Images
The newsletter of the VRA

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Notes from the President
Allan T. Kohl (Minneapolis College of Art & Design)
President, Visual Resources Association

The recent turning of the New Year provided occasion for numerous commentators to review "the first decade of the twenty-first century." Of course we all know logically that the decade didn't officially begin until 2001; still, the unfounded fears about Y2K provided a convenient starting point for assessing a string of years in which the growing power of networked information seemingly transformed every aspect of our lives.

All of these decade-in-review exercises prompted me to make my own list of important trends and changes in our profession. First and foremost has been the transition from analog slides to digital images as the basis of most of our collections. Second, but perhaps equally important in its long-term implications, has been the increasing acceptance of uniform standards in image cataloging and classification. This ongoing transformation is one for which we can take pride in the pivotal leadership provided by our Association, as evidenced in the formulation of the VRA Core categories and the publication of *Cataloging Cultural Objects: A Guide to Describing Cultural Works and Their Images.*

A third significant change has been administrative: looking at visual resources collections as institutional assets rather than just departmental resources. At a time when shrinking budgets increase scrutiny of institutional investments of all kinds, promoting broader access to, and more intensive use of, resources helps to maximize their value. Moreover, opening up collections for use by the broader community fosters interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and scholarship that surely reflect an important current in higher education.

A fourth significant trend has been our growing reliance on subscription-based products and services to provide an increasing percentage of the teaching images our faculty use. The tremendous success of ARTstor is the most obvious example; but many of us also rely on resources such as Grove Art Online, Bridgeman Education, RLG Cultural Materials, and others for key portions of our overall image needs. Image vendors now offer searchable databases to help their customers easily locate specific works; they have repeatedly demonstrated their willingness to work with their clients in customizing licensing agreements. Scholars Resource represents a successful model of one-stop shopping for images from multiple providers.

Ironically, these same positive developments have in too many instances led to declining faculty and administrative support for local collections and the professionals who staff them. Some have begun to question the ongoing value of local collections; others, faced with recession-induced budget crises, look to the elimination of local collections and services as a convenient way to cut costs – in some cases because the decision-makers have lacked clear understanding of exactly what it is we do, and why what we do adds value to their programs. The distressing job losses suffered by so many of our VRA colleagues during the past year should send a wake-up call that we need to be more pro-active in articulating our position, and actively seek to participate in such processes as long-range institutional strategic planning. Our publication this past fall of the VRA White Paper "Advocating for Visual Resources Management in Educational and Cultural Institutions" gives our members a powerful tool to bring to these discussions.

After reviewing the past decade in the rear-view mirror, I looked down the road to where we might be as a profession, and as an Association, at the end of the next ten years. I am convinced we will be pursuing many of the same goals we have today, but we will employ new means to reach

these goals. The major speed bumps on our way will not be technological: they will more likely be attitudinal. As I peered "through (tinted) glass darkly" towards the road ahead, two watchwords came to me. The first was *flexibility.* Not only our visual resources community, but also the constituencies we serve – faculty, administrators, students, and the public at large – must be willing to contemplate moving from old entrenched positions to consider new possibilities. Rather than fighting a rear-guard battle to "save" all visual resources positions as presently constituted, we must be willing to contemplate the redistribution of crucial tasks and competencies, melding these into parallel responsibilities in library, instructional technology, or other emerging operations.

Our Association must be similarly open to closer working relationships with its natural allies. Our second joint conference this coming year with ARLIS/NA will provide a signal opportunity to engage in this kind of bridge-building. And that theme gives me a segue to the second watchword for the coming years: *collaboration.* We need to foster and facilitate closer working partnerships with all of our constituencies: with individual faculty, with key administrative planners, with library special collections. We need to encourage ARTstor to move forward with its Shared Shelf and Open Shelf initiatives; work with our faculty in projects like SAHARA; and use opportunities such as MDID's Shared Collections or Luna Insight Community Collections to move aggressively towards shared cataloging, the pooling of relational database contents, and (yes) image sharing to the fullest extent permitted under our public domain and fair use rights, as interpreted by community standards of good practice.

As we set forth on the next leg of our journey, it's important for each of us to know that we don't have to travel solo. While underscoring the crucial significance of our work in developing standards and promoting tools for the betterment of our community, often the most direct effect we have is on a personal level. Our mutual encouragement and support of each other as individuals is equally valuable.

