



Images

The newsletter of the VRA

August 2007 vol. 4, no. 4

Changes for Images

Steve Kowalik has resigned as column editor for Chapter News. The staff of Images would like to thank Steve for his service. Trudy Levy, our technical advisor, has volunteered to also take on his duties. Thanks, Trudy!!

Notes from the President

By Macie Hall (Johns Hopkins University)
President, Visual Resources Association

Dear VRA Members,

It is hard to believe how quickly this summer has passed! My attentions are now focused on preparing for our two and a half day VRA Midyear Executive Board Meeting which will be held at the Westin Horton Plaza Hotel in San Diego on August 17, 18 and 19. The hotel will be the site of our 26th annual conference in March 2008. The midyear meeting is the time when the Board does the majority of the ground work for the conference – reviewing and selecting session, workshop and special interest group proposals, mapping out the schedule, working on local arrangements, scoping out the hotel and nearby venues, and planning special events. Other meeting business includes a careful review of all midyear reports from appointees, committees, task forces and chapters. As well, the annual budget is presented by the Treasurer. I look forward to updating you on VRA business after the meeting.

Meanwhile there are several announcements and reports of interest from summer activities.

Update Your Contact Information

I would like to remind all members that it is very important to keep your contact information up to date in MemberClicks. Several issues of the Bulletin will be mailed out in the next few months and membership renewal information will be mailed in early September. Mailing labels are generated directly from the MemberClicks database. Please log on to MemberClicks (you can do this from the main VRA webpage at <http://www.vraweb.org>) and check to be sure that your contact information is correct.

VRA Archives Task Force

The Board is pleased to announce the appointment of a task force on the VRA Archives. The task force will be co-chaired by Joseph Romano, Visual Resources Curator, Oberlin College, and Linda Reynolds, Visual Resources Curator, Williams College. Task force members include Martine Sherrill, VRA Archivist and Visual Resources Librarian, Wake Forest University; Jane Glicksman, Digital Archivist, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; and Kim Anderson Cumber, Non-Textual Materials Archivist, North Carolina State Archives.

The task force is charged "to research best practices and policies for the management of the VRA Archives; specifically to address the issues of storage, access and dissemination of materials, including artifacts, paper documents, and electronic and digital media files; and make recommendations to the VRA Executive Board".

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Jane Darcovich (University of Illinois at Chicago) Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights
Jacquelyn Erdman (Florida Atlantic University) Digital Scene and Heard
Alex Nichols (Michigan State University) Tech Tips

Contributions to **Images** are due the 15th of the month before the issue. Please send your copy in ".doc" format and Arial font to Marlene Gordon.

Report from the VRA Foundation Task Force

Loy Zimmerman, chair of the VRA Foundation Task Force reports that the VRA Foundation has been officially incorporated in the State of Delaware as of July 12, 2007. The next step is the submission of the 1023 application to the IRS to receive a 501 (c) (3) tax status for the Foundation.

In the coming months the VRA Foundation Task Force will be preparing to inform the membership on the function and operation of the Foundation, what the Foundation will mean to the VRA, and how the Foundation and the Association will relate and interact. We are planning to have a general information forum on the Foundation at the San Diego conference along with information sessions in other venues (Chapter meetings for example). There will also be postings on VRA-L and in Images.

On behalf of the Board, I want to thank Loy and the other task force members, Kathe Albrecht, Margo Ballantyne, Elisa Lanzi and Ann Thomas for the tremendous job they have done in preparing the materials and documentation for the various applications involved in this procedure. It has been a huge task and they have done an excellent job.

Another Successful SEI

I have heard from Karin Whalen, SEI Co-Chair for VRA and Jeanne Keefe, incoming SEI Co-Chair that the ARLIS-VRA Summer Educational Institute held June 24-29 in Bloomington, Indiana was deemed by attendants to be very successful. Forty-seven registrants participated in five days of information packed sessions on visual resources and image management. Thanks to all of the members of the SEI Implementation Team and the SEI instructors for their hard work and efforts.

Next year's SEI will be held at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, July 7 to 13, 2008.

