Supporting the Changing Needs of Art Historians

Matthew P. Long and Roger C. Schonfeld

May 2, 2014
ITHAKA is a not-for-profit organization that helps the academic community use digital technologies to preserve the scholarly record and to advance research and teaching in sustainable ways.

We pursue this mission by providing innovative services that aid in the adoption of these technologies and that create lasting impact.
Our Services

- **Ithaka S+R** is a research and consulting service that focuses on the transformation of scholarship and teaching in an online environment, with the goal of identifying the critical issues facing our community and acting as a catalyst for change.

- **Portico** is a digital preservation service for e-journals, e-books, and other scholarly e-content.

- **JSTOR** is a research platform that enables discovery, access, and preservation of scholarly content.
The goal of the Ithaka S+R’s Research Support Services program is to provide actionable information to information providers about scholars’ research methods and practices.

Previous projects in the Research Support Services program:

• Supporting the Changing Research Practices of Historians
• Supporting the Changing Research Practices of Chemists
Methodology

- Approximately 70 interviews with faculty members, curators, visual resource professionals, librarians, and other professionals

- Site visits to various institutions to learn more about academic departments, museums, and research institutes
Background: Changing Work Practices in Art History
Key Shifts in Scholarly Work Practices

1. Diversity of research approaches – interdisciplinarity, collaboration, and experimentation with digital methods

2. Changing nature of sources – digitization and its impact on discovery and access

3. Shifts in the environment – new pressures on curators, academics, and graduate students
Findings for Libraries and Archives
Print collections remain important to scholars, but often require deviations from library-wide collections management policies.

Expertise from subject / language specialists is still an important part of collections development.

How can libraries preserve legacy collections while also preparing for an increasingly digital future?
Library Services

- How can libraries share expertise about how scholars should manage personal collections?
- What role should libraries take on in graduate student training about research techniques?
Findings for the Library Community
Scholars frequently use other libraries (including through interlibrary loan).

How can institutions benefit from planning for a broader audience, rather than for the needs of local users?
Discovery of Primary Sources

- There is no central “discovery platform” for digitized primary source content (including artworks and printed materials). Content is held at many different museums, archives, and special collections libraries.

- What can libraries and archives do to bring together siloed primary source content, including content from museums?
Findings for Others: Departments, Funders, Museums, Scholarly Societies, etc.
Recommendations for Others

- **Funders and Departments:** How can incentives and funding convince more scholars to pursue digital research methods?

- **Visual Resources Professionals:** What types of training do scholars need in manipulating digital images?
Issues Outside the Scope of the Report

• **Copyright Issues** – This issue covered in great detail as part of the CAA fair use project. (See “Copyright, Permissions, and Fair Use among Visual Artists and the Academic and Museum Visual Arts Communities: An Issues Report”)

• **The Job Market** – The job market (and related issues of funding) have huge impact on many of the topics covered in this report, but they were outside the scope of the project.
Thank you!

Full report available at: www.sr.ithaka.org

Twitter: @IthakaSR
matthew.long@ithaka.org
roger.schonfeld@ithaka.org
Supporting the Changing Needs of Art Historians

Sandra L. Brooke, Princeton University
Heather H. Gendron, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill