I am going to talk a little about Yale’s Visual Resources outreach efforts to those disciplines beyond our standard Art History and Architecture patrons and the way in which we have tried to appeal to other patrons through the revamp of our digital collection interface. We have the luxury of having a position called Technology Specialist—who is me. This position blends the role of reference and instruction librarian, digital image specialist, and instructional technologist.
I am going to address our 3 main modes of outreach to those disciplines across campus like History, Anthropology, American Studies, English, Religious Studies, among others.

The first mode of outreach is one-on-one faculty instruction, the 2nd is addressing image research in library instruction sessions for specific courses, and the 3rd is teaching specialized classes in collaboration with other centers or groups on campus.
The first outreach activity is one-on-one interactions with faculty. This is kind of a no brainer, but has to be stated….it is these one on one interactions that can provide the best marketing for your collections. One nice interaction with a faculty person outside the Arts, means that h/s will most likely go back and spread the word.
Having this faculty champion will always lead to more users. But, beyond developing individual champions, it is vital that visual resource professionals also develop a reputation as the image experts on a campus for all image collections, not just those contained or administered by their department.

For example, with the increased prevalence of images available online, American Studies Professor Matt Jacobson noticed how he could use images as evidence in his lectures and rely not only on the texts that were assigned to students. However, he was unsure how best to incorporate multimedia into his classroom experience. With help from the Technology Specialist in the VRC, Professor Jacobson became confident in his mastery of finding and downloading images as well as audio and video clips and integrating them into PowerPoint presentations. And these were not only images found on our local VRC collection. He noted in an e-mail:

“Working digitally has not only expanded the archive of my teaching immeasurably, but it has allowed me to elaborate certain historical and analytical points in ways unimaginable without the aid of such images…”
He went on to say that a “true understanding of the civil rights era and the stakes involved is impossible without an understanding of this dimension, articulated so eloquently by a pictorial archive that was out of my reach before the availability of digital images online. He could make similar comments about each of the 24 lectures in my lecture set.”

Sometimes, having a visual resources staff member who can help faculty find resources (regardless of where they find it) and determine the best way to use it in an external software program is invaluable. Again, this facilitation of image use in teaching and learning, leveraging the skills and expertise of the visual resource professional, is key to supporting a range of faculty needs in the digital classroom. And it promotes the VR profession as an invaluable one to faculty from disciplines across campus.
Recorded civil rights demontrations in the hospital and on the street.
1963.
A SECOND mode of outreach is to address image research in library instruction sessions for specific courses. What a better way to promote your collection than with the support of our teaching librarians?
Librarians are hip now, and by collaborating with them in their instruction sessions you can begin the bones of a program or suite of skills based workshops that can then be done in conjunction with other groups on campus. How does this happen—honestly, it maybe just starts with a coffee date For example, I developed a friendship with the Social Science librarian.
When she was asked to do a library instruction session for this class, she sent me an e-mail and asked if I wanted to address the image part, especially because of their research project which was a bit more creative. These professional relationships can lead to good things for the VR profession. Never turn down a coffee date with a colleague b/c you are too busy as an opportunity to reach out to non-traditional users of VR collections may elude you.
A THIRD mode of outreach is to teach specialized classes in collaboration with other centers or groups on campus. Find out who directs your Writing Center or Language Center or Instructional Technology Group. Build a repertoire of academic technology related instruction sessions about digital images and submit a proposal to do a joint session for students or faculty. For example—VR professionals are well equipped to teach about media literacy and this may be an area to take advantage of. I co-taught a class at the Graduate Teaching Center about just that.

The GTC at Yale offers a Certificate of College Teaching Preparation (CTP) and it is an opportunity for Graduate Students to complete a comprehensive training program in effective college teaching.

In this session I interacted with graduate students from many disciplines, even the hard sciences. And I was also able to insert some info about finding digital images in our collection. Additionally, I built a relationship with the head of the GTC, furthering mission and goal of the VRC at Yale to support teaching and learning.
Back to that faculty champion, because it needs revisiting and b/c it is one of the most important modes of outreach…. A relationship like this may lead to unexpected outcomes which do nothing but good for the relevancy of the VR profession.