This will be my final "Notes from the President" column; next month in Atlanta I will hand over the presidential gavel to my successor, Maureen Burns, who this past year so ably chaired the VRA White Paper Task Force while dealing with the loss of her own position at UC Irvine. Navigating the VRA ship has been an interesting, if at times tempest-tossed, undertaking. As I prepare to step back into the ranks, I remain cautiously optimistic about the future of both our profession and our Association. Thanks to all of you who have contributed your encouragement, support, hard work, and good ideas.

Summer Educational Institute for Visual Resources and Image Management 2010
Kathe Hicks Albrecht (American University)

The Art Libraries Society/North America (ARLIS/NA) and the Visual Resources Association Foundation (VRAF) are pleased to announce that registration for the 2010 Summer Educational Institute (SEI Pro) for Visual Resources and Image Management opened on January 25, 2010. SEI has been filled to capacity in past years, please register early to assure a spot in SEI Pro.

SEI Pro will be held at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque from June 8 to June 11, 2010. It is an intensive workshop intended to provide advanced instruction in visual resources and image collection management. ARLIS/NA and the VRAF are developing a special curriculum to offer in-depth training that is often not found in library and information science degree programs. Find all you need to know on the SEI webpage, http://www.vrafoundation.org/sei2010/. The SEI planners will be adding more details to the web site during the next few weeks. Please check back regularly for more information as the opening of registration draws near.

Need funding assistance? Check out the SEI website for information on applying for a Kress Foundation Summer Educational Institute Scholarship, http://www.vrafoundation.org/sei2010/kress.htm. Please note that the deadline for submission of applications for the Kress Scholarship is February 12, 2010.

Digital Scene and Heard
Edited by Elizabeth Meyer (University of Cincinnati)
Digital Initiatives Advisory Group

MDID 3 as a platform for building innovative multimedia applications

By Andreas Knab, Kevin Hegg, Christina Updike, James Madison University

MDID 3 will feature an updated version of the familiar interface for discovering images, building and presenting slideshows and managing collections. Beyond the familiar, MDID 3 will also serve as a powerful platform for building innovative, web-based multimedia applications. The MDID 3 core stores, manages and delivers data records and media files; web developers will be able to author customized user interfaces to take advantage of specific MDID 3 core functionality.

The Center for Instructional Technology (CIT) at James Madison University (JMU) is currently using the MDID 3 platform to power JMUtube, a web application that allows faculty to upload and manage video and audio files for delivery to students through a variety of venues, including class web sites and Blackboard. JMUtube takes advantage of the MDID 3 core to store video and audio files and associated metadata. It also uses MDID 3 to manage user accounts and create thumbnail derivatives for audio and video files. JMUtube users, who for the most part are not teaching with still images and do not need the full functionality of MDID, may not even be aware that they are using an MDID-powered web application.

CIT is also using the MDID 3 platform to create a highly specialized oral history web application for history faculty. All audio files and associated metadata and audio transcripts are stored and managed by the MDID 3 engine. A novel interface allows faculty and students in the history department to synchronize audio time lines with typed transcripts. A web page for each composite record allows users to listen to the audio recording as the transcript automatically scrolls in step with the recording. Such functionality is beyond the scope of the traditional MDID web application, since it is only applicable to a relatively small set of records.

JMUtube and the oral history project exemplify the manner in which MDID can move beyond a single discipline into multiple disciplines. Imaginative faculty and skilled programmers will be able to collaborate to create innovative and useful multimedia applications. Once completed, the applications can be easily shared with other institutions as add-ons to existing MDID 3 installations.

For more information on the MDID project, visit the blog at: http://mdid.org/

Books, Articles and More
Compiled by Marlene Gordon (University of Michigan-Dearborn)

Hapsburg, Archduke Geza von. **Princely Treasures**. New York, NY: Vendome Press, 1997. Includes quality color images of Renaissance and Baroque objects in the Dresden Royal Secret Vault and the Imperial Treasury in Vienna. Dr. von Hapsburg is a leading authority on Faberge. The objects include an Automaton, the **Gemma Claudia**, Cellini's, **Saltcellar**, and **The Holy Thorn Reliquary of Jean, Duc de Berry**.

Perlove, Shelley and Larry Silver. **Rembrandt's Faith: Church and Temple in the Dutch Golden Age**. University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, c2009. This book looks at a variety of media used by Rembrandt throughout his career. Rembrandt's Faith is the recipient of the Weiss/Brown Publication Subvention Award from the Newberry Library.

Puttfarken, Thomas. **Meister Francke und die Kunst um 1400**. Hamburg: Hamburger Kunsthalle, 1969.

