

University of Washington
School of Art
Visual Services

PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION TO DIGITAL IMAGES

(notes presented to Art Council on 06 October 2004)

An article on the back page of the Autumn 2004 *Artifacts* provides some general information. Jeanette will provide periodic updates through the Updates link on the Slide Library web site: <http://art.washington.edu/slidelibrary/HomePage.html>.

Visual Services—the Slide Library and Media Center—are partners in a University-wide Fund for Innovation and Redesign (FIR) grant.

As part of the FIR grant we received \$10,000 for infrastructure improvements, which primarily has been used to create a true digital imaging work space for Visual Services staff. Some of the money also has been used to hire a consultant to help us with figuring out workflow issues.

We also hope to purchase a high-quality data projector that all SoA faculty will be able to check out for use in seminar rooms and studio classrooms.

Visual Services staff have spent the summer setting up the digital imaging work space (with Mark's help) and working on planning for the implementation of a digital image database.

We intend to use the Madison Digital Image Database (MDID), which will allow faculty to search for images, create lectures and/or folders of images for students to review, and present lectures.

We hope to have a basic demonstration ready for the all-faculty meeting on November 9th.

Getting images and their associated information (aka metadata) into MDID is very labor-intensive, and the workflow is quite complex.

Visual Services is focusing on creating high-quality digital images that will be useful well into the future, not just quick and dirty scans that will not look good projected on large screens.

We also want to make sure the metadata is as complete and accurate as possible so people can actually find the images they need.

Rather than simply scanning the entire slide collection, which is not feasible, we are planning to scan in support of curricular needs.

This will mean two types of additions to MDID.

First, each quarter we will choose one class that is taught regularly. At the end of the quarter all the slides used in teaching that class will be sent out for scanning. We will then process those images and their metadata over one or two quarters. The next time the class is taught, it will be taught digitally.

We originally thought we could do two of these classes each quarter, but the funding is not available at this time.

The first class chosen for this is Meredith Clausen's Paris course. She had lobbied for scanning money last Spring Quarter, and that money was put towards scanning all her slides during September. We are now processing the images and metadata with the intention that she will teach the class with MDID in Spring 2005.

The second type of additions to MDID will be slides chosen for student review through electronic image reserve (aka Eres). These will be scanned at high level and will be added to MDID as time allows. We still may use the UW Libraries' Eres system for student image review, rather than MDID, for the remainder of the academic year until we are completely comfortable with how MDID operates.

We are starting out by primarily supporting Art History classes, but all the images added to MDID will be available for all faculty to use. Once we have a smoothly flowing system in place for adding images, we should be able to start adding small batches of images at the request of Art and Design faculty.

Part of the FIR grant (\$50,000) will allow the UW Libraries to buy digital images for a central collection that should mesh with our use of MDID.

One major complexity of the workflow is that we will have to maintain and grow the slide collection while at the same time building the digital image collection. All this with only a few more student employees. The transition to digital teaching will take at least five years, probably more if increased funding is not available.

We are still learning as we are going, so we do not have all the answers yet.

Visual Services staff plan to survey SoA faculty about their interest in digital imaging later this week. It will be an online survey using Catalyst WebQ, but we will offer the option of doing it on paper.

Please encourage all faculty to respond to the survey, even if they have no interest in digital images. We need to know both who is and who is not interested.

The survey will be due on October 22nd. We hope to present a summary of survey results at the all-faculty meeting on November 9th.