

Visual Resource Centers and Academic Libraries: Shall the twain meet?

April 16, 2010, 11am Pacific – 12pm Mountain – 1pm Central – 2pm Eastern
Moderators: Deborah Ultan Boudewyns and Greta Bahnemann, University of Minnesota

[14:04] Stacy B: If you're just joining us feel free to change your guest name to your real name and/or introduce yourselves! 😊

[14:04] DebBoud: We are interested in getting a feel for why this discussion is of interest to you. Because of immediate relevance or curiosity.

[14:05] guest007: We've started exploring the possibility of integrating the VRC into the library but it would require transferring budget lines and at this point I'm in the process of selling that idea to the dean.

[14:06] DebBoud: Great. That's an excellent reason/example. I know Indianapolis U. will be soon moving her VR collection into the library.

[14:06] Beth Royall--WVU: The Libraries also manage all the software/hardware.

[14:06] guest007: Has anyone come up with a list of cons related to moving from the department to the library?

[14:06] Beth Royall--WVU: The Division of Art provides a graduate assistant to help with metadata and scanning, plus any funding for digital images.

[14:06] DebBoud: THAT's a GREAT question.

[14:07] gretabahnemann: I also know there are concerns about loss of autonomy and ability to make independent decisions when merging into a larger admin. structure like the library.

[14:07] Beth Royall--WVU: Just a guess, but I doubt that most library systems would supply a librarian devoted entirely to a VR collection.

[14:08] gretabahnemann: What about a librarian devoted to VR and Art/Art History/Architecture?

[14:08] DebBoud: I see that many are looking at that question in reversal though - why it makes sense to move VR collections into the lib.

[14:08] guest007: I imagine that if we move the core services would remain but the position would evolve to include dealing with cataloging/reformatting special collection materials and reference services.

[14:09] guest1903755: The best possibility I see re: what the library system might support is an "image" specialist, not necessarily tied to art and not necessarily located in proximity to art.

[14:09] guest007: Back to my question about a list of cons....Does anyone know if such a document exists? The VRA White Paper focuses mostly on the pros.

[14:10] DebBoud: If everyone right clicks on their "guest" names to put in a nickname we can better address each question.

[14:10] gretabahnemann: I don't know if a document exists but we could certainly brainstorm a list of pros and cons today.

[14:10] Elizabeth: Great!

[14:11] DebBoud: Greta will keep track of the cons and I will keep track of the pros. We will provide a list for everyone in some form.

[14:11] Beth Royall--WVU: Pro--academic libraries often have a well-qualified

Systems Department with expertise in maintaining servers and software.

[14:12] Beth Royall--WVU: Con--an art database would be one of many demands on Systems time and attention. Sometimes you have to get in line for upgrades and improvements.

[14:12] Elizabeth: Can anyone speak to the cons of being in a library versus the department?

[14:13] EileenFryIU: Pro- online image collections are system wide, both in terms of licensing and use. But few people in the library system know how to effectively use them

[14:13] DebBoud: Good point, Eileen.

[14:13] Stacy B: Pro: libraries often already have digitizing departments w/hardware and staff... may reduce duplication of equipment/staff in digitizing materials

[14:13] DebBoud: Are their concerns about staffing. THat a con would be we would lose the expertise of the VR curators?

[14:13] gretabahnemann: Pro: VR collection and staff are seen as a university-wide resource within the branding of the library.

[14:14] DebBoud: Or is there a direction that maintains their role within the libraries with slightly different added responsibilities.

[14:14] DebBoud: Eileen, can you speak to how Indianapolis will change staffing with your move?

[14:14] Stacy B: @ Deb: if we kept VR curators as image specialists as Eileen mentioned it might be a pro for everyone, university-wide

[14:14] gretabahnemann: Agreed!

[14:15] DebBoud: Yes! I agree!

[14:15] Beth Royall--WVU: Copyright and images is another area of specialty that VR curators can bring to a library system.

[14:16] Elizabeth: If a department is transferring a salary line to the library how is that seen as a gain for the department if the resource/services are viewed by the library as a university wide resource?

[14:16] gretabahnemann: I think these are all excellent points - and we can certainly continue this aspect of the conversation in Boston. Should we move on to our next question?

