

THE VIRTUAL MUSEUM COMES TO CAMPUS: TWO PERSPECTIVES ON THE MUSEUM EDUCATIONAL SITE LICENSING PROJECT OF THE GETTY ART HISTORY INFORMATION PROGRAM

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Abstract: A landmark project jointly launched by the Getty Art History Program (AHIP) and MUSE Educational Media will address key issues in the educational use of museum images etc. and related information delivered over computer networks. The Museum Educational Site Licensing Project will enable museum and educational communities to develop common solutions to problems now inhibiting the development of computer-based learning tools for the study of art and culture. The pilot project will test the distribution of art images and information from six museums to seven universities. Participating institutions will resolve issues of intellectual property rights, network security and information standards, defining the terms and conditions for the educational use of museum images and information on campus networks. This collaborative venture will also demonstrate the value of digital media in the study of art and culture. The project was started in December 1994 and is expected to run through June 1997. This paper describes the work in progress from the perspectives of one of the participating universities (Columbia) and one of the participating museums (Houston).

1. The Project

Since its beginnings in 1983, the Getty Art History Information Program (AHIP) has sought to make art-historical information more accessible through electronic technology. Digital imaging offers the potential to make our cultural heritage available to a wider audience, in ways never before envisioned. Distribution of these images over communications networks is changing the nature of teaching and research. For this transformation to be completed, however, a critical mass of digital information must exist, and it must be available in standard forms. Imaging systems also require a complex balancing of the interests of

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holders and the desires of those who use images, for study, research or entertainment. Without a common framework of rights, permissions and restrictions, the development of imaging systems is hampered.

The ***Museum Educational Site Licensing Project*** brings together representative museums, colleges and universities to define the terms and conditions for educational use of museum images and information on campus-wide networks. This two-year collaborative initiative will develop methods and guidelines for the academic use of digitized museum-owned materials at colleges and universities. The selected educational institutions and museums will collaborate in good faith to agree on terms of capture, distribution, and use of images of works from museum collections and their associated texts. The project is undertaken in the interests of exploring and promoting the educational benefits of digital access to museum collections through campus networks.

Museum will provide images and information. Educational institutions will enable networked access and test-use of images for educational purposes. Together, project participants will define the terms and conditions that will govern the future distribution and educational use of museum images and information on campuses.

Participating **museums** are:

- The Fowler Museum of Cultural History at the University of California, Los Angeles;
- The George Eastman House, Rochester;
- The Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts;
- The Library of Congress;
- The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston;
- The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.; and
- The National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.

Participating **universities** are:

- American University, Washington, DC.;
- Columbia University, New York, New York;
- Cornell University, Ithaca, New York;
- the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign;
- the University of Maryland at College Park;
- the University of Michigan; and
- the University of Virginia.

Each participating institution will field interdisciplinary team of experts in such disciplines as art history, instructional technology, museum collections

documentation, imaging and academic computing. In addition, a network of observers, drawn from the more than eighty museums, colleges and universities that applied to participate in the project, along with other interested parties, will allow for the broader community to follow the development of the project.

Participating museums will make digitized images and information, representing at least 6,000 works (1000 from each), available to educational institutions in standard formats. The educational institutions will install these digitized images and descriptive texts on campus networks for research and education during the academic years 1995-1996 and 1996-1997. Works included will be selected by museums on the basis of criteria suggested by the universities.

Educational institutions will propose and explore a wide variety of educational and research uses for the material. Images and accompanying documentation will be provided without site license or royalty fees during the project. This will allow the participants to evaluate and compare the uses of the images and information on university campuses, to define requirements for network security and evaluate various technological methods for its implementation, and to develop the terms of a model site licensing agreement. Once the two-year test is completed, images and information will be withdrawn from campus network, unless subsequent licensing agreements are enacted to allow for continued use.

Participating museums, galleries, and educational institutions will contribute staff time and technical resources to the execution of the project. Planning and organization is being funded by the Imaging Initiative of the Getty Art History Information Program, which will also provide some matching funds for project implementation. Additional funding will be sought from public and private foundations. This will be administered by AHIP's partner organization, MUSE Educational Media, a non-profit organization whose Multi-Media Study Group is developing model site licensing agreements for the use of museum images in CD-ROM publications. The Project has the support of American Association of Art Museum Directors, the American Association of Museums and the Coalition for Networked Information.

