



# Images

## The newsletter of the VRA

October 2010 vol.7, no.5

### **Memo from the President**

By Maureen Burns Burns (Archivision and IMAGinED Consulting)  
President, Visual Resources Association

I don't know what it is about the fall, but it seems to get harder to keep up with each one that rolls around! So, I'll try to keep this memo short, even though VRA has so much work in progress it is making my head spin. Expect to see more news soon on the VRA-Listserv.

I would like to urge all VRA members to vote in the Executive Board Election. Here is the link to the wonderful slate of candidates the Nominating Committee persuaded to run for office: <http://www.vraweb.org/evote/evoteindex10.html>. From this link you can get to biographical information and learn about each candidate's goals for the organization. Thank you to all of the candidates for stepping up in such a big way for VRA!

VRA Members also have the opportunity to vote on several proposed Bylaws changes. The texts of the changes, along with existing Bylaws and explanations for the proposed changes, are available in the members-only portion of the VRA web site as "2010 Proposed Bylaws Changes" (login to "My VRA"/MemberClicks and go to the "Community" menu and "Info"). These adjustments will help to move the work of the organization forward.

The direct link to the voting site is:  
<https://www.electionsonline.us/election/login.cfm?CFID=286420&CFTOKEN=29394748>. You have until October 20, 2010, to place your vote. Following our past successful forays into online balloting, voting is again is electronic. Considering the relative ease of online balloting, we hope to see a good turnout at the virtual polls! Please take seriously your responsibility as VRA members to help choose the officers who will lead our organization.

The election will be followed by the annual membership drive. The Board is presently considering and implementing the suggestions of the Membership Committee and other VRA members that we simplify the membership categories and clarify institutional memberships. It looks like there may be some mini-surveys in your future to help with the work of other committees and advisory groups too. So, stay tuned!

I hope the new academic year is treating those of you in such institutional contexts well and everyone is enjoying the transition to the fall season.

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

**Content Based Image Retrieval**  
By Eric Anspach and Elizabeth Meyer

Content Based Image Retrieval (CBIR) has been widely written about for over a decade. To describe it simply, it is using color, shape, and texture to search for images rather than using keywords. It is particularly useful for art collections and photo archives,

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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).

and is also used in weather forecasting, military, GIS systems, criminal investigations, bio-medical imaging, and surveillance. The ability find images with similar characteristics can allow for effective searches without large numbers of irrelevant results that may be associated with keywords. Several companies offer CBIR products with a variety of search capabilities.

Idee Labs <http://ideeinc.com/> has a variety of unique products based on content image retrieval that are able to perform searches in different ways. Idee Inc., a privately held company based in Toronto, Canada is a developer of advanced image identification and visual search software. Their technology is licensed to businesses and other entities for use in image searches, and also to track the distribution and use of images on the Internet. There are several tools though, that are available for free through their Web site.

Idee's Multicolor Search Lab <http://labs.ideeinc.com/multicolr/> allows users to find images based on the colors present in the image. Users can browse through 10 million of the most interesting images from Flickr's Creative Commons. To perform a search, users simply select the desired colors and an array of thumbnail sized results instantly appears. There are 120 different color shades to choose from, and up to 10 at a time may be selected for a search.

Visual Search Lab, <http://labs.ideeinc.com/visual/#random=98576>; another Idee product, performs searches based on the characteristics of images. The technology uses algorithms to examine hundreds of attributes of images to find others that are similar. A search may produce results that, at first glance, may look different, but it is likely that they share some strong characteristics. Keywords may be entered to give more focus to the search. However, all of the search results are stock photos from the 2.8 million images owned by Alamy, a British firm.

The BYO Search Lab <http://labs.ideeinc.com/upload/> is a variation of the Idee's Visual Search Lab, also producing results from the Alamy library. It differs in that it allows you to begin the search with an image of your own that you upload to the site.

TinEye, <http://www.tineye.com/> also from Idee, is a reverse search engine for images. With TinEye a user uploads an image, and a search is performed for other locations on the Internet where it is used. The technology does not search file names or metadata, but instead examines the pixels of the submitted file to define the characteristics of the unique fingerprint of the image. TinEye finds the exact image, not ones that appear similar. This product is useful to find out where an image may have come from, to find if others are using an image, or to locate a version of with a higher resolution. Images can be found even if they have been altered, resized, or if they have watermarks.

Query by Image Content (QBIC), <http://www.qbic.almaden.ibm.com/> a product from IBM, is used by the State Hermitage Museum of Russia <http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/cgi-bin/db2www/qbicSearch.mac/qbic?selLang=English>. At the museum's website, one can perform a search of the extensive art collection by color or layout of the image. A color search allows up to five hues to be selected, and the site interface allows searches for varying levels of each color through adjustment of bars on screen. Layout searches enable greater capability by allowing circular, elliptical, or rectangular zones of selected colors to be specified in the artwork.

