



# Images

The newsletter of the VRA

December 2007 vol.4, no.6

## Notes from the President

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

December 2007

I am writing this on Thanksgiving eve, amazed at how quickly the fall has passed. The Board has been busy with planning for the 2008 VRA 26th Annual Conference in San Diego and will be launching both conference registration and the conference web site as this edition of Images is published. The first week in December will also see the announcement of new Board members and the winners of the 2008 VRA Conference Travel Awards.

The 26th Annual Conference of the Visual Resources Association will be held March 12-16, 2008, in San Diego, California. The warm, sunny location will add to the excitement of our program, special events and receptions. VRA 26 will cover topics of significance to our profession: digital imaging issues, information management, VR positions in transition, and designing new VR facilities; and will attract professionals from major academic institutions, cultural organizations, and the commercial sector. In addition to professional sessions, workshops, and special interest groups, conference goers will experience San Diego's museums, famous restaurants, and other cultural attractions.

Conference headquarters will be the Westin San Diego at Emerald Plaza, conveniently located near Seaport Village, Little Italy, and the San Diego Gaslamp Quarter. Recently renovated, the hotel's 25 floors of guest rooms feature panoramic views of the San Diego Bay, Coronado Island, and the downtown cityscape. Only minutes away are major attractions, such as the world-renowned San Diego Zoo, Balboa Park and Museums, Sea World, Old Town, the USS Midway, and the breathtaking scenery of San Diego's stunning sandy beaches. International and commercial air service for the region is provided by the San Diego International Airport.

Our conference organizers, Vice-Presidents Rebecca Moss and Vickie O'Riordan, assisted by the VRA Southern California Chapter's local arrangements committee, are planning an event not to be missed.

Highlights include:

- An opening plenary session on intellectual property rights from the perspective of image rights and copyright owners.
- Informative sessions on metadata, cataloguing and access issues; collaboration and aggregation projects; preservation; and the future of the visual resources profession.
- Workshops presented by subject specialists on the Getty Vocabularies, Seeking the Right Path for Visual Resources Users, Subject Access to Visual Materials, and XML.
- Keynote address by Maurizio Seracini. Seracini, an internationally recognized expert in high-technology art analysis, is the Director of the University of California, San Diego's new Center of Interdisciplinary Science for Art, Architecture and Archaeology, a unique program that researches the history behind the construction of paintings, sculptures and buildings by using sophisticated diagnostic-imaging technology.
- Vendor exhibits, Special Interest Groups, and Ask the Expert sessions provide other opportunities to learn about new technologies, emerging products, and shared

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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 - [mgordon@umich.edu](mailto:mgordon@umich.edu).

professional interests.

- We'll be reprising last year's popular Birds of a Feather lunches -- issue-oriented lunch groups hosted and facilitated by VRA professionals, specifically but not exclusively geared toward new members of the organization and first time attendees.
- Special events will include an Awards Reception and Membership Dinner, an exciting and different Tansey Fundraiser featuring Charles Phoenix (a comedian known for his retro slide shows), and the always spectacular VRAffle emceed by Patti McRae with the able assistance of Allan Kohl and the VRAffle-Rousers.

VRA 26 will be an excellent opportunity to learn new things, share experiences with enthusiastic and knowledgeable colleagues, and enjoy local culture, architecture, and art. For more about the conference, including program details and schedules, links to registration and hotel reservations, descriptions of our special events, tips from our local committee members on what to see and do in San Diego, information for exhibitors, and much more, visit the website at <http://vraweb.org/conferences/sandiego2008/>.

Make your plans now to attend. Members benefit from lower rates when registering, so remember to renew your membership before the end of the calendar year. As well, pre-registering offers savings for our members. I look forward to seeing you in San Diego.

#### VRA Election Results

Macie Hall (Johns Hopkins University)

I am pleased to announce the names of the newly elected VRA Executive Board Officers: Vice President for Conference Arrangements, Brian Shelburne (Head, Image Collection Library, University of Massachusetts, Amherst); Treasurer, Jane Darcovich (Director, Visual Resources Library, University of Illinois, Chicago); and Public Relations and Communications Officer, Mark Pompelia, (Director, Visual Resources Center, Rice University). These new officers will begin their terms at the Annual Conference in San Diego in March 2008.

On behalf of the Executive Board and the VRA membership, I thank the entire slate of candidates. All of the nominees are committed and active members of VRA. These candidates have served the organization in many capacities and we look forward to their continued involvement in VRA. Other nominees were Emy Nelson Decker, Billy Kwan, and Eric Schwab.