[14:16] DebBoud: What do you think is the current corresponding relationship of visual resource centers to libraries within the academic environment?

[14:17] gretabahnemann: Elizabeth, you just typed a great question - that deserves more attention. Can we add that to the list of things to talk about in Boston?

[14:17] EileenFryIU: Con- Many library systems are PC only and do not support m

[14:17] Elizabeth: Sure!

[14:17] EileenFryIU: do not support MACS.

[14:17] Elizabeth: Deborah:I'm not sure I understand what you're asking.

[14:18] DebBoud: How about this: Do you think a merger would have a positive impact on the use of visual resources on campuses?

[14:18] DebBoud: Someone touched on that earlier...

[14:19] DebBoud: OR do you all think possible mergers are the result of budget issues and we are forced to think positively about a merge??

[14:20] Beth Royall--WVU: Perhaps slightly off topic, but my experience has been that when other departments find out about a great visual art online collection, they want the library to help them convert their (plants, cells, medical, etc.) slides into a similar online resource.

[14:20] Elizabeth: I think budget issues definitely prompt paradigm shifting and in a best case scenario a merger would be seen as a positive move.

[14:21] DebBoud: That's a good point, Beth. So there is more interest/desire/need from users for image resources.

[14:21] Elizabeth: I think it's important to emphasize that there is a need for professionals who are knowledgeable about the entire life cycle of digital content. It's not just about converting slides and then "were done!"

[14:22] DebBoud: To Elizabeth's point. I do think that Libraries are aware of that, too. And are working to handle that. Would others agree?

[14:23] DebBoud: What else might others contribute about how image resources are being sought after on campuses...

[14:23] Elizabeth: I was speaking to how the user community views digital content more than how the professionals view it. Yes, I think libraries are keenly aware, as are vr professionals, but it seems like our patrons/customers don't necessarily get that.

[14:24] gretabahnemann: Would they "get it" if it was marketed through the library as an ongoing library resource? or is that not a factor?

[14:25] gretabahnemann: OK, should we go back to talking for a few more minutes about the advantages and disadvantages of being part of the library or of being a stand-alone unit? Some talking points may include: budget concerns; staffing; integrated library systems, etc.

[14:25] moaburns: I agree and with budget cuts image users are having to scan their own materials so that often the rest of the institution loses out on access. Marketing is important.

[14:26] gretabahnemann: Do you think libraries are better prepared/positioned to help with marketing? I know Elizabeth has done a great job of marketing her collection at UT? Any thoughts?

[14:27] moaburns: Both are needed, broad marketing to the whole campus and localized schmoozing as well.

[14:27] DebBoud: Do we have a shy group today? Or perplexed about the topic? Questions you want to throw out?

[14:28] Elizabeth: Maybe someone in a library can speak to that issue.

[14:28] Beth Royall--WVU: I'm still mulling over the marketing question. Are you thinking of a resource like ArtStore? You want the broadest possible use to justify the price?

[14:28] moaburns: I'm relatively new to chatting and am trying to get into the swing of things!

[14:28] Beth Royall--WVU: With our in-house art history image database the audience is "captive".

[14:29] Elizabeth: Beth:How are you marketing the resource to your captive audience?

[14:29] DebBoud: OK. That's understandable. Chatting makes my heart rate go up because its so fast!

[14:29] Stacy B: ARTstor at my institution has gone over fairly well to many departments

[14:29] Beth Royall--WVU: The students in the Art History and Art Appreciation courses have to use it to succeed.

[14:29] Elizabeth: Do the faculty require the students use the resource as part of the course?

[14:29] gretabahnemann: I think we are thinking of ways to market all of our services and resources, including ARTstor - but not limited to ARTstor.

[14:30] Beth Royall--WVU: The students in Art History must use the online database to study images for upcoming exams.

[14:30] gretabahnemann: How can we convey the message that the work we do - either part of the library or separate - is seen as having institution-wide value?

[14:30] DebBoud: But its interesting because the libraries facilitate, market, and educate our users about ARTstor and other image dbases. Why wouldn't they do so with the VR collections too? Just a thought.

[14:30] moaburns: Does it seem to anyone else like there are a lot of campus constituents who aren't getting the help they need and want for images?

