Enabling educational use of digital museum collections

Digital Resources in the Humanities
Oxford University
July 1996

J. Trant

NOTE: Now jtrant@archimuse.com

Intellectual Property Rights
• legal framework inconclusive
• issue seen as major barrier
• requires balance between rights holders and rights users
Rights in digital images complex

• original work of art
• photographic reproduction
• digital image
• manipulated digital image
• accompanying text

• Rights complex...
  • each form may have distinct rights
  • often held separately
  • rights in one media don’t transfer to another
Rights administration inefficient
  • finding images and rightsholders difficult
  • fees for using individual images high
  • terms and conditions vary
  • volume required for digital production problematic
  • high overhead throughout the system

MESL a response
  • establish the terms and conditions for the educational use of museum images and text
  • facilitate distribution of high quality information
  • enable collaboration between rights holders and rights users
MESL approach
- site license collections of images
- avoid “pay per bit”
- reasonable monitoring requirements
- effective administration
- predictable costs; no hidden charges

Why museums and universities?
- museums have images and information
- universities have delivery systems
- both have educational mandate
- share common culture and interests
15 institution collaboration
- interdisciplinary project teams on each campus
- central coordination at AHIP
- management committee to advise
- January 1995 - June 1997

Participating Museums
- Fowler Museum of Cultural History at UCLA
- The George Eastman House, Rochester, NY
- The Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, MA
- The Library of Congress, Washington, DC
- The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX
- The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
- The National Museum of American Art, Washington, DC
Participating Universities

- American University, Washington, DC
- Columbia University, New York, NY
- Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
- University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL
- University of Maryland, College Park, MD
- University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Dearborn and Flint, MI
- University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

Progress to Date

- Cooperative Agreement signed
- Images selected and distributed
- Deployment on each campus
- Evaluation
Licensing Agreement

- terms and conditions from cooperative agreement
  - educational use on campus network
  - includes research, teaching, student projects
  - no redistribution
  - no commercial use
- model site license terms

Selection of test images

- over 8000 images distributed by fall of 96
- challenge to create coherent data sets
  - support teaching
  - work within digitization plans
  - negotiate to meet curricular needs
Data Distribution

- University of Michigan as “distribution central”
- each campus mounted entire image set
- deployment decisions based on local infrastructures

Text Formats

- Data Dictionary developed
  - object description as fielded text
  - unstructured texts linked
    - conservation reports
    - exhibition history
    - bibliography
- consistency major challenge
Image Formats
- maximum quality museums would release
  - 758 x 512 through 1536 x 1024
  - 24 bit colour
- file formats
  - JFIF with JPEG, PhotoCD, TIFF
- sites determined image delivery strategy

Objectives
- separate content from delivery systems
- learn about issues by studying choices
- understand process of data creation and delivery
- discover where standards essential
Welcome!

Please explore the thousands of museum objects that are provided by the Museum Educational Site Licensing Project for educational use at the University of Michigan. This material is restricted to local users and is licensed agreement executed by all project participants.

- Users of these images and texts agree to adhere to the Conditions of Use.
- Deed of Access and Use of the Information Technology Resources
- Guide to the Educational and Local Use of Software at U-M
- Licensing and Public Use of Information

Local museum objects by browsing category lists of information about the available objects. You can only browse objects from one museum at a time.

Local museum objects by combining items from category lists of information about the available objects. You can search across any or all museums simultaneously.

Note: You will need internet access to the MESSL system if you use Netscape 1.1 or later. We will not make it work equally well with other browsers.

Announcements

Content Selection Process Deadline Extended to March 22

Faculty and staff, there is still time to submit content and suggestions to the museums. The University of Virginia has prepared a Content Selection MESSL Site that contains information about each museum and a communication form for submitting comments electronically. Don’t delay! The deadline for submitting content is March 22, 1996. Additionally, you can take advantage of the content that has been provided to date. Content Summaries and Introduction Lists are available at the site.
Search Results 1 thru 9 (total 28 items)
The University of Michigan Museum Educational Site Licensing Project

Fowler Museum of Cultural History, UCLA

Please select small, medium, large, or max to view the image of that size. The thumbnail image is linked to the medium size image.

Mask; headdress; (ere egungun). Height 47.0 cm. Yoruba. Abeokuta; Nigeria.

(See additional object data below)

Additional Data

Creator

Culture or Nationality: Yoruba

Creation

Place:

Abene or Abeokuta, Nigeria.

End date: 1981

Techniques:

Carved, painted, painted.

Medium:

Wood, pigment.

Dimensions: Height 47.0 cm.

Concepts

Object
Uses for museum information

- teaching and research in the Humanities
  - art history, history, anthropology, cultural and religious studies
- multimedia development
  - distance learning, visual literacy, independent study, life-long learning
- information and computer science
  - image database research, image processing
Use on campus
• critical to success of project
• broad range of activities
  - UMD, joint studio/art history project
  - UVA, Religious Studies

INTRODUCTION
Life may be interpreted as a continuous series of rites of passages during which an individual progresses from one stage to another in the cycle of life. Possibly the most important of these transitions is the passage from...
This Mask Pacifies the Spirit of the Sacrificed Victims!

- Nkisi Mask
- Lwala (Zaire)
- Wodi
- C. Roy "Art and Life in Africa"

This male nkisi mask appears with three other masks in the ceremonies of the Nyanga society. The Nyanga society is responsible for the initiation and circumcision of young Luba men. Enslavement into the Nyanga society requires the sacrifice of human victims. This requirement ensures that the passage of an individual to manhood is accompanied by the passage of another individual into the spirit world. By appeasing the spirits with such offerings, the seed of the newly initiated man is blessed and assured to produce children, thus completing the cycle of life. During the ceremonies, two nkisi male masks and two nkisi female masks are worn by men in dances intended to pacify the spirits of the human victims.

Each of the four performers commissions the mask from a single carver, who is often the chief and organizer of the ceremony. The nkisi mask is of the mvondile type. It is held steady on the wearer's face by a cord passed through the hole beneath the nose. The cord was then changed between the teeth of the dancer. Aesthetically, this mask is remarkable for the oblique definition of the face—especially the scar near the eyes—and for the extremely fine, smooth surface.

He Swallows the Boys and Gives Them Rebirth!

- Dandza, the spirit of the ancestor who originated the multi-ethnic Poro society
- The mask is carved from lightweight wood
- A long fiber skirt attached to the mask conceals the body of the dancer
- Members of the Poro society sporting this towering costume appear in public during an elaborate ceremony which marks the beginning of the male initiation process

During the ceremony, the mask begins to consume the young initiates by chewing them with its large moving jaws. Then, as the music and dances climax, the youths are completely swallowed leaving behind a pool of blood. (The effect of blood is achieved by the wearer of the mask chewing cocoa nuts.) The youths, who are hidden under the covering skirts of the masks are taken to the initiation camp to begin the three-year initiation school. During this period, the boys learn discipline and the traditions of their
Evaluation
• statistics about use
• profiles of distribution systems
• assessment of interface choices
• examination of search capabilities

Economics
• costs and benefits of new technology
• costs of rights administration
• model self-sustaining system
Goals

- enable the educational use of museum digital assets
- propose a framework for the collective administration of museum intellectual property rights
- suggest a scalable system for implementation

Further Information

- http://www.ahip.getty.edu/mesl