



Images

The newsletter of the VRA

July 2012 Vol.9 No. 4

Annual Conference Wrap- Up, Part II

Friday April 20

Business Meeting

VRA Member Remembrances

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-member-remembrances>

Nancy Schuller: In Memoriam

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-nancy-schuller-in-memoriam>

Providence, Rhode Island Conference Preview

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-providence-rhode-island-preview>

Session: The Visual Culture of the Visually Uncultured

Alma Hoffmann, Indiana Purdue Fort Wayne University
Brooke Scherer, University of Tampa
Renee Meyer Ernst, St. Ambrose University
Summary by Emily Vigor (Academy of Art University)

Alma Hoffmann began this session with a presentation entitled "The Visual Culture of the Visually Uncultured." She started by giving a general background of the history of visual culture, including several definitions by Marita Sturken, Lisa Cartwright, and James Elkins. The general focus of visual culture is on how Western culture emphasizes visual rather than textual or oral media. Content is dependent on media, and so our society cultivates images to disseminate it.

Hoffman moved on to discuss her definition of the visually uncultured as societies online social butterflies. This group is commonly associated with the Millennial generation, with the primary feature being their reliance on technological products and social media. While this group is proficient in using technology to view images, they are visually saturated. Hoffman stated that we see 10,000 images a day on average and this has only been magnified by portable devices. For the Millennial's who have grown up being inundated with images, their ability to comprehend and analyze the images they see is shallow. Hoffman says they are quick thinkers who do not focus on image details or context, but just the surface value.

Hoffman discussed the need to be conscious of how technology and social media have altered the ways in which we interact with images, and how these images are often edited to alter our perception of what we see. Along with the technology to create and edit images comes the issue of discerning what is fabricated in what we see. Hoffman said that the problem is "the more we see, the less we see, the less we feel, the less we understand." She gave an example of a collection of tweets published by the Huffington Post where users were questioning whether or not the Titanic was real (<http://tinyurl.com/6vo6tnf>).

As Hoffman reached the end of her talk, she discussed several ways to approach the issue of the visually uncultured. It is routine in our society to use technology to multitask

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(for example, texting while watching TV and having a conversation), and this is having a significant effect on the education of younger generations. In order to critically engage with our visual culture, we need to stop and really look at the details in the images we are absorbing. The Millennials need to develop the skill to analyze images and use their critical mind. By teaching them to be aware of an images capability to be edited (including historical, “factual” images), they will hopefully realize the implications of a visual world that can be manipulated.

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-visual-culture-hoffman>

Brooke Scherer followed Hoffman with her presentation, “Matrices: the missing framework.” This session focused on the importance of being attuned to cultural norms when creating an advertising campaign. As a graphic designer and teacher, Scherer has created a matrix to plot different cultures values for advertising campaigns to successfully reach the target audience in their visual context. Scherer uses this matrix in the classroom to help graphic design students understand the connections between culture and visual communication.

Scherer emphasized the importance of thinking locally and acting globally when designing. What we can read from an advertisement in our own visual culture does not carry across all cultural lines. Her matrix is designed to break down visual communication across cultures by highlighting elements of importance in a given society, such as the significance of individualism in American cultures. Scherer offered several case studies of advertisements that did not translate properly to their intended audience, one of which is an advertisement for P.F. Chang’s in China where the placement of chopsticks in a bowl of rice visually translated as a symbol of death.

Scherer ended her presentation with a discussion of how she implements her matrix in an academic setting. Her graphic design students are assigned a country to design an ad campaign for, and must utilize the matrix to plot the cultures valued elements, such as color, imagery, context, and symbology, to translate their message. She ended her presentation by highlighting several student projects and matrices.

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-visual-culture-matrices-the-missing-framework>

Renee Meyer Ernst was the final speaker for this session. Her presentation, entitled “Losing Site Online: the future of web designs after past designs,” focused on the issue of properly archiving the visual design of a website. When Ernst was conducting research for a web design course she currently teaches, she discovered few quality images of past web page designs. With limited examples, Ernst questioned how to prepare students for web design’s future without an archive of past designs.

While websites are primarily used as tools, Ernst wants to ensure that the importance of designing websites does not go unnoticed. Designing for your websites primary purpose is an important issue that needs to be considered. The emphasis on websites used to be about the information on the page, but now our culture is saturated with visual images and the emphasis on web design has shifted. Ernst used the example of Facebook to highlight the amount of space devoted to imagery in relation to text. As websites edit their site design, the old design is often lost. With limited documentation on the history of web design, graphic designers are worried that the evolution of this type of design will be lost. Changes are happening rapidly, and attention needs to be given to the issue of how to catalog web designs for future research purposes.

