irvine's experience with these workshops has indicated that customized, hands-on group workshops can be effective in reaching quite a variety of disciplines and some attendees like the semi-anonymity of a crowd, especially educators who might not be comfortable as students anymore. The image workshops are also available upon demand, for example, a group of Visual Studies students requested an interactive session and discussion where they could bring their own laptops and walk away with the software and images needed downloaded on their own machines. I've collaborated with a variety of UCI librarians on such targeted sessions, including those to meet the demands of engineering, medicine, and the sciences since the ARTstor rollout.

I'm also HumaniTech's go-to person for any queries related to images and this has enabled me to connect with faculty one-on-one who have more ambitious image projects in mind or who might never have walked into the Visual Resources Collection. A few examples of these are illuminating.

A faculty member from the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures came to HumaniTech with a copyright question related to a collection of photographs of 1940s-1960s Japanese theater. Her experiences with digitizing these fascinating images could be the basis for a dramatic production in itself. By the time she came to us, the photos had been digitized twice, the first time to an inferior image quality standard, the second time lost to a surge which destroyed her hard drive. With the second attempt, she had a student work on the metadata, which was also lost. However, the third time was a charm. The VRC managed to get her images scanned properly, saved on multiple media, and preserved on a server in the library. We are presently trying to build the descriptive data again on Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/8899119@N05/>) before moving the project into Cornell's Global Performing Arts Database (<http://www.glopad.org/pi/en/>). This is a technologically experimental and brilliant faculty member who is just extremely busy. The project will take time, but at least it is now on the right track.

In contrast, an emeritus Comparative Literature faculty member came into the VRC apologizing that he was unable to attend my recent images workshop and asking for assistance. He had a brand new MacBook (I managed to get my own last year arguing that I need to be able to demo image projects in both the Mac and Windows platforms and to be mobile). I always ask if they want to drive when starting a one-on-one session and he eagerly volunteered confessing he was more comfortable with Windows. First, I directed him to the UC Irvine Libraries Web site (<http://www.lib.uci.edu/online/subject/subpage.php?subject=images>) where information about all of the image resources available to him is summarized with links. This includes, the content available and guides and tutorials, as well as information about off-campus access, the visual resources collection, copyright information, and workshops. Then I recommended he try my new favorite wiki developed at Wellesley College (<http://digital-image-collections.wikispaces.com/>) with free and fair use Web sites, including Flickr and Wikimedia Commons images, so he could show me his image interests. He was looking for the French photographer Atget's work and we quickly determined that ARTstor was worth trying with its Eastman House content. He became a registered user, found the images he wanted, and saved them as a group to the ARTstor server. I directed him to the maximize button and the arrows that would allow him to flip through the images in a slide show. He was unsure of access to an Internet collection where he was presenting and so he downloaded the Offline Image Viewer and tried using the image palette for his slide show instead. In less than a half an hour, this faculty member, who is easily in his 70s, walked away a satisfied customer with a finished presentation. So, it behooves us to not make assumptions about any given users ability to handle our image resources.

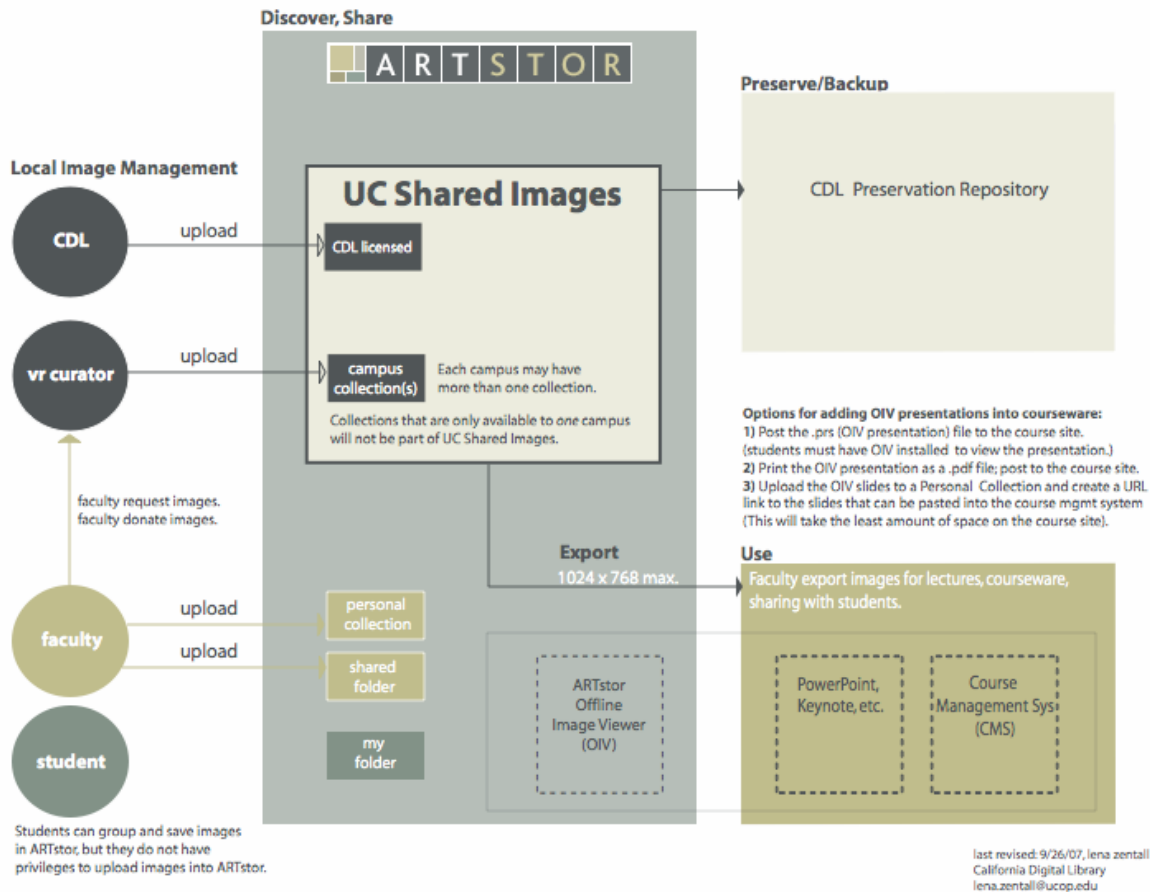
UC Irvine's Visual Resources Collection is still, of course, supporting the traditionally intensive image users in the Arts and Humanities and they are proving to be are greatest challenge. In this chart, you can see the number of digital images requested by the faculty teaching in these various areas of Art Historical study.