I would also like to thank Ann Burns and the members of the Nominating Committee, who developed the slate of candidates, Carolyn Lucarelli, who served as teller for the election, and Henry Pisciotta who served as the assistant teller.

Please join me in congratulating Brian Shelburne, Jane Darcovich and Mark Pompelia.

#### **Intellectual Property Rights**

**by Jane Darcovich (University of Illinois at Chicago)  
Intellectual Property Right Committee**

#### **Online Workshop: Copyright and Academic Culture**

By Carl M. Johnson (Brigham Young University)

Have you experienced feelings of frustration or devastation with not being able to resolve the grey area of copyright compliance in the midst of ever-advancing technology and academic culture?

The author, along with fifty other participants, completed the online workshop Copyright and Academic Culture: New Issues and Developments sponsored by the Center for Intellectual Property, UMUC (October 1-12, 2007). The moderator Siva Vaidhyanathan, Associate Professor of Media Studies and Law, University of Virginia, and live chat session guests Ann Bartow, Associate Professor of Law, University of South Carolina, and Kembrew McLeod, Associate Professor of Media Studies, University of Iowa, provided an informative and enlightening workshop.

The moderator's and other guests' review and discussion of the following points provided helpful information and a solid framework to assist the participants in clarifying pertinent issues and questions: (1) The purpose, role, and scope of copyright and its relation to academic culture; (2) The problems, challenges, changes, and opportunities facing academia; (3) The relationship of the academy to copyright via the Google Library and consideration of important questions for both libraries and Google; (4) The controversy surrounding e-reserves as an example of copyright and

academic culture in conflict; (5) The evolving relationship between the publishing industry and libraries.

In-depth presentation and discussion occurred on the following topics:

**Academic Culture:** Originally, universities were founded to copy and preserve; not until the 20th century did they concern themselves with dissemination and teaching. Late 20th century universities operate as publishers—producing products and goods for commercialization. The academy plays a key role as a knowledge filter—what should be available, discussed and learned? Similarly, copyright ownership acts as knowledge content filter.

**Myths of Copyright:** Many often-heard statements about copyright were debunked. (1) Copyright is an incentive to create—not true! Rather, copyright is an incentive to invest in the marketing and distribution of a creative work. (2) Copyright is the best or only incentive to create, invest in, or distribute creative works—not true! The ability and incentive to create and author creative works has been a part of society since the beginning of time. Copyright regimes may provide a useful framework for incentivizing creative works, but copyright by itself is not necessarily the fundamental reason for such creativity. (3) Copyright infringement equals plagiarism—not true! Copyright infringement is the unauthorized use of others' creative works; plagiarism is taking credit for other's works. (4) Copyright protects ideas—not true! (5) Fair use means I can use three sentences or 50 words or eight measures of an original work without a problem—not true! (6) I can use another person's copyrighted works in the service of social satire—not true! (7) You have to register and renew your copyright to enjoy all the benefits of ownership—not true! (8) Longer copyright terms generate more incentive to create, invest, or distribute creative works—not necessarily true! (9) An infringement, such as a digital download, equals a lost sale—not true! (10) Copyright is too weak for the digital age—not true!

**The Googlization of everything: Google, Digitization, and the Future of Books:** Is the very scanning of copyrighted works (post-1923) a violation of Section 106—the right reserved for the copyright owners? Does the fact that Google will only be presenting post-1923 works in snippets, much like KWIC searches via Lexis/Nexis, qualify as “fair” under Section 107? What problems might Google Book Search solve? Some possibilities put forward were improved access to books and improved searching for books, rather than traditional book searches, limited by author, title, keywords and subject headings. Many good books are lost in the marketing shuffle. Why should we be concerned? Fair use is too rickety a structure to support so many public values and activities. Other future scenarios that were discussed included possible rampant privatization of library functions, bad Google search results, students' shortcuts to good research techniques, and concentration of power in Google.

**Copyright and Academic Culture—the Conflicts:** Course reserves and packets form the bulk of the issue here. The Library of the University of Wisconsin-Madison was mentioned as an academic institution having a good [electronic reserve policy](#). The [Statement on the Digital Transmission of Electronic Reserves](#) developed by the Music Library Association was also touted as an example of a very good policy. Other discussion centered on changing paradigms for publishing, asking how useful is the formal, commercial publishing apparatus? Open-access publishing is a new paradigm which may be more suited to the information age. Open-access literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions, made possible by the internet and the consent of the author or copyright owner.