Special Issue of the VRA Bulletin

Mark Pompelia reports that the special issue of the Bulletin (spring 2007: vol. 34, no. 1) on Cataloguing Cultural Objects will go to press in early August (membership can expect to receive it in mid-late August); the special Art Historical Perspectives issue (summer 2007: vol. 34, no. 2) will go to press in late August (membership can expect to receive it in early September); the remaining issue of the volume will be the first issue from the Kansas City conference (fall 2007) and should appear in November.

Electronic Voting Update

We are moving ahead with preparations for our first online election for VRA Board Officers. At our midyear meeting the Board will approve the selection of a company to handle the online balloting and finalize the exact election dates and procedures. In the past ballots and candidate statements were mailed with the membership renewals on September 1. This year in the membership renewal packet you can expect to receive a one page information sheet with instructions and a screenshot of a sample ballot. Candidate statements and biographies will appear on the VRA website and with the online ballot.

Toronto 2009 – Get Your Passports Ready

Looking ahead, we have signed a contract with the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel for March 16 to March 23, 2009. These dates include the days that the Board will be setting up for the conference and holding the two Annual Executive Board Meetings; the actual conference dates will be announced later. Just a reminder that whether you are flying or driving you will need a valid, current passport to travel between the US and Canada. Currently there is a huge backlog on passport applications and it is taking several months to process applications. Be prepared! If you don't have a passport, get started on the process now. If you do have a passport, make sure it won't have expired by the time of our conference and make plans to renew it early if it will.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

Macie Hall
President, Visual Resources Association

VRA25 Silver Jubilee 2007 Kansas City

Seminar 2

35mm Slide Collections: Retention Criteria, Preservation Issues, and Donation Ideas [html](#)

Session 7

Color Management from A to Z [ppt](#)

Creating Input Files (Color managing your scanner and digital camera)

Alex Nichols

Session 11

Managing Student and Faculty Member Collections:

Trials and Triumphs [ppt](#)

Capturing Faculty Images for a Common Database

Kathleen Cohen

Intellectual Property Rights

Compiled by Jane Darcovich (University of Illinois at Chicago)

Intellectual Property Rights News: Monthly Updates on VRA-L

Submitted by Jen Green (University of Minnesota)

The VRA Intellectual Property Rights Committee (IPR) has just launched a new project, compiling summaries of news from various listservs that committee members are monitoring. These include the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS), the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), the Museum Computer Network (MCN), and the ALA Washington Office Newline (ALAWON). Summaries of IPR news posted on these and other listservs will be compiled into one email that will be posted to the VRA list on a monthly basis with the subject line, "VRA-IPR News" and the month and year.

We hope that this will be a convenient and tangible way for you to keep up-to-date on important IPR news in addition to the IPR column in the VRA online newsletter, Images.

Intellectual property issues can be an intimidating topic, and it is our hope that this monthly email format will inspire readers to start some informal online discussions.

The first posting appeared on VRA-L on August 2nd. (This initial posting is a bit longer than its successors will be, as it covers IPR news from April through June). The second posting will be somewhat shorter, summarizing news from July and August. By September, the postings will summarize news on a monthly basis.

Please submit any questions or comments that you have about VRA-IPR News to either Jen Green, IPR News compiler, or Marlene Gordon, IPR Committee Chair.

Town Hall Meeting on Intellectual Property scheduled for MCN 2007 conference

A group of four sessions on Copyright Issues in the New Millennium is scheduled for MCN's annual conference, to be held in Chicago from November 7th through 10th. The first of these is a Town Hall Meeting, chaired by Alan Newman, Chief, Division of Imaging and Visual Services, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

Digital Scene and Heard

By Jacquelyn Erdman (Florida Atlantic University)

Digital Initiatives Advisory Group

As collections are created and collaborations formed, more and more content has become accessible to the art world. The VRA has been at the forefront of creating standards and best practices to make such collections relevant to the educational community. But how on earth are we ever to find them all? This month we look at different products and collections which approach this topic.

Authoritativeness in our image collections

By Carmen Wiedenhoeft (Scholars Resource)

Scholars Resource (<http://www.scholarsresource.com/>) was established to provide a forum for broad, cross-collection image searches. There are several challenges in our work that we find the community at large may also face in an image matchmaking commons. The issues are a little broader than "Should we use a Wiki?" We would like to share our expertise and be part of the community effort as it unfolds. We would separate the issues into a few big categories: rights, integration (of both metadata and images), quality, and authority.