2. Columbia University

Columbia University, founded in 1754 as King's College by royal charter of King George II of England, is the oldest institution of higher learning in the state of New York and the fifth oldest in the United States. The present library system is the lineal descendant of the Library of King's College. The collections of the Columbia University Libraries today hold more than 6.3 million volumes, with more than 124,000 added annually. Additionally, the collections contain more

than 4.6 million units of microform, 26 million manuscript items, and 35,000 current serial titles. The Libraries also hold important collections of CD-ROMs, data files, maps, sound recordings, and pamphlets. Library resources are provided through 22 libraries throughout the campus. In addition to its local collections, the Libraries provides access to more than 50 databases by electronic gateway through its CLIO Plus service. The Libraries add to its array of electronic resources daily through offerings in its Electronic Data Service, Electronic Text Service, and many specialized service "menus".

Academic Information Systems (AcIS), with 45 FTE professional staff and 65 students, provides the computational and networking infrastructure for the Columbia community. AcIS operates a central cluster of Unix hosts to provide general time-sharing and e-mail service for over 20,000 affiliate users. Network information servers support Gopher, World Wide Web, and Z39.50, and provide directory database and security services covering over 60,000 members of the Columbia community on several campuses. AcIS also operates one of the first campus-wide information systems, ColumbiaNet (of which CLIO is a subset), which provides access to over 9,000 local and remote information services, as well as gateways to the much larger body of Internet Gopher and WWW material. ColumbiaNet offers networked and dial-up access, allows multiple simultaneous sessions, and enforces a variety of licensing restrictions using locally developed software.

AcIS and the Libraries are currently pursuing a digital library initiative, through which the coordinated development to access tools, delivery systems and collection support tools is proceeding. The digital library initiative has and is developing contractual relationships with several commercial publishers and other higher education institutions, which are beginning to provide further electronic resources to our community over the campus network.

Access restrictions are enforced in Columbia's infrastructure services through a "Kerberos" security layer that lies between clients and any ColumbiaNet service, covering a population of over 60,000 individuals from its Personnel Information System (faculty and staff), from its Student Information System (students), and from its affiliate institutions. Daily "cross-loads" from these administrative systems automatically update the Kerberos database, providing access-status and demographic information on the entire community. Restrictions to particular services are, in turn, derived from the demographic information. Digital library development is currently focused on a set of pilot projects in full text delivery and in delivery of still images. As well as network delivery, all projects take into account user interface design, intergration with other campus services and into the

overall digital library presentation, bibliographic access to all items, and evaluation of the projects. The Libraries has received a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for an in-depth evaluation of full text pilot projects currently being implemented, and the methodologies and statistical programs developed for it will be applied to the Museum Education Site Licensing Project.

An imaging committee (PixCom) was created for Columbia's participation in RLG's Digital Image Access Project, in which Columbia was one of eight institutions who contributed approximately 1,000 images each under the general theme of "the urban landscape". The team's charge was expanded to develop local imaging projects beyond the limited boundaries of DIAP, and it was this team that developed the proposal for participation in MESL and will carry out the project. The team consists of the Deputy University Librarian; the Director of the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library; the Manager of Research and Development in AcIS, who is also the Coordinator of the Digital Library Technical Development; the User Services Consultant Lead in AcIS; the Director of the Preservation Department of the Libraries; the Director of the Bibliographic Control and Processing Department of the Libraries; the Director of the Library Systems Department; the Director of the Institute for Learning Technologies; the Curator of the Photo/Slide Collection of the Department of Art History and Archaeology; the Coordinator of Imaging Projects in the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library. The Visual Resources Committee of the faculty of the Department of Art History and Archaeology serves as an advisory body to the Project Team.

The Project Team has been working on a variety of other imaging projects and has developed a methodology for providing three levels of support through the World Wide Web: Access to the permanent image collection, through a hierarchical set of MARC records created in CLIO (Columbia's online patron access catalog) and linked to the Web site through filters designed by the AcIS members, capable of converting the MARC records into HTML documents linked to images. The second level of support is for the equivalent of 'reserve' home pages, for which a prototypical course home page has been designed capable of admitting images from the permanent collection along with images 'put on reserve' for a specific course from a variety of sources. The third level of support is for the creation of professor's home pages (of which a multitude are already in existence) which can take a variety of forms and uses depending on the teaching style and proficiency of the individual professor.

3. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

The six museums listed above were selected to represent different types of institutions in different geographical locations with different types of collections. The museums' primary role in this project is to provide digitized images of objects in their permanent collections; along with descriptive text for each item. The museums also provide staff expertise from various departments in the implementation of the project. At the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the project team includes several department heads: the Director of Education, who is in charge of all programs for the public, makes decisions on which images to include in the project, and helps design the evaluation tools; the Registrar, who manages the records of the museum's objects, assists in selecting the fields for the standard descriptions of the objects and directs the gathering of slides to be digitized; and the Librarian, who serves the information needs of the museum's visitors and professional staff, coordinates the project and taps different staff members to carry out particular pieces of it. These individuals, plus the Administrator, the Director of the Grants Department, the Curator of Photography, and the Director of Publications, comprise the project team, who consult to the project over electronic mail.

As the nature of publishing changes from the slow moving world of print publishing to that of electronic network publishing, museums need a way to provide access to their images while retaining some control over their use. They also need an easy to maintain and stable methods of collecting fees for the use of images of their works of art. Part of this project is the creation of a draft agreement for site licensing, which will deal with issues such as fair use, copyright and fees. The museums also hope to learn how "courseware" created by the universities can incorporate images of works of art for teaching purposes, can be applied later to their own in-house projects for teaching museum visitors about works of art. For instance, museums could design computer kiosks for visitors to access information. The museums also hope that if the university professors and graduate students have greater access to images of works in museums' collections, more research will be done which can be incorporated into the object files, and included in published material for the public.

Another major desire of the museums is to make their collections more widely known. Most museums have published only a fraction of works they own. University students have had either limited or no access to these images in the past. It is hoped that with exposure to the art works in electronic format, students will visit the museums to see the works of art later in person.

A final way in which museums could benefit from this project is more hypothetical; that this project could be expanded to include objects from museum collections all over the world from which one could draw images for lectures, publication, and other teaching purposes. If there were one "big image bank in the sky" for museum collections, the costly and less than complete slide libraries and rights and reproductions offices of museums could be radically changed. A request for an image for reproduction could take seconds instead of weeks. The chasing down of individual invoices could be eliminated, and a steady flow of income to the museums could be established.

4. Methodology

The project coordinators meet face-to-face twice a year to get to know each other, set the agenda, and develop a timetable. All of the project teams from each participating institutions have access to the electronic bulletin board for this project over the Internet. The MESL-L bulletin board has been heavily used by the project coordinators and the project participants. The minutes from the first meeting in Washington, D.C., in February of 1995 were published over the MESL-L listserve. Many questions, both of a technical and theoretical nature have been discussed:

- the purpose of the project;
- explanations of the JPEG format for digitizing images;
- requests for the inclusion of types of images;
- timetables were distributed;
- gathering of institutional financial data for inclusion in future grant proposals;
- etc.

In addition, project team members volunteered to serve on specific working groups:

- Monitoring & Security;
- Distribution;
- Documentation;
- Content Selection;
- the World Wide Web;
- Evaluation;
- Funding; and
- Faculty Training.

Test images have been put up on a test site on the World Wide Web at the address:

<http://www.umcp.umd.edu/MESL/home.html>. The images were scanned at a high resolution to enable viewers to enlarge the image many times to be able to

examine details of the works of art. By June 1, 1995, the museums will have sent in first batches of 500 digitized images to the central site for the university professors to access. Each participating university has pledged to have at least one course offered for fall 1995 using images from this database on their campus network.

5. Conclusions

Although the model for this type of collaborative project has existed for 20 years in libraries (i.e. projects on the Research Libraries Information Network in the U.S.), this type of collaboration between museums and universities is new. And while access to the Internet is fairly widespread in universities, most museums are just beginning to feel a need to connect. This project establishes a working model for museums and universities to come together to explore the potential of "the virtual museum." Museums in the past have operated more as walled-in castles, with their objects treated as treasures, than as information systems. This project has already brought down some "walls" of fear of loss of control on the museum end, and has opened up some new ways of thinking of reaching new audiences, as well as increasing the knowledge base on works of art, not just from inside the museum, but also from scholars on the outside. The museum is bridging the moat, and allowing end users to 'play' with its images; to 'create' virtual exhibitions, and to enjoy works of art on their own time, and in their own places.

On the side of the universities the humanities departments have lagged behind in the use of electronic media, and the availability of high caliber images provided from the museums that own the originals provides an exciting opportunity for professors of art history and other humanistic disciplines to enter this brave new world. Some have forged ahead in great strides, at Columbia, for instance, one architectural historian is making imaginative use of CAD (computer assisted design) to explain the construction of mediaeval cathedrals - the Amiens Project. But others are clamoring for more training and technological assistance.

We believe that both types of institutions have much to learn, together and from each other.

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