For me, this was a very stimulating and helpful online workshop, well worth the expense, time and effort to participate. Keeping up with the pace of studying the workshop readings, participating in the live chat sessions, listening to Vaidhyanathan's presentations and responding online to the discussion questions required one to two hours per day. I gleaned very helpful information from over 50 participants, the moderator and other guests, heightening my awareness of the wide variety of copyright issues and related questions in the context of academic culture.

**Digital Scene and Heard**  
**By Jacquelyn Erdman (Florida Atlantic University)**  
**Digital Initiatives Advisory Group**  
**Guest Editor [Liz Gushee](#) (University of Virginia)**

Developing image collections is a huge part of the VR profession, but there is an on-going problem concerning searchability. Most catalog and search engines have a predetermined set of fields that it will search, or the dreaded “keyword” search can be performed. In this month's column, a very new product which will search the deep metadata of records is highlighted. This

product can be used for general libraries or for specialized collections like image collections.

**An interview with Bess Sadler, Research and Development Librarian, University of Virginia**  
Conducted by [Liz Gushee](#) (University of Virginia)

**Liz Gushee:** What is Blacklight?

**Bess Sadler:** Blacklight is a research project that is underway at the University of Virginia Library; our goal with this project is to develop a better discovery tool and for the display of results from our library catalog and from our digital collections repository. Our library catalog, while a highly effective tool, has been constructed to return the best results for a user who knows precisely what they are looking for. We hope that Blacklight will allow users to approach the library catalog with a more serendipitous approach. Users will be able to browse content and build searches that are highly focused and reusable, thereby returning results without requiring that they know exactly what they want at the start of their search. Blacklight is an attempt to reveal the Library's data in such a way so that the users have more ways to interact with it. We're hoping to give the user a bird's eye view of the collection.

**LG:** Can you explain to our readers how that works?

**BS:** Essentially, Blacklight is built to take advantage of the rich metadata in bibliographic records (MARC) as well structured XML objects, such as TEI or UVA's GDMS, our homegrown version of XML for image objects. Users can combine search and browse facets to obtain their results. Results are shown to the user ranked by relevance.

**LG:** Can you give us an example?

**BS:** Sure. First of all, our MARC records in our catalog are filled with information a user might be interested in retrieving; the weakness in our ILS, and with many ILS's, is that the entire MARC record isn't indexed. Because of this, information such as a song title, embedded within a CD or LP recording, isn't returned to the user unless the song happens to match the exact title of the overall CD or LP. Blacklight is constructed to run across the entire record. As has been mentioned, these results are weighted by relevancy; so, for instance, a word in a query that matches a title or author will generally be given more relevancy than a word in the description. Our Music Librarian is delighted by the information we've been able to expose from the MARC records used to describe their collections. For the first time, a user can now pull up compositions limited by era with one search, such as all the UVA music composition holdings for the twentieth-century. Once they have those results, they can then refine their search by any constraints they select.

**LG:** How is Blacklight being implemented at UVA?

**BS:** Well, in its current state, it is a research project. We are, however, going collection type by collection type to build and test our product. We're working together with UVA's subject and reference librarians to ensure that we're building this tool to return the most relevant results to the user. The subject librarians have been extremely helpful in helping us to determine what specialized facets to use and how to weight terms accurately so that meaningful returns of data are generated for the user.

Thus far, Blacklight has indexed about 4 million MARC records from our catalog and a subset of roughly 10,000 objects from our digital collections repository. We are also experimenting with BlacklightDL which has indexed all our repository's TEI texts, GDMS images, and EAD finding aids. The plan is to merge Blacklight and BlacklightDL so that there is a single discovery resource that can support searching and browsing across a variety of content while also providing functionality for all content types, such as images, full text and music.

**LG:** Although you've touched on it, could you tell us a little more on how Blacklight is relevant for non-text communities?

**BS:** We're actually hoping that Blacklight will be the most useful for non-text communities. MARC records and library catalogs are optimized for book-like items. In order to serve all users and their desire to search across object types beyond the bibliographic, we have to devise better ways to expose data for the arts, music, digital objects and content types we haven't thought of yet. We're using Blacklight to provide access to collections through metadata that our

catalog does not index, by creating metadata, such as a browse century, and by indexing MARC records and digital objects together. We can also create custom browse categories and display interfaces for non-text collections, such as for music and scores or images, based on the needs expressed by our users.

**LG:** What are the tools used to build Blacklight?

**BS:** Blacklight is built with open source software. It's based on a tool called Collex from the NINES project, using Apache Lucene with Solr as the indexing software; the programming language is Ruby on Rails.