Good quality image of Meister Francke's Barbara Altarpiece in Helsinki and the SaintThomas Altarpiece in Hamburg.

Scholfield, Louise. **The Mycenaeans**. Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007. A good selection of Mycenaean sites and plans and drawings.

Upcoming Conferences
Compiled by Brooke Cox (DePauw University)

VRA 2010 Conference
March 17 - 20, 2010
Atlanta, GA

http://www.vraweb.org/conferences/2010atlanta/index.html

Midwest CONTENTdm Users Group Meeting
April 8-9, 2010
Iowa City, Iowa
http://ir.uiowa.edu/cdm_mw2010/

Digital Futures: from digitization to delivery
April 19-23, 2010
London, UK
http://www.digitalconsultancy.net/digifutures/

ARLIS/NA 2010 Conference
April 23-26, 2010
Boston, MA
http://www.arlisna.org/boston2010/

DigCCur Professional Institute: Curation Practices for the
Digital Object Lifecycle
May 16-21, 2010 (January 6-7, 2011)
Chapel Hill, NC
http://ils.unc.edu/digccurr/institute.html

Tech Tips
By Betha Whitlow (Washington University in Saint Louis) and Susan Jane Williams (Archivision),
Guest Editors

Run-up to New Tech II in Atlanta
This year in Atlanta, we are following up last year's popular Engaging New Technologies sessions
with "New Tech II." As part of the "run-up" to this year's presentation, we thought it would be a
good time to revisit what was covered last year and to provide some links and information to
review, for those not able to attend. We also hope to build on this with "New Tech II" and not to
repeat information from last year, so this is also in the nature of a review. Following New Tech II,
additional information, PowerPoint's and video will be posted—stay tuned for the URL.

Review of Session I, Emerging New Technologies, Toronto
Moderator, Betha Whitlow
Presenters, Heather Cleary and Susan Jane Williams

Heather kicked off the session with a segment on **Communication Tools**.

RSS feeds (Really Simple Syndication)
RSS is an automatic notification that something new has been posted, published, sent, and
scheduled. In order to subscribe to an RSS feed or newsfeed you will need two things, an RSS
reader (also known as a news aggregator) and URL (web address) of the RSS feed that you wish
to subscribe. RSS specifications include RSS 1.0; RSS 2.0 and Atom. See:

 http://www.rss-specifications.com/subscribe-to-feeds.htm
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS

Why use RSS feeds? For the content creator, they can help with user control of content and for
the users, help with time management. Users are alerted to new content and they visit sites they
know have been updated. The feeds do not clog up inboxes. Feed Readers help manage
subscriptions to content. Content creators can embed feeds into blogs and web pages. Heather
stepped through examples like Bloglines: http://www.bloglines.com, which suggests feeds of
interest. The availability of feeds on sites is usually indicated by the RSS icon.

Blogs
Blog is short for "web log". Other terms include vlog (a video blog); photoblog. Other terms in use
include blogger (one who blogs), blogosphere (the community of bloggers) and blogroll (links to
other blogs). Why blog? It is a communication tool, content changes regularly, a means for both
amateurs and professionals to share content (news, thoughts, images, polls, events) with the
world, although privacy is also possible for those who use it as a personal journal or diary. The
elevation of the blog to a professional status was noted when a Huffington Post reporter was

called on during a White House Press conference. Advertising is now using blogs as well for "viral" marketing. Individuals may set up their own blogs using free sites such as

Blogger (formerly Blogspot)
LiveJournal
TypePad
WordPress.com

Heather then stepped through creating a blog on WordPress for 2009 New Technologies.

For more about blogs, please see the previous Images article authored by Marta Bustillo:
http://www.vraweb.org/publications/imagestuff/vol6no4.html

Twitter
In the intervening year since Toronto, Twitter has become a phenomenon, frequently cited in international news events as a key means of communicating in crisis, since one can access Twitter from many devices, including phones, and use websites, feeds and widgets. Many were new to Twitter in 2009, when Heather outlined the basics. Twitter posts, called "tweets" are limited to 140 characters. This was first described as "microblogging." One may also subscribe to tweets from friends, family, institutions and celebrities for immediate and constant updates, read and experienced as strings.

Instant Messaging
IM is for spontaneous conversations or "chats". Popular IM services include AIM (AOL), Google Talk, ICQ (I Seek You), Meebo, Pidgin, Yahoo Messenger and Window Live (formerly MSN) Messenger. IM is "live" chatting back and forth, as opposed to Twitter or "texting" which are brief exchanges, not necessarily in real time. See Netlingo for definitions (see the underlined terms for links) and a dictionary of the shorthand that is now used with texting, which is reshaping English, for good or for ill.
http://www.netlingo.com/acronyms.php

IRC (Internet Relay Chat)
IRC allows for group conversations on pre-existing "channels." Some IM clients allow you to talk across IM networks and some, like Pidgin, also handle IRC.