In this case, this faculty champion was this was a history professor. He expressed desire to learn some video 101 skills for his research as it was discovered that this was a faculty need that wasn’t being met anywhere else on campus.
He got some graduate students interested, I had the skills, the library had some equipment. We have a 3 part workshop on video making....No long after, our Instructional Technology Group on campus heard about this and lucky for us they asked if we wanted to help support a Chemical Engineering course that involved a student video assignment.
What? The VRC was helping with Chemical Engineering? YES!
The students of this class were charged with the task of creating short promotional videos for target audiences of prospective engineering students at Yale. While the project served to deepen the students' understanding of Chemical Engineering's connections to other disciplines, it also modeled the type of teamwork students would encounter as a regular component of a career in Chemical Engineering. Members from the Instructional Technology Group (ITG) and the Visual Resources Collection (VRC) worked closely with the Professor and his students in offering course design, student consultations, video camera and video editing workshops, and grading rubrics. These students take classes in all disciplines and because we were reaching out to them in this capacity, we were able to sneak in a little promotion about our collection as a resource during their time at Yale.

It is this type of outreach—faculty relationships and collaboration with others on campus that allow us to EXPAND our user base and ultimately makes VR professionals a very relevant and needed resource on campus.
I am lastly going to address how we’ve appealed to more patrons by doing the opposite of what you might expect. Instead of wanting our VRC digital collection interface to have its own branding and making it stand out, we’ve actually toned that down and promote the library’s new cross collection interface much more. The library has more than 15 digital image collections and the VRC had a big role in the redesign of this site because we are the biggest digital collection and had the knowledge of how our users search to offer as guidance for redesign by the Library’s brilliant senior web programmer, Mike Friscia. I will give a brief history of our older interfaces and then explain some of these new features in the Digital Collections site.
This was our interface in 2008. The main issues—hard to find anything since it was just a search and retrieval interface and there was no way to discover images (no browsing, etc.) and it was easy to miss all that other great digital image content being produced on campus—even collections that were somewhat related to Art and Architecture had built their own interface. Like Classics library’s digital image collection.
From this site, you could save images one at a time for teaching. There was a way to make a group of images, but it was bulky and only the Art Historians knew about it. And again, getting to this page offered no options except to go back and put in another search term.
Then came Metagallery for the Visual Resources Collection. This site was a collaboration between the Center for Media and Instructional Innovation (CMI2) and included a host of teaching features (making groups of images, adding annotations, sharing groups), but it only searched the VRC and it didn’t provide others means of finding images outside of groups and standard searching. It became clear what we needed was to focus on discovery.
To be fair, there was a cross search tool and this did exist from 1997-2008, but it only included 8 library collections and the results brought you back to the individuals interface; again a little better to find images, but no focus on discovery either.
So with the initiative of the library programmer, he re-built and re-designed this site. This happened in two phases: the first was to combine results from across 15 collections and sort by rank which happened in late 2008 and the next piece was to build an environment that focuses on discovery of items and is conducive to teaching and learning with images.
This is a sample of some of the collections that are included.
There's a browse mechanism. Spelling suggestions. All improvements over what we had.
Once you do have a search result list, (Searched O’Keeffe) there are facets to narrow search or expand your search.
On a single item page, the metadata for an asset is linked. Here from a search on O’Keeffe, I found a Stieglitz photo from the Beinecke’s image collection and clicked on the word in the Title field “Waiting for a Smile” and then found images from prehistoric art to modern art that have smile in their titles. Users now have the ability to find images they were not originally looking for and isn’t this process of discovery a huge part of learning?
And we also created an environment to use these images. Basically, integrating the group functionality from Metagallery and making it more seamless for the users. Users can add data and their own content from links and files and then display it in a variety of ways as well as share it with course management sites, etc.
In 2007 we had this many searches through our separate interface.
In 2008 when the technology was revamped—we have 15,382 in the separate VR interface and 38,768 in the cross search.
In 2010, there were over 100,000 searches in the digital collections site. Which is over 180% increase in the number of searches from the stats from 2008. More users are coming to the site and returning to it because they can finally find images regardless of their discipline. I think this proves that if you build it, they will come.