Several of the popular Internet search engines, such as Google and Microsoft's Bing, have limited content based functionality available as part of their image search capabilities. Image searches using these must begin with a keyword, but the results can be narrowed by selecting a color from a palette. Both of these products can also search for images that depict human faces, and include or exclude results that are color or black and white, and that are photographs or illustrations.

## **Upcoming Conferences**

By Brooke Cox (DePauw University)

### **Joint Meeting of SECAC and MACAA**

October 20-23, 2010

Richmond, VA  
<http://www.curiouser.vcu.edu>

**ARLIS/NA-MW Chapter 2010 Virtual Conference**  
*Adapt, Evolve, Transform: Current Issues in Art Information*  
November 4, 2010  
Online <http://arlisna-mw.lib.byu.edu/>

**Brick and Click Libraries**  
November 5, 2010  
Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO  
<http://brickandclick.org/>

**THATCamp Chicago**  
The Humanities and Technology Camp  
November 20, 2010  
Northwestern University, Chicago, IL  
<http://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/thaticampchicago/>

#### **Positions Filled**

By Anne Norcross (Kendall College of Art and Design of FSU)

#### **Nova Scotia College of Art & Design**

Heather Ferrier has accepted the full time position of Library Technician, Visual Resources beginning Monday, September 13, 2010. In this position Heather will be responsible for assisting in the delivery of Visual Resource Services by the cataloguing of images and DVDs, digitization of images, circulation and general library instruction. Heather is familiar with NSCAD and had previously worked with the University Library as a Term Library Technician in 2007 – 08. Heather holds a Library and Information Technology Diploma from the Nova Scotia Community College as well as a Bachelor of Arts (English) from Dalhousie and is currently working toward a Visual Arts Certificate in Studio at NSCAD.

#### **Chapter News**

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

Submitted by Jenni Rodda (Institute of Fine Arts)

The Greater New York Chapter will hold its fall meeting on Friday, October 15, 2010, from 3:30 until 6:00 p.m. Dustin Wees, Lisa Gavell, and their colleagues at ARTstor will host the meeting at their East 61st Street offices in Manhattan. On the agenda for the business meeting: discussion of the VRA/CAA affiliated society session being organized by Chapter member Johanna Bauman; selection of a new Vice Chair; and a review of the bundled membership/centralized bursary programs made available through VRA national. After the business meeting, Natalie Milbrodt, first recipient of the VRA Foundation's Professional Development award, will update us on her current research: "Bringing It All Together: Creating a Collaborative Digital Archive." (Abstract: Explore the early planning and evolution of a consortium to establish a digital archive that will explore and capture memory in one of America's most diverse and rapidly changing communities using a range of documentary strategies and support from combined institutional resources and public contributions.) And of course there will be ample time for visiting with friends and fellow members. All local colleagues are invited! If you would like to attend, please RSVP to Lisa Gavell ([lisa.gavell@artstor.org](mailto:lisa.gavell@artstor.org)) no later than October 8, 2010.

##### **New England Chapter**

Submitted by Carey Weber (Fairfield University)

The VRA New England Chapter is pleased to announce that our fall meeting will be held at Colby College on October 22, 2010. We will be meeting at 9:30 for breakfast in the Miller Library and in the morning will have an introduction to PechaKucha (a social networking phenomenon) to see how it is relevant to VR professionals looking to expand the reach of their expertise and stay current. Colby librarians and VR staff will present on topics relevant to the profession including Colby's participation as an ARTstor Shared Shelf development partner, how to accommodate student's visual learning styles and

bringing one's VR skills into the community.

Lunch will be served in Roberts Halls and after lunch we will have a tour of the Slide Library and the Bixler Art and Music Library. We will have a round-table discussion with Colby librarians, museum staff and academic information technology services to discuss shared experiences and issues relating to visual resources, including "doing more with less", cross-departmental collaboration, rights issues, management systems and collaboration across institutions.

Finally, we will have a tour of the Colby College Museum of Art (led by Elizabeth Finch, the Lunder Curator of American Art and Lauren Lessing, the Merkin Curator of Education) recognized as one of the best college art collections in the United States.

All VRA members are welcome to join the New England Chapter for this exciting meeting. Please R.s.v.p. using the following link: <http://doodle.com/afs4i6q3zzgmka73>. Contact Carey Mack Weber, Chapter Chair ([cweber@fairfield.edu](mailto:cweber@fairfield.edu)) with any questions.