Internet Forums
Another type of communication in groups is the evolution of the old text-based BBSs (Bulletin Board Systems) and Usenet. The new generation of tools includes MSN Groups, Google Groups (which took over Usenet) and Yahoo! Groups. These are customizable ways to join and communicate with a group. Discussions are posted and participants can choose how to read and respond to the messages, either by interfacing with the group as a website (checking in and reading and posting periodically), or through their email.

Wikis
The term is traced to the Hawaiian wiki wiki ("fast"), and also a retronym for What I Know Is.

It is a collaborative repository of static and stable information. The collaborative nature harnesses the power of crowd; anyone can contribute to an article. It allows for easy access to the editing history, and is easy to reverse edits. Wikipedia is the best known example, begun in 2001. It is powered by MediaWiki software and is available in about 260 languages. It is edited by volunteers and a paid administrative staff consisting of only a couple people. Some other wikis may restrict content contributors to prevent unauthorized postings. Heather demonstrated the OTIS college wiki and PBWorks, wiki creation software.

http://www.otis.edu/life_otis/faculty_life/tlc/wikis.html
http://pbworks.com/content/edu+resources

Susan Williams covered the next segment on **New Display Technologies**.

Display Hardware
Susan contrasted two hardware trends on the ends of the size spectrum, from the huge LCD screens seen in the Beijing Olympics to the small, handheld Pico data projector. She showed a picture of the largest LCD screen playing continuous video (which is actually multiple screens but the video is fed seamlessly across them to form a single "frame".) The screen is suspended as a

canopy over a downtown Beijing street and measures 656 x 98 feet. In contrast the Pico was the first entrant in a class of small data and video projectors that can be held in the palm of your hand. There are now several models from other makers available. These are obviously short throw and have a relatively small area of projection, but it is significant that this "personal" size market has opened.

Small Point and Shoot Video Cameras
Another market of very small, point and shoot video cameras became very popular in 2009. These include the Vado and the Flip Mino HD. Kodak now has a video camera in this class as well. These are especially handy for creating and feeding video to sites like Vimeo and YouTube (which will be covered in Session II, our next article).

The Smartphone as a New Computing Platform
The iPhone has made a big splash since its introduction, and other smartphones have emerged into a class that is now considered a type of computing platform in its own right. These mobile devices are excellent examples of convergence in computing tools—they have become a sort of Swiss Army knife of mobile, personal computing. Schools and libraries have availed themselves of this platform, knowing that texting, IM and mobile web, video and email have become ubiquitous among their students. http://www.wired.com/gadgetlab/2009/12/iphone-university-abilene/

(iTunesU will be covered in Session II). Library systems are beginning to have links from their OPACs to smartphones, so that citations and shelf numbers (and much more) may be sent directly to the patron's phone. Many websites are now created for the smartphone/ mobile platform, using the domain name .mobi. This was created from a consortium of Google, Microsoft, Samsung and Nokia. There is a style guide for mobile content associated with this, and many developer resources are available for creating mobile content. Fremont Public Library in Illinois has a .mobi domain.

Ball State University Libraries also have implemented such a site.
http://www.bsu.edu/libraries/mobile/

Library OPAC vendors are also incorporating this in their products. Innovative Interfaces, Endeavor, SirsiDynix and Talis have all developed mobile interfaces. Innovative's product is called AirPac and has been launched by over 90 libraries.

Museums are also using mobile devices for visitor education and exhibit guides. This is not new, museums have been doing this for decades using dedicated hardware players (mostly audio), however now they can do this using a smartphone or sophisticated MP3 player which the visitor already owns.
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/15/arts/design/15design.html

Demonstration of Display Software Innovations

Photosynth and Seadragon:
http://photosynth.net/
http://www.ted.com/talks/blaise_aguera_y_arcas_demos_photosynth.html

Cooliris (formerly PicLens):
http://www.cooliris.com/

Animoto:
http://animoto.com/

Zoomii (a virtual bookstore with a unique display):
http://zoomii.com/

Susan then led a segment on Training/Remote Meeting and Screen Capture.

