



## SLIDE AND TRANSITIONAL MEDIA TASK FORCE CASE STUDY TEMPLATE

The following is a list of suggested categories to provide some uniformity to the case study, but they are optional depending on the context. These descriptions of events do not have to be lengthy, but utilitarian. If more in-depth narratives emerge, it is recommended that the author(s) consider submitting an article on the topic to the VRA Bulletin (see: <http://online.vraweb.org/vrab/submguid.html>).

### TITLE

Slide deaccession project(s)

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### INSTITUTION

Visual Resources Centre,  
Department of Art History,  
Pennsylvania State University

### TYPE OF COLLECTION/DESCRIPTION

Currently approximately 200,000 35mm slides  
2,350 lantern slides  
9,000 mounted photographs  
4,230 books (dept. library)  
84,000 digital images

### STAFF SIZE

2 full-time staff, 3 graduate assistants during Fall and Spring semesters, each 10 hours per week

## NARRATIVE

When we moved into our current facilities 7 years ago we were lucky enough to move the entire 35 mm slide collection numbering approximately 300,000 with us. We did have to weed our mounted photograph collection before the move, keeping only those photographs that had a publisher listed. After the move the use of the slide collection dramatically fell and we decided to start weeding the collection. In March of 2010 we started our first slide weeding project. First we disposed of the unlabeled survey text slides; these images were already digitized from the survey texts. Next we created a weeding guidelines document for the graduate assistants to follow as they went through the collection. The goal was to keep one good color slide that had our unique identifier on the label, pointing the slide back to the book it was originally created from. We also kept one black-and-white image for sculpture and architecture slides. As the slides were weeded they were boxed up and discarded. The project was completed in a year and half and we disposed of 55,149 slides. We were able to also re-organize our remaining slide cabinets and re-label them as well. The collection sat as is for about two years when we then decided to remove slides from the collection where the images had been scanned and made available in our online collection. Our graduate assistants were again used to pull slides. The guidelines were different this round in that they were using the original order forms filled out by faculty to create the 35mm slides. They simply found everything on the order form and once again slides were boxed up and discarded. We did not keep count of the number of slides thrown out in this round and it lasted approximately eight months. We are still doing this; as old orders are scanned from the source material, the slides are disposed of. The last major round of weeding was not initiated by us but forced on us by administration to make room for our College IT department. In the beginning of 2015 we were approached and told to give up half our physical slide storage space by the summer. This prompted a quick survey of faculty to see if there were certain areas we had to retain until scanning was complete. Once we had those results we quickly disposed of whole sections of our collection: non-western arts and architecture, 21<sup>st</sup> century Arts, and photography. As we threw out these areas we also proceeded to collapse the remaining slides within their drawers. The “weeding as we scanned” project had left many gaps in the drawers. By the end of May we had finished moving and rearranging our remaining 200,000 35mm slides.