Ernst discussed that while images do exist online for old web designs, they are often of poor quality and tend to be from a source other than the website. This highlights the issue of copyright and crediting the designers. There are several resources that Ernst discussed that are working to preserve the history of web design, including Wayback Machine (<http://archive.org/web/web.php>), Communication Arts (<http://www.commarts.com/>), and AIGA Design Archives (<http://designarchives.aiga.org/#/home>). While these resources are all steps in the right direction, they are by no means a comprehensive solution to properly archiving website design.

Ernst closed her discussion by focusing on what needs to be done, with her solution

being a centralized website archiving system. Ideally, this system would give credit to the designers of a website and would serve to increase awareness of a website as a design object. The obvious problems at this point are the question of managing and hosting the project, copyright, and what the archive method should be (a single page or the entire site?). Ernst is hoping that more people will be made aware of the need for archiving this type of design work, and that a solution will be reached.

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-visual-culture-losing-site-online>

Questions were initially directed to Ernst in regards to what type of research is being conducted in the area of web site preservation, and the resource Archive-it (<http://www.archive-it.org/>) was mentioned. Scherer and Ernst were also asked how the matrix should be utilized in regards to web design. Scherer was asked how she introduces the concept of the matrix to students in her course, with the answer being that numerous examples are given to break down the matrix. The websites for Coca-Cola throughout the world is a major example that she used. Scherer will be publishing an article this summer concerning the matrix with the long term goal of publishing a text book on the subject.

Hoffman did not use this term, I am using it here to give parameters to the generation she spoke about.

Cataloging and Metadata Special Interest Group Meeting

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-cataloging-metadata-sig-introducing-collectionspace>

Session: Beyond These Four Walls: Optimizing Traditional Collections Through Outreach and Collaboration

Jen Green, Plymouth State University
Marianne Martin, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
Laura Anne Heller, National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum
Stephanie Post, Metropolitan Museum of Art & Jenni Rodda, New York University
Summary by Shalimar Fojas White, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection

Introduction (Karin Whalen): Whalen welcomed the audience and stated the theme of the session: to highlight recent projects at academic institutions, museums, and archives that extend the reach of their collections through the use of digital technology and collaboration.

Jen Green, "Developing Digital Collections at Plymouth State University". Green is the Digital Projects Librarian at Plymouth State University. Her position is housed in Library, but she works across the entire campus, serving as a liaison to various departments. In this role, she conducts outreach to units with existing digital collections, as well as those prepared to collaborate with her to share digital collections throughout the university. When hired, she was charged with coordinating an institutional initiative to select a shared system to provide access to these digital collections. Green worked with several partners across campus, including the Library's Spinelli Archives and Special Collections and The Museum of the White Mountains. Early on, Green focused on developing relationships with campus contacts not familiar with digitization projects and gathering the information needed to inform the selection of a shared campus system. In July 2010, she began to develop relationships with staff at the Archives and Museum, so that she could understand their current practices and what they wanted to achieve with their digital content. In January 2011, Green conducted a needs assessment and researched various systems, including CONTENTdm, Canto Cumulus, and Extensis Portfolio. All of Green's collaborators informed the decision, since they were involved in the selection process and met frequently to discuss their specific needs. Eventually, in July 2011, CONTENTdm was selected as the university's shared system. The critical factor in this decision was the fact that CONTENTdm provided hosting services, a solution ideal for Plymouth State, which lacked the necessary local infrastructure. Both the Museum's digital collection and the Spinelli Archives' collection of Plymouth State Historical Images are now live and accessible through CONTENTdm:
<http://digitalcollections.plymouth.edu/cdm/>.

