

can be used to catalogue images, efforts have continued within the cultural community to create metadata elements specifically for images of works of art. The Visual Resources Association (VRA) has developed the VRA Core Categories which is a single element set that can be applied as many times as necessary to create records to describe works of visual culture as well as the images that document them (<http://www.vraweb.org/vracore3.htm>).

Searching for images by content

Research is being undertaken into using more visual cues to retrieve images. This is known as Content Based Image Retrieval (CBIR). It is the process of retrieving images from a collection on the basis of features (such as colour, texture and shape) automatically extracted from the images themselves. Whilst this is a technology still in its infancy, it has been shown to have relevance to particular fields such as patents and trademarks identification and police suspect identification. You can see how such a system works with the Digital Collection on the Hermitage Museum website (http://www.heritagemuseum.org/fcgi-bin/db2www/browse.mac/category?sell_ang=English). This uses IBM's Query By Image Content (QBIC™) to enable you to search for an image based on its predominant colours or by drawing the shapes or composition you are looking for.

The Institute for Image Data Research has a research interest in this field and its website (<http://www.unn.ac.uk/iidr/>) contains further information about this area. Some areas of the website do not appear to be particularly current but are still useful for background information and links.

Creating your own collection of digital images?

I can do no better than to refer you (again!) to the excellent TASI website which contains a wealth, in both scope and depth, of articles covering this subject. They also run training courses for those involved in image digitisation projects, those who wish to capture images and those who wish to use digital images in learning and teaching.

Moving Images

There is a wonderful collection of a variety of digitised moving images at <http://www.archive.org/movies/movies.php>. Their aim is "to provide easy access to a rich and fascinating core collection of archival films".

It is from this digital collection that I leave you with a final gem – a wonderful short film from 1947, part of the Prelinger Archives, it is on the work of Librarians (<http://www.archive.org/movies/details-db.php?collection=prelinger&collectionid=00526&from=landingReviews>).

Reference Management

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Fancy it for free?

There are two new services which offer reference software for free to the academic community. Neither requires any special software although registration is essential.

CiteULike

Citeulike is a free service to help academics share, store and organise, with references being stored in your personal web library. The system captures the citation details from within the web browser. Further details from <http://www.citeulike.org>.

ARMS: the Atkins Reference Management System

Another free software, which was developed by an academic and a professional software engineer, was designed for use by students in the medical and psychological disciplines. It helps users keep track of references and build reference lists; store references based on keyword or location or type; and assists in the literature searching by helping to locate abstracts and full-text articles on the web. The ARMS software allows for browsing and searching of stored references. When you're writing a new paper, ARMS scans the word-processed document and builds a list of all the references used. Because ARMS knows which references you've got and which you haven't, it can give you a wish list sorted either by priority ('must get', 'want an abstract', etc.) or organised by journal name so you can print it out and take it to a library with you.

It comes with an extensive and updateable list of journals and their websites, including the on-line availability of articles and abstracts. This means that in most cases, you can simply click out of the wish list straight to search pages to get copies of articles from the web (where available).

The software is free and is aimed at the undergraduate market. All you need to do is register on the website to get the new versions of both the program and the master journals list.

Details at <http://psyche.tvu.ac.uk/phdrg/atkins/atws/main/arms.html>.

Silva CMS

If, however, your references need more managing than a standard reference software package, you might find Silva a powerful content management system for web, paper and other media far more

applicable. Features of the software include an integral WYSIWYG editor (Kupu), content reuse in multiple presentations, and hi-res image storage and manipulation. Further details from <http://www.infracom.com/products/silva>.

RefWorks

Should you wish to enter references where English is not your first language you may prefer the RefWorks product, a web based reference software package. Refworks offers six alternative language options.

Further details from <http://www.refworks.com>.

RefViz 2

The latest release from RefViz includes a search option called Reference Retriever which searches across a number of different data sources at the same time. Reference retriever is able to search a range of sources, remove duplicates and create a data visualisation of those same references. The data sources attached to RefViz include Web of Science, PubMed, Ovid databases of Medline and Eric; OCLC databases such as Medline, Eric and PsycInfo, Library of Congress and Purdue University. You can also use the import filters to access other data sources. Other improved features include the thesaurus which has been expanded to provide improved ability to identify equivalent terms.

RefViz 2 is designed for Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows 2000 and XP and is available for three hundred US dollars. Further details from <http://www.refviz.com>.

Onfolio

Finally, the Onfolio 2.0 software has been integrated with Endnote 7 and above. Onfolio is a PC application for reading RSS new feeds, collecting and organising online content and publishing

to email, weblogs and websites. This takes Endnote further forward by allowing the capturing and re-purposing of references whether they be websites or weblogs. The system does not work with Mac machines at the moment. Further details and a demo site available from <http://www.onfolio.com/>.

Central Government has had some far more controversial topics, not least the Iraq war, and far greater numbers than we have had in local government.

I believe the Information Commissioner has received 500 appeals of which 70% are concerned with requests to local authorities

Public Sector News

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People's Network

The People's Network has launched its twenty-four hour online enquiry service and this is quite a pioneering service. Staffed by English librarians, Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm, it will offer an out-of-hours service from a centre in the US at other times. The web site introduction warns you take care to give full details of the town and county in which you live when posing questions out-of-hours as the librarian may not be familiar with your area. A warning about the use of English versus American-English terms might be useful too, or maybe the training has covered that.

I would love to try it out but cannot think what to ask at the moment!

Freedom of Information update

We are now 6 months into the first year of the Freedom of Information legislation, and I for one am grateful that the flood has slowed. We have had some interesting and slightly bizarre requests but we are managing to cope.