

**Integrated Digital Image Resources  
Faculty Advisory Committee**

December 7, 2006  
1:30 – 3:00 p.m.  
SML 409

**Present:** Ned Cooke, Rob Nelson, Meg Bellinger, Hannah Bennett, Tracy Bergstrom, Katherine Haskins, Ed Kairiss, William Kelly, David Joselit, Christina Kraus, Mary Litch, Christine Mehring, Jack Meyers, Alan Plattus, Karen Reardon, Lillian Tseng

**Absent:** Chip Benson, John Faragher, Ben Foster, Chuck Powell, Ivan Marcus

Recording: Rachel Dwight

---

---

**Agenda:**

1. Introductions and review of purpose and goals (Ned/Rob)
2. Progress (briefing memo to be sent in advance) clarifications and questions (staff)
3. History of Art faculty affirmation of institutional collection building (David)
4. Review and discussion of draft budget categories (Meg)
5. Thoughts and discussion on future metadata planning (Karen/Katherine)

**1. Introductions and review of purpose and goals (Ned Cooke/Rob Nelson)**

Ned Cooke welcomed everyone back to the Integrated Digital Image Resources (IDIR) Faculty Advisory Committee. Introductions were made for the benefit of new members.

To review:

- The spring meeting of IDIR was primarily a feedback and fact-finding exchange, to figure out what direction the committee should go. Since that meeting, it has worked on ideas to move forward, with usability one of its focuses.
- Anxiety (about digitization) in the faculty has been diminished, and new digitization possibilities are welcome. There has been a lot of collaboration and productive dialog (current projects have helped with this).
- The question now is, how can we broaden the circle of users to reach those who are not heavy users of current digital services? How do we spread the word?

**2. Progress , clarifications and questions (staff)**

FAC members agreed that there is evidence of real progress since IDIR's inception last February. Rob Nelson noted that he had been able to meet his personal goal of never showing a slide since coming to Yale. He also noted that more discussion and information sharing among faculty colleagues and Library and ITS staff has led to a world in which everyone is working

together to solve problems. There also was agreement that the potential was great and that we should move forward as quickly as possible.

Ned Cooke reminded the committee that new people need to be brought in before we go too far, and there still is the need to find out how people [in different departments] are using images. William Kelly observed that restricting project development to images alone was a potential concern, especially for faculty outside of the arts, who use sound, video, etc., as well as still photography. Kelly suggested that we should investigate how departments outside of art history might contribute to project development as well as considering further individual department needs vs. the overall aims of IDIR and its faculty advisory committee. Faculty might be reluctant, too, to share their private collections, although Meg Bellinger made the point that one advantage in adding personal content to an institutional repository is the preservation component that could ensure collection safety. Further discussion ensued about fair-use issues, conditions of access to private vs. public collections, as well as use restrictions on photographs with people in them. Other issues raised concerning the possibility of future faculty/departmental project contributions included funding for metadata creation (seen as a bigger problem than the digitization per se), as well as usability and searching capabilities. Kelly also mentioned that a key problem was not the digitization effort, but data creation. This has been achieved largely with special, one-time grants

Alan Plattus noted that in the School of Architecture there is a lot of technology and equipment that few people know how to use. Individual faculty don't have the time to compile complete resources. Aside from technical support from the professional offices of some School faculty, students are recognized as a resource too—they have incredible computer graphics and digital fabrication skills, and they understand the special use and manipulation needs involved. These observations raised further points about funding for student staffing. Should grants be sought? Not just in the VRC but within other departments? Again, the issue of special formats for particular purposes were raised, such as 3-D and “fly-through “ or animated image composites for architectural and related instruction. These are expected in architecture studies now, and require huge files. Meg Bellinger stated that the desire will be to support such functionality but we don't yet have the technology here.

David Joselit observed that many universities seems to have the same or similar problems to ours, and wondered if there was any kind of consortium [for the creation and management of digital image resources]. Katherine Haskins reminded everyone that the Mellon-funded resource, ArtStor, was in part intended for that purpose. While there aren't many opportunities for broad-based institutional collaboration, and Yale doesn't have the technology in place (at this time) to be a good collaborator, it will soon, Meg Bellinger suggested.

Alan Plattus remarked that the technology involved is very powerful and extremely expensive. It would be nice to have any and all appropriate software packaged and ready to go for faculty/students who need it. Could it be put on a disk, so those who need it can just load it on their computer and go? David Joselit added that Jonathan Lizee (ITS) is working on something like that. The School of Architecture has not used VRC much and Meg Bellinger asked Alan Plattus if the School has digitized or shared much among itself. The response was, yes, the School had.

Hannah Bennett mentioned that many people don't really know how to search for images, and that we need to emphasize cross-department-collection searching. Alan Plattus thought that

if you have some small collection of great interest to a department, it could be a carrot to bring more people in. Rob Nelson added that once you have a critical mass, [others won't go] back (to what they did before). Mary Litch noted that students need to know about the VRC and how it will work for them, and they will spread the word.

Discussion ensued about how to assist graduate students as well as faculty in ready access to digital images for class presentation. Ned Cooke thought that assistance for students could be done at times other than those that were the busiest for faculty. Early in the semester, the faculty has its highest need for digitization; the students need it late in the semester. Other questions followed such as could digitization be done for students making it explicit that the content will go into VRC? Would a limit of 10 or 20 or 30 a semester need to be imposed? Katherine Haskins mentioned that supporting a new audience will cost money, but the result is useful as a form of collection building. The VRC would be willing to do it and it shouldn't be overwhelming. Lillian Tseng remarked that most students can create image scans themselves on their own computers. Why would they come to the VRC, where it would take longer? David Joselit wondered if using the VRC for digital content should be a requirement in graduate seminars.