**LG:** Why is Blacklight called Blacklight?

**BS:** It's a blending of the "University of Virginia" with "Solr" with the result of UVA light, a.k.a. ultraviolet radiation, known as "blacklight."

**LG:** Is there anything else you would like our readers to know about Blacklight?

**BS:** Blacklight was developed at UVA by Erik Hatcher; additional development has come from Bethany Nowwiskie, Erin Stalberg, Chris Hoebeke, Matt Mitchell and me.

Screenshot of a record  
created by implementing Blacklight over the UV Library catalog.

Screenshot of a record  
created by implementing Blacklight over the UV Digital Library.

To receive more information about Blacklight please e-mail Bess Sadler at [eos8d@virginia.edu](mailto:eos8d@virginia.edu). 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>

### Tech Tips

By Alex Nichols (Michigan State University)

### Which Bits Are Which?

There is often uncertainty over how many bits should be used during the capture, manipulation, and archiving of images, and confusion over the specific advantages and disadvantages of different bit depths.

**The Math:** Bit depth simply describes the number of possible tones/colors that any individual pixel could have. Each bit in a pixel can be a 1 or a 0. The number of possible tones can be determined by  $2^{\text{number of bits}}$ . So a 1 bit pixel would have  $2^1=2$  possible tones (black or white; no grays or colors). An 8 bit pixel has  $2^8=256$  possible tones (black, white, and 254 shades of gray). In order to create color, a pixel will be assigned three or more grayscale tonal values, each representing a different color "channel." For example, an RGB pixel with 8 bits per channel, combines one red tonal value (256 possibilities; bright red, black, and 254 reds in between), one green tonal value 256 possibilities; bright green, black, and 254 greens in between), and one blue tonal value 256 possibilities; bright blue, black, and 254 blues in between). An 8 bit RGB pixel has  $256 \times 256 \times 256 = \text{more than 16 million}$  possible colors.

**The Equivalencies:** Scanners and scanning software usually make reference to 48 bit color, 24 bit color, 16 bit grayscale, 8 bit grayscale, or 1 bit grayscale. Photoshop, on the other hand, only makes mention of 32, 16, and 8 bit modes. The Photoshop bit modes should be read as "per channel," so "8 bit" mode means "8 bits per channel," which in the case of three channel RGB, would be a total of 24 bits (equivalent to the scanner's 24 bit color setting). Similarly, the scanner's 48 bit color is equivalent to 16 bit RGB in Photoshop. The 32 bits per channel mode in recent versions of Photoshop is used for HDR (High Dynamic Range) and image stacking, and therefore not of interest for most Visual Resources applications.

**The Advantages of Higher Bit Depth:** Dividing the scale from black to white into 256 discrete gray values (8 bits), creates such a minimal difference between grays that the human eye cannot

distinguish between them – the scale appears as a smooth gradient with no distinct steps. However, when you edit the tones or colors of an image, you are changing the relationships of these values (e.g. reducing contrast pushes values together, possibly causing overlaps, while increasing contrast pulls values apart, causing gaps). This can make two values that were once imperceptibly different now appear distinctly different, thus interrupting a smooth gradient. The effect is can be a blocky, grainy, or “posterized” image. This is where higher bit depths can be useful. If you start out with a grayscale that is overkill in terms of subtle differentiation between discreet values (such as with 16 bits), you have more latitude in pushing and pulling the tones without gaps and overlaps becoming visible.

**The Practical Conclusion:** If you are (or may be) editing your images significantly after capture, it is best practice to capture and edit 16 bits per channel. If it is very unlikely that your images will be edited significantly in the future, you can convert to 8 bit for archiving, after editing is complete. The main disadvantage of archiving images with 16 bits per channel is that they will require twice as much storage space.

### **Books, Articles, and More**

Compiled by Elizabeth Darocha Berenz (ARTstor)

### **Sharing Visual Arts Images for Educational Use: Finding a New Angle of Repose**

The current issue of Educause Review features an article written by ARTstor’s General Counsel, Gretchen Wagner. The article, “Sharing visual arts images for educational use: Finding a new angle of repose,” discusses current practices across campuses in building and maintaining institutional image repositories, and the copyright implications of such practices. The article encourages the sharing of these resources for teaching and scholarship through greater reliance on fair use.

