Digitisation: some issues, some solutions

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Viewpoint: the Google project seen from France
Michel Melot

p.5-10

Upholding Bodley’s vision: the Google mass digitisation project at Oxford
Ronald Milne

For most of the 400 years of the Bodleian Library’s existence, users have had to travel to Oxford to use its collections. In recent years, Oxford has undertaken a number of focused, ‘boutique’ digitisation projects. Now, as a partner in the Google Library Project, an immense range of scholarly and other 19th-century out-of-copyright library materials from the Bodleian’s collections will be digitised en masse and will be made freely available over the internet to anyone who has web access.

 Millions of books and journals will be scanned in the course of the Project and the author contends that digitisation on such a scale represents a revolution in the dissemination of information that parallels the impact of the invention of printing from moveable type in the 15th century.

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Public domain art in an age of easier mechanical reproducibility
Kenneth Hamma

The current information environment presents opportunities for sharing information and enhancing the public domain of creative resources for education, research and the public good. Because the sharing paradigm for digital resources is fundamentally different from any we experienced in the analog world, practices of non-profit cultural heritage collecting institutions should be re-examined and re-evaluated with respect to aligning mission with new opportunities. One practice that deserves attention, particularly in this new environment, is the continued assertion of intellectual property rights in images of creative works that are themselves in the public domain.

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The people versus technology
Mike Pringle

How can the many and various members of the arts education community get the digital images they need, in a world where intellectual property rights issues, lack of co-ordination, poor quality, erratic standards and insubstantial support are the norm? Perhaps we should think about whether we focus too much on the technology in Information Communication Technology. Are we guilty of flooding the internet with innovative new products instead of facing up to the fact that most of the issues in finding digital images are to do with people processes: informing and communicating?
Digital images and art historians – Compare and contrast revisited
Margaret E. Graham and Christopher Bailey

As the number of digital images available to art historians grows apace, it is perhaps an opportune moment to consider what impact digital images have had on the discipline and on the work methods of art historians. This paper revisits the findings of a research project – Compare and contrast – focusing on the attitudes of art historians towards digital image technologies, the role of the technologies in the different phases and activities of the research process, the tools and their potential, and barriers to the use of digital images.

Curators and their use of digital images
Caroline McBride

New Zealanders like to think of themselves as high users of the latest technology. Does this extend to digital imagery in the workplace? Curators at the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki were surveyed regarding digital image sources, their use and the problems and opportunities they presented. They were found to be keen, adept users, satisfied with their technical and retrieval capabilities, and aware of issues relating to copyright and image storage. Happy with thumbnails in many instances, they employed the skills of the Gallery’s professional photographers when higher quality images were required. Looking at the move from analogue to digital, slide use was found to be negligible but reproductions in books and journals were still a favoured source. Disadvantages were downplayed and the positive impact of digital imagery was stressed.

Integrating digital technology into teaching: the MDID
Christina B. Updike and Allison L. Rosen

At the same time that visual media play an ever expanding role in culture and society, technology offers new opportunities for using them in teaching and learning, far beyond what was possible with traditional analog image collections.

Faculty and staff in art and art history, the library and instructional technology at James Madison University have collaborated in the creation of the Madison Digital Image Database (MDID), an innovative online teaching and learning system, to accommodate the exploding need for visual information. MDID is an open source system for managing digital images including personal image collections and displaying them in the classroom. Its support for sharing image collections among institutions and the expanding community of users offers new opportunities for collaboration in providing visual media for teaching and learning.

ARTstor: a cross-campus digital image library
Barbara Rockenbach

ARTstor (http://www.artstor.org) is a digital library consisting of images in the areas of art, architecture, the humanities and social sciences, along with a set of tools to support use of those images in research and pedagogy. Originally conceived as a project of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in 2001, ARTstor became an independent not-for-profit organization in January 2004 and launched the digital library in July of that year. ARTstor works closely with both providers and users of content from educational and cultural institutions around the world in creating a resource that meets the needs of the scholarly, educational and cultural communities. At present, the ARTstor Digital Library contains over 400,000 digital images and...
descriptive data; software to enable active use of the images in the digital library; and tools that allow users to access and use personal and/or institutional images along with ARTstor content for scholarship and teaching.

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Reviews

Douglas Dodd

Oil paintings in public ownership.

Gaye Smith

The design encyclopedia. Edited by Mel Byars

and

A dictionary of modern design. Jonathan M. Woodham

Gregory P.J. Most

Strategies for transitioning to the age of digital media. Sarah E. Cheverton and Christina B. Updike.
Ann Arbor, Mich.: Visual Resources Association, 2005 (Visual Resources Association special bulletin 14)

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