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-beyond-these-four-walls-developing-digital-collections-at-plymouth-state-university>

Martin described the Library's archive of 350,000 photographs, slides, negatives, and digital images. The Core Historical Archive consists of photographs that document Williamsburg from 1926-1937. In 1946, Colonial Williamsburg hired its first staff photographer, later forming the Audiovisual Services Department, which recorded the history of the museum over six decades. These collections contain many hidden gems - historic photographs documenting people, places, and events that have a potential to reach audiences beyond the traditional community served by the museum (i.e. museum curators, architectural historians, archaeologists, historians, and costumed interpreters). Library staff have endeavored to expose these hidden collections to larger audiences, such as students, faculty, and local community groups. To this end, they began a new educational initiative by collaborating with faculty from the nearby College of William and Mary for courses relating to Music and American Studies. As part of these classes, the professors assigned projects, such as online exhibits and blogs, which required students to post digital copies of archival materials to their course websites. Due to a lack of resources, Colonial Williamsburg does not yet have an online image database, only an internal database for staff use (MARS). However, by putting finding aids and digital images on the Colonial Williamsburg website, the contents of the photo archives are becoming increasingly discoverable to outside researchers, such as local community groups and reunion groups seeking to reconnect with classmates and friends in the area. All of these efforts to engage the wider community have resulted in many benefits. Information is exchanged between faculty, students, staff, and other repositories. Researchers have given wider publicity to photographs from the archive by using them in their online projects, publications, and exhibits. There is increased classroom use of images now that a copyright strategy has been developed. Internally, there is increased commitment to providing broader accessibility to digital images from the collections. This has resulted in a pilot project to develop an online CONTENTdm database for all materials in Special Collections, including manuscripts, rare books, architectural drawings, and historical photographs.

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-beyond-these-four-walls-colonial-williamsburgs-photo-archives>

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum is an independent non-profit with a mission to preserve and document the heritage of the American West for the enrichment of the public. Heller described the Donald C. & Elizabeth M. Dickinson Research Center as the research arm of the Museum, which seeks to collect material in 5 areas: entertainment, Western art, ranching, Native American, and rodeo. In 2005, the Center launched an online database of images from its holdings, the Image Database Archive (IDA; InMagic and CS/Textworks). While museum curators are the main users, the Center also provides services to outside patrons, including: authors of books and magazine articles, scholars, film producers, documentarians, and TV producers. Approximately 50% of outside requests come from rodeo performers and their family members, seeking photographs for their personal use. The Center's main challenge is expanding its audience through outreach and promotion. Most users learn about the Center's collections through Google, using keyword searches for names of artists or family members, titles of art works, or place names. Heller is trying to reach additional users by conducting oral history interviews with rodeo performers and contemporary artists of Western art and posting the resulting videos on YouTube. Heller posts links to the YouTube videos on the Center's Facebook page, sends emails to art professors at local universities, and collaborates with the Museum's Public Relations and Marketing departments to re-post the links on the Museum's main social media channels, including Facebook and Twitter. Heller uses all of these strategies for outreach, since the Center is a small archive with a larger vision, always looking for ways to promote its collections and make them accessible to a wider audience.

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-beyond-these-four-walls-a-wealth-of-images>

Finally, co-presentors, Stephanie Post and Jenni Rodda, discussed "Digitizing Keighley."

Post described a project to digitize the William Keighley slide collection, which is housed in the Image Library at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The collaboration involved the Museum, the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, and ARTstor and was

conceived in September 2006 by Roberto Ferrari (Associate Museum Librarian, Image Library, Metropolitan Museum), Jenni Rodda (Curator of Visual Resources, Institute of Fine Arts – now Manager, Digital Media Services and Image Archive), and Christine Kuan (Director of Collection Development, ARTstor). From a collection of 34,000 35 mm color slides, the Image Library selected four thematic sets of slides (Pilgrimage roads to Santiago de Compostela, Parisian houses, Architecture of Austria, and Architecture of Spain) to make more broadly available through the ARTstor Digital Library. ARTstor performed the digitization and Rodda supervised the IFA graduate students who cataloged the images. For the Museum, the project highlighted the following lessons: determine your strengths and look for others to assist in projects; capitalize on talent and expertise available (i.e. collaborating with ARTstor's production staff to digitize the slides and using graduate students knowledgeable about the subject matter); and use open resources. Post introduced Rodda, who described her previously unsuccessful efforts to collaborate with other New York area institutions by using a common software, project, or database. In the past, these abortive efforts had focused on sharing study collections, rather than unique content like the Keighley slides, which resulted in complicated copyright issues. For the Keighley project, IFA could provide high-level descriptive data by employing the subject expertise and language skills of graduate students. The students also benefited from being able to use Keighley images in their scholarship and teaching. Rodda reflected on the lessons of the project for the IFA: don't give up; capitalize on individual strengths; communicate regularly and keep everything as transparent as possible; make sure everyone benefits; and these collaborations are useful case studies to present to future grant funders.