Rob Nelson returned to the point that we need to hear from outside the arts—what do you need? Alan Plattus replied that metadata is very important. Meg Bellinger agreed that we should make metadata a continuing agenda item.

Christine Mehring asked if the VRC was expecting to grow its staff size. Meg Bellinger replied that the staff size is based on serving the History of Art department. If its service area grows, there will have to be some kind of growth. Katherine Haskins added that before staff size grows, there needs to be an assessment of potential reassignment and redesign of staff responsibilities. Rob Nelson thought that student help will be heavily used. Christina Kraus mentioned that student help has not worked well for Classics, and that you will need to be flexible [in terms of types of staff]. Meg Bellinger added that the Provost is likely to give support for using graduate students. Rob Nelson asked if graduate student assistance could work with the Anthropology department. William Kelly answered that it probably would, once things settle down a little. Rob Nelson said that [spreading out the work force] would help with the issue of only 600 sq. ft. in the new VRC [facility planned for post-2008]. There was general recognition as well that the types of services being envisioned by IDIR should go beyond the art historians and exist in other sites. Christine Mehring asked if something like Eli Express could be employed for digitization work, as a time saver.

Meg Bellinger raised the point that technical staffs around campus are talking—many don't have the digital space yet to do extensive archiving. Also, that there are several different kinds of metadata, and there is a strong move toward integration. Alan Plattus responded that the challenge is to normalize [digital resource production]. It should be a budgetary line item. William Kelly added that we can make the argument that we'll teach [with] these images. Lillian Tseng mentioned that some art repositories won't let you use images except on their own site, as a way of protecting their rights. Katherine Haskins remarked that, conversely, there is a trend in larger museums to open up their digital collections for educational purposes (including the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the Victorian and Albert Museum in London). On a related topic, Meg Bellinger announced that the Yale Collections Collaborative will be having a spring symposium on the interrelated roles of libraries, museums,

and archives, and asked if some of the committee members would be interested in participating in a panel discussion.

### **3. History of Art faculty affirmation of institutional collection building (David Joselit)**

David Joselit introduced the next agenda item, which was the topic of shared institutional collection building around the idea of an “image commons” that had emerged from a series of History of Art department “Digital Day” workshops last year. Many faculty in History of Art are using only their personal collections to teach with, without sufficient or timely access to their colleagues’ materials, so they have decided [routinely] to integrate personal content into the University’s collections. Having shared materials readily available will be a huge benefit to the faculty and will make finding/accessing materials much easier. Now the plan is to build a service model for personal collection integration with the institutional collections that other departments can use.

### **4. Review and discussion of draft budget categories (Meg Bellinger)**

Meg Bellinger next reported on the IDIR draft budget categories. The estimated budget for the transition from the physical collection to a digital collection, with new image services and sustained collections and services, has been presented to the Provost’s office. The provost should give their answer in the next week.

The budget breaks down into four categories:

*First category:* VRC/IDIR Library operations budget

- We are working on developing a service level agreement that will reflect what we are doing today, as well as laying the groundwork for future development including identifying new skills sets, teasing out whose roles are what, and drafting job descriptions for positions integrating content knowledge and information structures, as well as developing staff knowledge across a full range of technologies

*Second category:* Digitization budget for 50% of the slide collection

- We have concluded that it will be more cost effective and of better quality to selectively digitize from the slide collection to support digital teaching.
- The faculty request a graduate student budget to support the review, selection, and preparation of slides.
- 35mm slides will be sent out for digitization, lantern slides will be digitized by Yale Media Services.
- We can rely on students for some cataloging and basic metadata. The metadata can be improved later, we just need basic information at this time.
- This scenario assumes that any additional digitization will be absorbed as part of the ongoing work of the VRC or will be funded through grant or special projects money.

Alan Plattus asked about who is selecting the materials for Architecture. He reminded everyone that [architects] need many different types of images, even for a single structure— photos, floor plans, multi-levels of data for comprehensive collections. Both Meg Bellinger and Rob Nelson encouraged Alan to ask at the next School of Architecture faculty meeting about interest in being involved in selection.

*Third category:* Cost of the technical infrastructure to support the digital slide collection/Image commons.

- This is a recurring cost, including annual equipment replacement costs, image management tools, software, and FTE staff to develop/refine/integrate technology.

*Fourth category:* Cost of the transfer of the photograph and slide collection from Street Hall (to be completed by fall 2008)

- The collections will be packed and labeled by students.
- VRC staff will absorb bibliographic and record-keeping work.

Katherine Haskins added that there is a comprehensive LSF transfer plan in place, that includes Orbis cataloging records and for many parts of the collections, finding aids (at a box level of detail), and that we will use regular LSF delivery to return any materials requested. We will end up with around 8,800 boxes of mounted and unprocessed photographs, lantern slides, 35mm slides, etc., to be transferred. The plan calls for starting with the photographs and getting to the slides last (as they remain the more heavily used of the two collections).

Christina Kraus inquired about whether the VRC Classics slide materials could be integrated with the Classics collections rather than sent to LSF. There will be further discussion about that possibility.

## **5. Thoughts and discussion on future metadata planning (Karen Kupiec/Katherine Haskins)**

This agenda item was not covered, as the meeting ran out of time. It will be added to the next meeting agenda.

### **Wrap-up:**

Meg Bellinger asked, Are we [IDIR] on the right track?

Alan Plattus responded that it's not clear to many faculty how [the IDIR initiative] affects them. We need to make it clear that they have a stake in it. Specialized projects may help with this.

Bill Kelly added that images are not our (Anthropology) focus. We need to find a way to make [IDIR] useful. Adding some kind of digital materials collection that includes maps, texts, sounds, etc. might be one way.

Meg Bellinger noted that the committee affirmed [that IDIR is on the right track], with the above caveats.