We have found that some of these faculty prefer to do all image scanning themselves, others rely completely on VRC scanning services, others do a little of both, and several have retired rather than “go digital.” Yet, a collaboration with a new faculty member has given me hope, in this final example. She studies the Islamic architecture of South Asian and we are presently scanning 10,000 of her fieldwork slides (upon arrival she networked on campus for funds to outsource this material to no avail). Since the metadata is in her head and field notes, we provided her with an Excel spreadsheet which maps to our local database so she could catalog the images she needed for immediate instructional needs. Although she has her own Web site with some of this material on it (<http://www.alkapatel.com/>), she was eager to have her material made available in campus resources and to date 5,000 images are accessible to the students taking her courses. Because she built a Web site herself, she appreciated the efforts necessary to digitize slides and understands why metadata is so important. She also understands that her images can be discovered easier if they are in multiple resources and therefore would like to disseminate them as widely as possible to enhance scholarship. We are presently working with ARTstor to make her images available as part of their core content available to all ARTstor subscribers.

A new generation of scholars, may make it easier, but we still have our work cut out for us with existing image users still trying to find their way through the digital transition. My experience so far indicates that many faculty and students don’t completely understand (or haven’t taken the time to experiment with) the potential of digital image services that have quality images, detailed descriptive data, and image management and presentation tools bundled together. In my mind, this convergence is what makes educating educators about digital images different from other library resources and requires extra efforts on our part in terms of instruction.

Workflow: UC Shared Images



With the California Digital Library taking the lead, the University of California Libraries and Visual Resources Collections are hoping to help make the coin drop. Since the UC VRCs have the most instructional content in digital form, curators from all ten campuses are presently moving these images into ARTstor hosted collections. Although it is unlikely there will ever be one-stop shopping for digital images, we're going to find out if ARTstor may be able to provide some semblance of it with their 750,000 strong digital library, approximately 100,000 teaching images from UC VRCs, and any personal collection material faculty choose to upload. When faculty can see that any images they order from the VRC eventually turn up in ARTstor, we hoping the value of such image services will be more fully understood and the age of strategically built shared image collections will have truly arrived at UC.

But, we all know that image technology is a moving target—expanding content, new platforms, updated software with expanded tools, Web 2.0 and 3.0, etc. After the VRA and ARLIS conferences, I know I have my work cut out for me in terms of determining how to stay on top of learning all the new things I need to know and how to best to employ new technology in outreach and instruction. You'll find no sense of complacency on my part. I've learned that it is going to take a distributed network of functional partners to shape the future.

In closing, I would like to try to provide you with a few take aways. We need to explore the literature (such as the selection of articles below) and share experiences to better understand the variety of image users and all the different pedagogical uses they can dream up. We need to connect with image users in every way we can—from the

water cooler conversation to workshops—to make sure they clearly understand we are here to help with images. Building reciprocal partnerships and establishing clear communication channels between art librarians, visual resources curators, and the computing staff who are specialists in teaching with technology, designing smart classrooms, and supporting course management systems is crucial— especially the natural synergy of the art librarian and visual resources curator working together. In this way, we can maximize campus resources while drawing upon the respected expertise of librarians and the spontaneous front-line services provided by visual resources curators to best serve image users—whether in the arts or humanities or any other discipline.

There was a fantastic session at VRA in San Diego called “Improving Your Image: Marketing Visual Resources Collections” organized and moderated by Brooke Cox of DePauw University (<http://www.vraweb.org/conferences/sandiego2008/sessions/session6/index.htm>). There is so much good information from this panel up on the VRA Web site with creative ideas about outreach and instruction, it nearly stymied me in trying to determine what to share today. I highly recommend you look at it for specific recommendations about branding, communication, services, and even facility makeovers to attract image patrons. This YouTube video is just one example of the innovative work they are doing at DePauw University: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ceW7GcPMPwU>. I now use these videos to break the ice at student orientations and plan to link to them from UCI’s VRC Web site (<http://www.arts.uci.edu/vrc/>).

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