First and foremost is the task of assuring rights. In creating a match-making commons, while the sponsoring organization may act much like an Internet Service Provider (ISP) who just hosts content provided by others, there is still administrative work in answering the queries that come from those who have questions about the images and their use. We find this to be a broader issue than just copyright. It is often entangled in contract law as well. An artist may give a museum rights to images for certain uses, and depending on how the contract was drafted the artist may question subsequent uses even though educational and seemingly covered by the original contract. Of thousands of images, just one claim of copyright infringement can cause serious drain of time and money trying to address any concerns of artists' estates or other representatives. This is especially problematic as museum personnel "move on" and new staff members are often unclear about past arrangements. Thus "due diligence" upfront is exceedingly important in ensuring an environment with integrity. This is true even of works that appear to be in the public domain. We had photographs of a sculpture in front of a cathedral (and the intent was really to show the cathedral). The sculpture in the foreground was one year away from being in the public domain, and the artist's estate contacted us to see why this work was available.

Another subtlety of the question of rights moves out of copyright or contract law and into the realms of privacy and moral rights. Even small issues like personal data surrounding contemporary artists' works need to be taken into consideration. We have had a living artist contact us saying, "please remove my birth date from your web site." With a long-deceased artist a detailed birth date is just good metadata; with a living artist it can be perceived as an invasion of privacy when freely publicized on the Internet. In another example, while a few years ago a Native American image was acceptable for a textbook, when we wrote back to the museum we were told the tribe had asked this image not be published. For them capturing a likeness in a photograph violates the sacredness of the object. "Pulling" images can be as relevant as "providing" them. I personally think this is especially true of poor quality images. We risk turning our students off by showing them poor surrogates. The study of aesthetic objects should be an aesthetic experience itself.

Once we have a high comfort level that the images can be shared we then have the bear of integration to face. Often images are of varying sizes and degrees of quality. We try to standardize formats, sizes and levels of correction so that the images are useful to an end-user in an efficient manner. Dealing with many different file sizes and formats, even if images are free, can cost a user an inordinate amount of time. The metadata accompanying the images, too, can vary greatly by collection. If the collection is heavily architecture-oriented, for example, you may have 20,000 records that relate to just 1,000 sites. While an image collection that is heavily paintings-based may have 20,000 records that relate to 15,000 works and figuring out where to draw the line as far as having a "master work record" in integrating these two can create quite a lot of work. Trying to build our collections such that we can easily exchange information using schemas like CDWA Lite, data standards like VRA Core 4.0, and ensuring we have good metadata to begin with by following the guidelines offered in CCO certainly goes a long way in taming this bear.

At the end of the day, we want our work to have a certain level of authoritativeness. We want professors to "trust" the collections and feel comfortable sending their students there to study. Conscientiousness regarding the issues above builds that authoritativeness. Just as we go to a museum to "see the original" and are very disappointed if offered less than that, we should also be disappointed when incorrect (or sloppy) metadata or poor quality images are offered as a first step in information gathering prior to seeing the original work of art. Google allows us to find all kinds of data according to "relevance." I raised my hand in a Google Business seminar in Denver last year and asked the head presentor (who had quite a lot of arrogance I might add) whether we could tweak the algorithm to also take into account "authoritativeness." He waved me off because I had asked the most uncomfortable question. The NASA scientists next to me and other knowledge management experts sitting with me concurred during the break. My many years in knowledge management in the telecommunications sector taught me how vital this simple fact is: information becomes stale, some is better than others, and knowing which is the "best" is as important as knowing which is "most popular."

Now that we have figured out in our community how to exchange our information using schemas

like CDWA Lite, how to harvest data using protocols like the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) Metadata Harvesting Protocol, and can ensure we have good metadata to begin with using guidelines like Cataloging Cultural Objects (CCO), it is time to begin to address the question of authority. While many institutions do use controlled vocabularies/authority files like ULAN in building collections, the authoritativeness of the information is not always apparent to end-users doing searches and so they settle for lesser quality information that comes up quickly in Google. While it is fine for Google to help me find a popular place to eat down the street, we expect that our scholarly landscape will have less changing metadata and that at some point the "authority" of it will matter too.