(PowerPoint presentation unavailable due to copyright issues)

Session: Visual Literacy/Case Studies

Joan Beaudoin, Wayne State University

Stephanie Beene, Lewis & Clark College

Alex Nichols, Michigan State University

Summary by Sarah Christensen (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

The session's moderator, John Taormina, introduced the session with ACRL's definition of visual literacy. This definition, "visual literacy is a set of abilities that enables an individual to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use, and create images and visual media," served as a reference point for the audience to reflect on throughout the session. Taormina then gave the audience a brief overview of the presentations included as well as biographies of the speaker.

In a digital libraries course at Wayne State's School of Library and Information Science, Joan Beaudoin sought to examine how much learning took place in a series of exercises about describing images. This project, which has thus far taken place during spring semester 2011 and 2012, came about due to the proliferation of images in a media rich world and the contrasting lack of pedagogy surrounding the subject. Beaudoin used ACRL's "Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education" and attempted to apply it to her teaching with two research questions in mind: What activities increase visual literacy in the areas of images description and analysis? How do students perceive their learning process?

Using digital images from the "Virtual Motor City" collection at Wayne State, students participated in a qualitative study examining their understanding of and responses to image metadata collection. At week one, students were given a set of images to catalog with minimal data associated. At week eight, students reviewed each other's data. At the end of the course, students re-examine their data from the first week, keeping in mind the peer review activity from week eight. Throughout this process, Beaudoin asked the students to reflect on this process in a blog. Aside from visual literacy, skills and elements involved with these exercises include the evaluation and quality control of a digital library, cataloging, using controlled vocabularies, usability, selection, and project management.

At the end of the semester, Beaudoin found that the students were mostly frustrated with the limitations of the tools available, such as controlled vocabularies, resources, time, data, and personal knowledge. Through blog posts, Beaudoin found that students learned how difficult descriptive cataloging is, and that they learned to take time to research rather than provide inaccurate data. Her conclusions were that these exercises increased visual literacy, but very minimally. In the future, Beaudoin plans to provide

more one-on-one guidance, provide a framework for analyzing picture content, find additional exercises that help with using controlled vocabularies, and interview highly effective students.

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-visual-literacy-case-studies-a-case-study-of-visual-literacy>

Stephanie Beene then spoke about her experience on the advisory group for the ACRL Image Research Interest Group's (IRIG) visual literacy task force. The visual literacy task force was charged with defining visual literacy and drafting standards and guidelines, while the advisory group's role was to provide feedback on various drafts.

Beene then related Watzek Library's efforts to improve access to information about visual literacy at Lewis and Clark College through workshops for faculty and students. At Lewis and Clark's Faculty Technology Institute (FTI) in May 2011, Beene led a workshop titled "Do you see what I see? Helping students critically engage with images." Due to the success of this workshop, another is planned for the FTI in May of 2012 and an adaptation was created for an upper level course called "Gender & Aesthetic Expression." For the student workshop, Beene first had the students write a response to Stanley Forman's "Boston Fire" without providing any information. After this activity, she presented the image's caption and had the students compare their initial impressions versus the information they now had. For the third activity, she provided Forman's recollection of the moment the photograph was taken and discussed further reactions. In addition to these workshops, Beene attempts to work visual literacy into her day-to-day work, such as consultations with students, faculty, and staff, answering reference desk questions, and providing a "Visual Literacy in a Nutshell" presentation and handout to other librarians at Watzek Library.

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-visual-literacy-case-studies-adventures-in-seeing>

Alex Nichols focused on his work creating a collection of image based art history exam questions within Michigan State University's online learning network, LON-CAPA. With the art history faculty reevaluating assessment strategies due to large classes with limited resources, questions about cheating, creating meaningful assessments, and grading efficiently arose. Nichols found an opportunity for the Visual Resources Center to expand its role into class assessment, and started to create a communal bank of image based questions within LON-CAPA that could be shared across multiple exams, instructors, classes, and institutions. LON-CAPA has customizable testing features, and the questions were built with xml. This system has many benefits, such as making the generation of image based assessments easier in the long run, limiting the potential for cheating, promoting resource sharing, and expanding the utility of the Visual Resource's MDID database. However, Nichols noted that creating this bank of questions is a large up-front time investment, as there is currently no established art history resource bank. Nichols currently does all the coding for the questions, but hopes that in the future faculty will be able to do this themselves. Going forward, Nichols will continue to support this assessment system as long as the faculty remain interested, and would like to expand to one or more additional courses. In addition, he would like to try features more advanced than multiple choice, such as free text answers and answers contained within images, as well as explore tighter integration with MDID.