Computer Screen Capture (Recorded Video)
There are a variety of screen capture and recording software, from freeware to more elaborate Adobe products. A major feature to plan for here is the screen real estate of the capture, since a full screen video will be prohibitively large to post. Since the outcome of many of these efforts is to post the video on a site like YouTube or Vimeo, tailoring the size of the capture window correctly

is the major skill involved. If you are showing a computer program like using a cataloging database for training purposes, you will want the type to be readable as well. Several of the programs have the means to set a small recording window that you can see as you make the recording and navigate the program shown in your demo, at 100% within the window. Susan showed screen shots of this in Captivate and Camtasia, two of the popular paid products. These programs also offer complete editing of the video and audio, so you can insert title frames and make other edits to create effective training videos. A webcam may also be used to record beyond the computer screen.

http://www.adobe.com/designcenter/captivate/videos/
http://www.techsmith.com/camtasia.asp

Remote Meeting/Live Screen Sharing
Remote meeting is an effective and cost-saving means to meet, sharing group audio, usually over a toll-free, dial-in phone line provided. With the remote meeting you can also have video of the participants via webcams, or share computer screens to look at documents and programs together. Most programs allow you to pass control of audio and computer screens among participants freely. There is a full range of products with an array of features. Many are low-cost and have "pay as you go" plans. Many also have free 30 day trials. The price separation in these products is the difference between the live meeting and the ability to record and save the session. Typically the recording ability is only provided as a higher priced, full feature.

TeamViewer is a free download that provides only the screen sharing; participants can call or Skype in addition to using the screen share.

TeamViewer:
http://www.teamviewer.com/index.aspx

WebEx:
http://www.webex.com/

GoToMeeting:
https://www1.gotomeeting.com/

Breeze:
http://www.adobe.com/support/documentation/en/breeze/

Look for Session II in the next Images and information about New Tech II in Atlanta in future editions.

Postions Filled
Compiled by Anne Norcross (Kendall College of Art and Design)

Lewis and Clark College, Portland, OR
Stephanie Beene replaces Margo Ballantyne as Visual Resources Coordinator at Lewis and Clark College. Stephanie comes to Lewis and Clark from the University of Texas at Austin, where she completed her M.S. in Information Studies, and was the Database Development Assistant at the School of Architecture Visual Resources Collection. She also has an M.A. in Art History from the University of California, Riverside, and a B.A. in Art and Art History from Colorado State University. Stephanie has an impressive track record in visual resources collections, gallery, and museum work, arts education, digital library initiatives, and community service that she will bring to Lewis & Clark.

Chapter News
Compiled by Trudy Levy (Image Integration)

The Greater New York Chapter:
Contributed by Jenni Rodda, (Institute of Fine Arts)

The Greater New York Chapter held its fall meeting in November at the New York Public Library. Susan Chute and Clayton Kirking of the NYPL gave a wonderful overview of the Library's digital projects, followed by a tour of the NYPL Photograph Collections. It was a great pleasure to see

the collections, and to be hosted in the NYPL's historic space.

During the fall business meeting, Chapter Chair Sarah Goldstein announced she has accepted a new position at Mt. Holyoke College, which will take her out of the Greater New York geographic area before the end of her term as a Chapter officer. Vice Chair Jenni Rodda will therefore step up as Chair, and a new Vice Chair, Ching-jung Chen, will take over that position, as of March 1, 2010. The Chapter's spring meeting, to be hosted by the staff of the Image Collection at the Metropolitan Museum, will be held after the VRA Atlanta conference.

Greater New York Chapter members, with the support of the Chapter, will present a panel discussion at the Atlanta conference, titled 'After the Transition: Planning for Collections Storage & Workspace Changes in the Digital Environment.' This session grew out of a similar panel discussion organized by past Chapter Chair Billy Kwan for a Greater New York Chapter meeting in spring 2009. Panelists include Billy Kwan, Metropolitan Museum, Moderator; Claire Dienes, Metropolitan Museum; Sarah Goldstein, Vassar College; Steven Kowalik, Hunter College; Jenni Rodda, IFA/NYU.

Northern California Chapter
Contributed by Karen Kessel (Sonoma State Unitiversity)

The Northern California Chapter held a reorganization meeting in June after a long hiatus, at which a nomination committee was formed to elect new officers. We have scheduled a February 26 meeting with 2 lectures on local subject authorities, cataloging, and the STEVE project at UC Berkeley's architecture library. Our speakers will be Judy Weedman, professor at the San Jose State University School of Library and Information Science, and Layna White, Head of Collections Information at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Co-chairs Heather Cummins and Karen Kessel are working on plans for future meetings and Heather has launched a website cum blog for the chapter.