I said this during a breakout session on Semantic Web at the Museums & the Web conference in San Francisco this year and a colleague from the UK gasped, "Who is to say who is the authority?" Here I think we can look to the fine distinction brought to light in the discussion on the authorities of the American art museum in *Whose Muse: Art Museums and the Public Trust* that there is a big difference between "authoritarian" and "authoritative."

The difference is akin to the difference between precision and accuracy. Something that can be repeated frequently (popular) may be precise but not accurate. Type, "Is the world flat?" into Google and the first page affirms that the "The world IS flat." From book reviews about Friedman to conspiracy theories, you will find enough reading for a semester. The rearranging of my words definitely makes these results highly "relevant" according to Google but in my particular inquiry, I would have to wonder what Galileo would have thought of our information exchange. En masse, we have to separate what we have figured out, isolate it, question it, and create new knowledge. At present most of what we are doing in our shared space online is combing through millions of "search results". Surely there must be a better way to ensure the material we make available is both comprehensive and authoritative.

Scholars Resource has begun this work by looking at the questions that surround version control. In a community shared cataloging environment, it will be important to be able to identify global metadata and quality issues, assign those to knowledgeable persons or departments, receive changes back, have some transparency as to who provided the information, and mark records and images as having been through that process. We copied our entire web site and database into a beta environment and opened it up to colleagues. The project is still in a developmental phase, but at least it gave us a way to let catalogers pick their own tools that were most comfortable while we explored the workflow questions of data exchanges across repositories. We hope to continue this dialogue as part of the "image matchmaking commons" currently underway in the community.

CSA-Illustrata

By Jacquelyn Erdman (Florida Atlantic University)

There is a new product available in the electronic publishing world which should be noted within the visual resources world. The product is called Illustrata, created by Cambridge Scientific Abstracts <http://info.csa.com/csaillustrata/>. This product goes beyond normal journal searching and instead concentrates on searching just the captions and other data associated with photographs, images, graphs and tables.

What this means for the art world is that images within electronic journals are not lost when the scholar searches on a specific topic. Also, CSA re-scanned each image at a higher resolution so that the scholar has access to the full quality of the image (versus the poor almost microfilm quality of PDF's found in online journals today). The metadata that Illustrata offers is minimal and most of the journals that the product searches are science related. However, this technology now exists and greatly improves the scholar's experience. Visual resources professionals should look into this product if only to ask the publishers of art journals to consider the same model with more in depth metadata.

For those who are interested in purchasing Illustrata, keep in mind that you do not get access to more journals through it, but rather pay for the service to enhance the searching capabilities of the journals you already subscribe to.

Collection Spotlight

By Jacquelyn Erdman (Florida Atlantic University)

PictureAustralia

PictureAustralia is a collaboration of a number of different cultural agencies who came together to

create a database on Australia. This website serves as a federated search portal to each of the agencies' collections. The user searches on a certain topic and all the images which fit the description will be displayed as a thumb nail. Once the thumb nail is clicked, the user will be redirected to each agencies' website. The agencies range from the Australian archives to galleries to libraries and museums.

The collection includes photographs and images of artwork and objects such as costumes or weapons from the 19th century to today. The images found on this site are at a reference quality only and can be printed or saved if for research or study purposes. However, if the images are to be used for commercial purposes, they must be purchased from the copyholder's website, where higher quality images are available.

Please contact Jacquelyn Erdman with any questions or suggestions for future columns. For more information on the activities of the Digital Initiatives Advisory Group (DIAG) see
<http://www.vraweb.org/diag/index.htm>

Symposium Summary

By Steve Kowalik (Hunter College/CUNY)

On June 18, the Museum of the Moving Image (Astoria, Queens, New York) sponsored a daylong symposium entitled OPEN COLLECTIONS: EXPLORING ONLINE CULTURAL RESOURCES (presented with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the New York State Council on the Arts).