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-visual-literacy-case-studies-curating-questions>

During the question and answer period, an audience member asked Beaudion about the correlation between visual literacy and early education. She replied that she couldn't answer because her students come from all over the country and have different prior educational experiences. Beaudion noted that she would like to investigate this further, and thinks it is important in early education as visual literacy has yet to be acknowledged as being important. Other audience questions and comments related to the accuracy of metadata, and how important that can be in formulating biases with images.

Session: Cataloging/Case Studies

Mary Alexander, University of Alabama

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-cataloging-case-studies-metadata-magic>

Elizabeth Berenz, ARTstor

Ian McDermott, ARTstor

Joshua Polansky, University of Washington

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-cataloging-case-studies-robocataloging>

Berenz and Burns

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-cataloging-case-studies-cataloging-in-the-cloud>

Closing Plenary: *The Art of Perception*

Amy Herman

Summary by Sheryl Frisch (California Polytechnic State University)

Amy Herman opened her engaging talk, "The Art of Perception: Rethinking How We See" by showing a brief video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJG698U2Mvo>). She asked us to count how many times the players wearing white passed a basketball. Audience members had several answers and we were surprised at the range of results. The video demonstrated how our attention can be selective and how easily we can miss details—even when they are right in front of us. Ms. Herman called this "inattention blindness," when we fail to notice something in plain sight because our attention is absorbed by something else, the act of counting in this example. What we see is what we "attend" to. Upon reviewing the video we saw the details that we had missed – including a person wearing a gorilla suit.

Ms. Herman, an art historian and attorney, developed the "The Art of Perception" (www.artfulperception.com), to teach medical, legal and law enforcement professionals to improve observation and communication skills by analyzing and discussing works of art. Her lively presentation consisted of an overview of the program, participatory exercises, and a question and answer period. Throughout, Ms. Herman emphasized that improving observation skills and communicating effectively can lead to success whether it is in solving crimes, or going back into the field with what she calls a refreshed sense of inquiry.

Over ten years ago, while the Head of Education at The Frick Collection, Ms. Herman developed a program for Cornell medical students. Modeled after one at the Yale Center for British Art, students honed their observation skills by analyzing works of art. They looked at and described works in The Frick Collection. They raised questions and described paintings. The goal was to make them better observers, to increase their diagnostic abilities as well as communicate effectively with patients.

Subsequently, Ms. Herman adapted her program to include officers from the New York Police Department. Officer's first view works of art in a conference room where Ms. Herman leads them in discussion. Here, they become comfortable once they realize that they do not need to know about art. They focus on what they see in the works and not on brush strokes, styles, artists, or anything related to art history. They then move to the galleries where they work in small groups. They have five minutes and are not permitted to read the museum labels, before returning to the entire group to present their results. They look at the big picture as well as the details and take these techniques back into the field. The program was a success and every newly promoted captain was required to take the training. The Wall Street Journal published a story about the program generating greater interest by other law enforcement agencies. The program has grown to include agencies such as the FBI, the Department of Justice and the Secret Service.

According to Ms. Herman the program can "refresh a sense of inquiry" for professionals who have years of experience. To demonstrate this, she showed *The Wait* (1964-1965) by Edward Keinholz. She spoke of her own encounter viewing the work and how she tended to notice the dust that is part of the installation. On one occasion she heard the squawk of the live parakeet, which brought up new questions about the bird. She talked about using our five senses, not just our eyes, to make observations. Our perceptions are formed from our observations, and can lead us to raise new questions. This refreshes our sense of inquiry and helps us to be open to other possibilities.

Ms. Herman discussed how observing small details can transfer to real life, and displayed Edward Hopper's *Automat* (1927), a painting showing a woman sitting alone

and holding a cup. The perception was that the woman is drinking coffee, but Ms. Herman asked, "How do we know it is coffee?" Small details can make a difference. To illustrate her point, she examined several high profile criminal cases. In the case of, Annie Le, a Yale graduate student who was murdered, Ms. Herman told how a police officer had a "gut feeling" when interviewing a fellow student who appeared uncomfortable and was behaving oddly. She noticed that he moved a box of wipes on a cart where bloodstains were found. Ms. Herman stressed that a "bad feeling" or "6th sense" is "not good enough" and that we must question our perceptions to find out why we feel the way we do. What are the details and how can we articulate them so that we communicate precisely? In the case of Chandra Levy, Ms. Herman emphasized the importance of effective communication. Searchers were ordered to comb 100 yards from the "trails" in Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C., where Ms. Levy's body was found. However, the search was made from the "roads", which are fewer in number. Had the directions been followed, Ms. Levy would have been found sooner and more forensic evidence would have been secured.