Since the emergence of copystand photography in the early twentieth century, campuses have relied on the U.S. copyright doctrine of fair use to protect the now widespread practice of scanning images from books and other printed materials for use in the classroom. With the advent of digital technologies, educational institutions now have the opportunity to share those collections to meet the teaching needs of multiple institutions. Gretchen enumerates some of the disadvantages of maintaining the current, “siloeed” approach, including the copyright implications of not asserting fair use in a shared context. She also describes some of ARTstor’s experiences in working with rights holders in the visual arts, from which she asserts that visual arts images could be shared for teaching and study in ways that are consistent with fair use, and that would bring benefits to rights holders as well as to educational users.

The article is available online in full text through Educause Review at <http://www.educause.edu/apps/er/erm07/erm0764.asp>].

### **Image Sources**

Compiled by Marlene Gordon (University of Michigan-Dearborn)

Have you found a good source for images? This new column is the place to share that information. Here are a few books that I would recommend.

1. Jorge Maria Mejia, et al. **The Fifteenth Century Frescoes in the Sistine Chapel.** Vatican City State: Musei Vaticani, 2003
2. Slive, Seymour. **Jacob van Ruisdael: Master of Landscape.** London: Royal Academy of Arts
3. Wright, Alison. **The Pollaiuolo Brothers: The Arts of Florence and Rome.** New Haven: Yale University Press, c2005

Please send your recommendations to Marlene Gordon, [mgordon@umich.edu](mailto:mgordon@umich.edu).

### **Chapter News**

Compiled by Trudy Levy (Image Integration)

### **The Greater New York Chapter**

Submitted by Johanna Bauman (ARTstor)

The Greater New York Chapter of VRA had its fall meeting on Friday, October 19th at Vassar

College hosted by the VR Curator there Sarah Silverstein. The program included a tour of the Vassar VR facilities and a talk by Sarah about Vassar's road toward digitization. We also had a tour of a Hudson River Valley exhibition at the Vassar Museum. I won't bore you with the lunch menu, but we did have a nice lunch as well!

We have planned a mid-Winter event to be hosted by the Metropolitan Museum of Art about the ARTstor and Met collaboration on the Images for Academic Publishing (IAP) project. The VRA/NY mid-Winter event on IAP will be on Tuesday, February 5th, 2008, 3:30-5:00 p.m. The venue will be the Douglas Dillon Boardroom of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We are planning to have the presentation started at 4 p.m., and it is very likely that the Image Library will sponsor a coffee/tea reception before the program.

### **New England Chapter**

Submitted by Megan Battey (Middlebury College)

On an unusually warm day (Friday, October 19th), amidst stunning fall foliage, the New England Chapter gathered for its 2007 Fall Meeting at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. Hosted by Jennifer Edwards (Curator of Visual Resources), we met at the Visual Arts Center for breakfast and registration, and then enjoyed a tour of the glorious, newly renovated Bowdoin College Museum of Art conducted for us by the curator Alison Ferris. We had a delicious lunch and held our business meeting in the Pinette Dining Room in Coles Tower.

The afternoon program included a presentation by Ruth Bartlett (Educational Technology Consultant) about the state-of-the-art AV projection system developed at Bowdoin. Following that, Marci Hahn (Visual Resources Curator, Wellesley College) gave a presentation reporting on the workshop she attended at VRA Kansas City "Getting Past No: Assessing Copyright Risk." Following an afternoon break, Renate Wiedenhoefst graciously hosted our group for cocktails and dinner at Scholars Resource in Freeport, Maine. Some photos from the meeting can be seen at <http://cat.middlebury.edu/~slides/vrane/bowdoin/index.htm><http://cat.middlebury.edu/~slides/vrane/bowdoin/index.htm>

### **Southern California Chapter**

Submitted by Jackie Spafford (University of California, Santa Barbara)

VRASC is holding its fall meeting on December 7 and we invite all members in the area to join us. We'll be spending the day at Pomona and Scripps Colleges.

Below is our itinerary, which includes our business meeting, exhibition tours, talks, morning refreshments and a lunch break. Our business meeting will include a welcome of our new Chair and Treasurer, and more information about local organizing committee opportunities for the VRA San Diego conference next March. Thanks to Susan Thalman for setting this day up for us.

Activities include a visit to the current exhibition at the Gallery: "LA Live: Contemporary Art in Los Angeles" with talk by the curator, <http://www.scrippscollege.edu/williamson-gallery/index.php>, lunch in Lebus Court with the business meeting to follow. Members will also visit the Pomona College Museum of Art for Turrell exhibition with a curatorial talk, <http://www.pomona.edu/Museum/>, an Introduction to Turrell Skyspace, "Dividing the Light," by Kathleen Howe and see the Skyspace light program followed by a reception. Read more about the Turrell show and Skyspace, <http://www.pomona.edu/museum/news/home.shtml>