In a series of three panels, experts in the field described how online cultural resources, especially those composed of primary-source materials, are planned, developed, and used. The symposium brought museum and library professionals together with information-technology experts and scholars to confront issues that involve them all. Panelists and moderators include professionals from leading cultural and academic institutions, including Teresa M. Russo, Metropolitan Museum of Art; Barbara Taranto, New York Public Library; Alexander Pasik, Guggenheim Museum; Karen Weiss, Smithsonian Archives of American Art; Elizabeth O'Keefe, Morgan Library and Museum; Charles Musser, Yale University; and Stephen Brier, David Gerstner, and Paula J. Massood, City University of New York.

Go to the symposium website, <www.movingimage.us/open> for complete information.

Books, Articles and More

Compiled by Elizabeth Darocha Berenz (ARTstor)

Roberto C. Ferrari, "To PhD, or Not to PhD: A Question for ArtLibrarians," *Art Documentation* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 51-55.

Landis, William E. and Robin L. Chandler. *Archives and the DigitalLibrary*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 2006.(Published simultaneously as the *Journal of Archival Organization*, Volume 4, Nos. 1/2.)

Positions Filled

Compiled by Anne Norcross (Kendall College of Art & Design)

ARTstor

Elizabeth Darocha Berenz is a new Library Relations Outreach Associate for ARTstor. Elizabeth received her MA in Modern Art History, Theory, and Criticism from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and her MLS from the University of North Texas, concentrating in Digital Image Management. Elizabeth is also an active visual artist; as an undergraduate she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree for which she studied at Pratt Institute and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Before coming to ARTstor, Elizabeth worked as Visual Resources Curator at Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island and as Project Coordinator for the Global Resources Network and the Area Studies Program at the Center for Research Libraries in Chicago. At ARTstor Elizabeth will be focusing on international library outreach.

Smith College, Imaging Center, Northampton, Massachusetts

The Smith College Imaging Center is pleased to announce that Jonathan Cartledge has accepted the position of Digital Imaging Specialist effective September 10, 2007. Jonathan is currently the Visual Resources Librarian at Massachusetts College of Art. He holds an MLS from the University of Kentucky and a MFA in Printmaking from the University of Cincinnati. Jonathan will work as

part of a collaborative imaging team focusing on the use of images for teaching and learning in the visual arts and the aligned disciplines.

University of Notre Dame, Art Image Library

Art Image Library at the University of Notre Dame is pleased to welcome Sara Method as an Assistant Curator/Library Specialist. Sara, a Virginia native, received her MA in Art History from the University of Notre Dame, and a BA in Studio Arts and BA in Art History from Salem College, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Besides her duties as Assistant Curator/Library Specialist at Notre Dame, Sara continues to work with Art*o*Mat, a non-profit arts organization, which takes retired cigarette vending machines and converts them to vend art. Currently there are about 90 active machines in various locations (<http://www.artomat.org/>).

University of Wyoming, Laramie

Betsy Lindell Bress accepted the position of Art Slide Librarian at the University of Wyoming in Laramie this past winter. Her current duties include converting the film and analog slide library into a digital library, with plans to eventually develop a comprehensive digital resource center. Betsy has a BA from Scripps College in Claremont, CA, and has been at the University of Wyoming Art Museum for the past 6 years, where she worked in public relations and graphic design.

Visual Resource Collection, School of Art, Arizona State University

Sara Blackwood has joined the staff of the Visual Resource Collection at the School of Art, Arizona State University, as Assistant Curator. She recently received her MA in Art History from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

Chapter News

Compiled by Trudy Levy (Image Integration)

Southeast Chapter

Submitted by Emy Nelson Decker (University of Georgia)

VRA Southeast Chapter will be meeting August 3-4th at the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia. Emy Decker is the Chapter Chair and Mary Alexander is the Secretary/Treasurer. The meeting activities include a business meeting and afternoon presentations by Barbara Brenny, Visual Resources Librarian, North Carolina State University Emy Decker, Director of Visual Resources, University of Georgia Mandy Mastrovia, Digital Imaging Coordinator, University of Georgia and Jennifer Tyner, Digital Imaging Specialist, Georgia Institute of Technology

Upstate NY Chapter

Submitted by Jeannine Keefer (Cornell University)

The Upstate NY Chapter held their spring 2007 meeting at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, NY on June 15th. We will have a joint chapter meeting with the Philadelphia Chapter on October 26, 2007 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.