[14:30] DebBoud: Yes! Definitely!

[14:30] Stacy B: At my institution, ARTstor is a library product, but the VR collections aren't.

[14:31] Elizabeth: On the topic of marketing, there is an ALA publication called "Bite-Sized Marketing" by Nancy Dowd, Mary Evangeliste, and Jonathan Silberman that is worth a look.

[14:31] gretabahnemann: Yes! They don't know what is available to them as members of the community - so they don't know what they are missing out on.

[14:31] DebBoud: Exactly, Stacy. I wonder if thats a problem!?

[14:31] gretabahnemann: And how can they stand up for VR collections if they are unaware of resources and services?

[14:31] moaburns: Soemtimes they want things that we don't have the resources to deliver too.

[14:32] Elizabeth: Why would they be compelled to stand up if they are unaware?

[14:32] Beth Royall--WVU: I suspect many campus constituents need/want help with their image collections, but I'm not sure most library systems are ready to take on many additional projects. Unless a funding line comes along with the project...

[14:33] moaburns: In a world of shrinking resources, it seems like libraries and VRCs should work together whether they want to combine or not--both need to figure out and focus on what they can offer.

[14:33] DebBoud: So, with all of this discussion. I want to refer to a question Greta and I talked about. What can be done to ensure that the value and services of VR centers stay (become) front and center?! With or without a move to the libraries?!

[14:33] gretabahnemann: Elizabeth - My point exactly! They cannot lobby for something they don't know exists. So it goes back to marketing/self-promotion.

[14:33] Elizabeth: One approach is to help constitutents with content that will enter the centralized collection. They see the value in doing so as a result.

[14:34] gretabahnemann: Good point. What else?

[14:34] DebBoud: THat's a nice way to connect the two service point, Elizabeth.

[14:34] gretabahnemann: What about creating a libe guide for visual resources?

[14:34] moaburns: Also make higher levels of the administration aware of the services being provided in the hope of getting more support.

[14:34] DebBoud: I think more of this connecting could happen if, like Maureen said, we work together more.

[14:35] moaburns: People go to central IT units for help with images too, so this might be a group to include in partnerships too.

[14:36] gretabahnemann: Agreed. How about integrating VR use/services instruction into the library instruction curriculum?

[14:36] DebBoud: Excellent points, both Greta and Maureen.

[14:36] Elizabeth: I think that would be easier if one were part of the library and not an independent unit.

[14:36] moaburns: Especially if It supports learning management systems. Wouldn't it be nice if we could feed images directly from such systems to our campus databases.

[14:37] gretabahnemann: Maureen - that is a great plan. Bring all the disparate service providers together for better user services -- i.e. are we all on the same page?

[14:37] moaburns: Also if resources are scarce, pooling them could help.

[14:38] DebBoud: What do you all think? Would it truly be a budget saver to merge VR collections into the libraries??

[14:38] EileenFryIU: A consortial arrangement certainly helps. Here at IU, that means Library + Learning Technologies + VRC.

[14:38] DebBoud: Ah ha. THat makes sense, Eileen. Thank you.

[14:39] DebBoud: But then why physically move the VRC into the Library?

[14:39] EileenFryIU: re: budget, I have no backup now as a stand-alone unit. It's hard to take sick days, much less vacation. That will be much easier when I'm part of a larger unit that is open whether I'm there or not.

[14:40] moaburns: Not sure about the merger being a budget saver, it still takes a small army to build shared image collections.

[14:40] gretabahnemann: Maureen - you touch on an important point. Merging is expensive and time consuming.

[14:40] Stacy B: I would love to merge/work more closely with the VRC, but our VRC and art/arch library are in two very different locations on campus, and they report to two separate departments (art dept vs library). Neither space is big enough to hold both collections

[14:40] gretabahnemann: How far out do you need to plan for a merger?

[14:41] DebBoud: OK. This is interesting... Eileen and Maureen represent two very different scenarios.

[14:41] gretabahnemann: And if your unit falls under the axe (like KVRF at Cornell University) there is no time for merger discussions. We were closed before we could have that conversation.