Since its inception Ms. Herman has expanded the program to include race, religion, age and gender. Medical and law enforcement professionals must be able to talk about everything including subjects that may make them feel uncomfortable. She showed us several works and we were asked to describe them. We were not to use the words "obviously" or "clearly" since what is obvious to one person may not be so to another. We were to be precise by saying "It appears X because of YZ". We were not to point, but to describe the location - upper right corner for example - of a detail. One work was Alice Neel's Self-Portrait (1980). Interestingly the word, "naked" did not come up when describing the painting. Nor did "poverty" or "poor" when looking at Dorthea Lange's photograph, Migrant Mother (1936). Words about weight, "obese" for example, were not mentioned when describing Lucian Freud's Big Sue (Benefits Supervisor Sleeping, 1995). In the medical field such an observation would be helpful when diagnosing a condition like diabetes or depression.

For the exercise portion we looked at and discussed numerous works of art as well as photographs from the news media. We were not to insert our knowledge of art history, artist's styles, periods, etc. We were to take a journalistic approach and ask who, what, where, and when questions. Specific questions we were to consider were: "What do I know?", "What don't I know?" and "What do I need to know to get more information?" We had a limited time to assess each work. In one exercise we compared two portraits of presidents, a painting of George Washington (Landsdowne portrait, 1796) by Gilbert Stuart, and a black and white photograph of a seated Abraham Lincoln. We noted facial expression, eye contact, and body language. The phrase "not slept" came up when describing President Lincoln; however, this was an example of an interpretation. Looking at the details revealed "bags under the eyes" and "tousled hair".

Some exercises focused on communication. In one, we paired up. One person described the work, while the other listened and drew - with eyes closed- what was heard. The exercise could only take a few minutes to practice communicating precisely and briefly. The first work was Herbert Bayer's The Lonely Metropolitan (1932), a black and white photograph showing two disembodied hands floating in front of a multistory building with windows. An open eye appears in the palm of each hand. The purpose of the exercise was to prioritize visual communication, and to determine what to say and how to listen. For the second work, participants switched tasks as they worked with Rene Magritte's Time Transfixed (1938). The painting shows an interior with a stone fireplace, with a train floating out from the center at the top. Three objects are placed symmetrically on the mantelpiece, two candleholders on opposite ends with a black clock positioned in between. A large mirror appears on the wall above the mantle. Both works were a challenge to describe without referring to surrealism or using the word "surreal". Ms. Herman talked about the "pertinent negative" a concept primarily used in the medical field to diagnose medical conditions. It is when a symptom is expected to be present, but isn't. For instance, a patient could have "symptom A, B, but not C" (the pertinent negative). The absence of C may determine a specific condition. In Magritte's painting pertinent negatives would be a fire in the fireplace, train tracks, or candles in the candleholders.

In another exercise, Ms. Herman asked us to come up with "four words" to describe a photograph that appeared in the New York Times. "Youth," "flip-flops," "smiles," and "stoop" described a group of teenagers hanging out on a stoop. According to Ms. Herman, they were celebrating Ramadan by being with friends and not playing ball,

hence the socks and flip-flops instead of athletic shoes.

Ms. Herman's presentation showed how "The Art of Perception" uses art as a vehicle that connects all professions where observation and effective communication are essential. Participants apply the skills of their profession such as diagnosing patients or analyzing crime scenes to works of art. It's about observing and communicating what is seen and not what is assumed or inferred. No two people perceive the world in the same way. It's about "raising the right questions" and "getting it right". It's an opportunity to be professionally responsible and perform the "best job possible".

The Q&A session included questions about visual literacy and education. "The Art of Perception" is a practical application of analyzing visual data. Elementary teachers, who are not trained in art or art history, can use artwork in the classroom to develop visual literacy by asking students questions about what they see.

Travel Awards Committee Summary

Submitted by Victoria Brown (University of Oxford) and Heidi Eyestone (Carelton College)

Six members of the Travel Awards Committee (TAC) met at the High Noon Saloon in Albuquerque on April 21. The committee bid a sad farewell to Jackie Spafford, committee member since 2000 and chair from 2006-9 and welcomed a new recruit, Joshua Lynn from the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. (Two other committee members have subsequently stepped down: Eric Schwab, Toronto Reference Library and Julia Cook, University for the Creative Arts.)

The committee reflected on a successful round of awards, having received a record number of 64 applications and making a total of 14 awards at the 2012 conference. For the first time this year, we accepted submissions from non-members, with the stipulation that any applicants falling into this category would be required to take out a full VRA membership before they could accept an award, hence providing the welcome benefit of slightly boosting membership figures and bringing new blood into the organization.

We celebrated the Tansey event in style: Flamenco! drew 90 attendees and was a fantastic evening's entertainment. The TAC has handed over responsibility for the organization of future Tansey events to the Development Committee/ VRA Foundation, following a general shift to all-year-round fundraising and taking advantage of the Foundation's 501 (c) 3 status.

We look forward to the coming year's awards process and to receiving your applications in the fall – keep an eye out for the announcements on VRA-L and other listservs.

MDID Users Group Session – Cultivating Multimedia on Your Campus

Co-moderators: Andreas Knab and Christina Updike, James Madison University

<http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc/vra-2012-mdidusersgroup>

MDID Users Group Question and Answer period:

1. How can one show images to anonymous users (front page content)?
The front page showcase selects eight images at random from all images that are available to the current user. To make images available to anonymous users, grant read permission to "Anonymous Users" or "Everybody" in both the collection and storage area that contains the metadata and image files respectively.
2. Is the "parent-child" relationship working?
If a collection is configured to be a parent of one or more other (child) collections, searching the parent collection will also search all child collections, while still enforcing permissions. It is currently not possible to hide child collections from the user interface.
3. How can an administrator trouble-shoot permission issues?
Administrators can switch to any other user account on the Options screen. This allows them to view the interface just as the other user would see it.
4. How has the student functionality been working?

Students have the same access as faculty users, including creating presentations and uploading images. There are plans to add per-user quotas to prevent individual users from uploading too much content and filling up a server.

5. How are accounts created?
If the system is connected to an external authentication server (e.g. LDAP), accounts are created automatically when a user logs in successfully for the first time.
6. How do you create class groups?
JMU has a custom tool that creates class-enrollment-based groups from a data feed. The data feed is not standard, which is why we have not distributed this tool.
7. How can an administrator give users browse and read only access?
Permissions should be set on all collections and storage areas to only give read access to "Everybody" (which includes anonymous users) or "Authenticated Users". Only individual accounts or small user groups should be given write or manage permissions.
8. What institutions are using MDID3?
JMU will conduct a survey of users in the near future to collect information on who is using MDID2 or MDID3, who is testing MDID2 and MDID3 in parallel, what operating system is being used (Linux or Windows), etc.
9. How often does the indexing tool run?
The indexing tool should be configured to run every minute to keep the full-text search index updated.
10. Is MDID3 iPad compatible?
Yes. It also supports video playback, given that videos are encoded in a supported format and the selected streaming server supports mobile devices (if streaming is desired).
11. Is the Flickr search fully integrated?
Yes, Flickr images can be searched for and selected for inclusion in presentations from within the MDID interface.
12. Are there plans to have an MDID3 demo site?
Yes. There still is some customization work to be done to allow for self-service account creation.
13. Is JMU working on applying for grants for programming help?
We are not actively seeking grant funding at this time, but if you are aware of available grants to support open source software development, please let us know.
14. Does MDID3 have a PowerPoint export?
Yes.
15. Is there Keynote export?
No, and since Keynote can open PowerPoint files, JMU will likely not pursue a Keynote export feature.
16. Will there be JP2 support?
That format never gained much momentum, so we did not pursue it.
17. How is dual screen projection set up in the classroom?
At JMU, classroom computers are equipped with a dual-head video card connected to two projectors.
18. Is there a way to download a package/group of images in a presentation?
We are working on a feature to allow download of a ZIP file with all images contained in a presentation.
19. How can a user filter a search?
To further filter the results of a search, use the keyword field or select one of the facets displayed on the right side of the screen.
20. Are there plans for a flash card mobile app or electronic flash cards within the system?
This will be added to the "feature request" list.