[14:42] moaburns: Same at UC Irvine, I had a great relationship with both the library and central IT, but there was not enough time to do anything and everyone

was dealing with big budget cuts.

[14:42] DebBoud: Stacy's comment is important, too. Forget a physical move. How about connecting virtually or at service desks... etc...

[14:43] Stacy B: I will admit that a physical move is attractive to me, due to the "no backup" issue that Eileen raised. I'm also a one-woman show...

[14:44] moaburns: More reason to build those relationships and look to creative ways to work together physically and virtually.

[14:44] gretabahnemann: OK it is now 1:45. Should we spend a few minutes talking about what we would like to discuss at the Visual Resources Division Group Meeting in Boston? Perhaps we could create a list of a few talking points?

[14:44] Stacy B: This has been a great conversation! Thank you Deborah and Greta.

[14:45] DebBoud: Maureen and Greta's experiences are reasons why its so important we have these conversations... maybe we can avoid further closures (like theirs) if we are all armed with some data about possible ways VR collections may connect and function on campuses...

[14:45] gretabahnemann: I think we could spend a little time talking about budgets - going back to Elizabeth's excellent point about departmental money streams.

[14:46] DebBoud: What other questions come up...

[14:46] moaburns: Please check out the VRA White Paper advocating for VR for ideas along these lines too.

[14:46] gretabahnemann: Excellent reminder - thanks Maureen.

[14:46] DebBoud: Right. Thank you, Maureen.

[14:47] Elizabeth: You can get to the VR White Paper from the VRA's home page: www.vraweb.org

[14:47] moaburns: Sorry to miss the VRD meeting and ARLIS Boston, please don't ever hesitate to contact me as VRA president if I can help in any way.

[14:47] Stacy B: As a reminder, the follow-up conversation will be at the ARLIS/NA conference in Boston on Sunday at 4 p.m. as part of the Visual Resources Division Meeting hosted by Nicole Finzer.

[14:48] Elizabeth: Do we want to discuss possible topics we want to see covered at the joint conference in Minneapolis?

[14:48] DebBoud: Do you think this conversation/topic might lend itself to a survey or a focus group. What do you all think about that?

[14:48] DebBoud: Great idea, Elizabeth!

[14:48] moaburns: Yes, it will be so great to be together in the Twin Cities.

[14:48] gretabahnemann: Please bring questions and comments to the VR Division meeting - or contact myself or Deborah via e-mail.

[14:49] Elizabeth: Would the survey go to both ARLIS/NA and VRA members?

[14:49] EileenFryIU: I think the VRD should make a concerted effort to work with VRA and really rack up some great session proposals. Personally, I think the whole ##\$% conference should be image-oriented...

[14:49] gretabahnemann: I would say both.

[14:49] DebBoud: YEs, I think that would be the most thorough, Elizabeth.

[14:50] moaburns: Yes please.

[14:50] nfinzer: Greta et al, after introductions and general announcements - I will open the floor to you at the VRD Meeting. I believe this topic will result in a lengthy

discussion, which I want to allow enough time for..

[14:50] Elizabeth: What information would we hope to gain from a survey?

[14:50] DebBoud: THank you, Nicole!

[14:50] nfinzer: youre welcome!

[14:51] Stacy B: Thanks Deborah and Greta for a great discussion!

[14:51] DebBoud: Gain better understanding of where we might intersect easily and not so easily? Perhaps?

[14:51] EileenFryIU: Maybe we could find out what these 200 plus people in the VRD want from both organizations

[14:52] gretabahnemann: Eileen - great point. Also maybe a survey can take us to our next point of action? Something to build on at the joint conference?

[14:52] DebBoud: Let's think about that, though. What and how might a survey on this topic look? And the goal. Let's plan to discuss in Boston.

[14:53] DebBoud: Thank you all for listening and chatting. Greta and I look forward to continuing this discussion at the VRD meeting in Boston.

[14:53] Stacy B: Thank you everyone for joining us today.

[14:53] Stacy B: The transcript of this chat will be posted on the ARLIS/NA Lunchtime Chats page: [http: www.arlisna.org/chats/](http://www.arlisna.org/chats/)

<<http://www.arlisna.org/chats/>>;

[14:54] Stacy B: Have a good weekend and see you in Boston!