Social Tagging Museums: Research and Reflections

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• Access to Collections
  ➡ searching + reference questions

• Tagging
  ➡ potential for user content

• Research Questions
  ➡ methods
  ➡ steve tagger

• Preliminary Results
• Can we learn from tagging?

Social Tagging and Access to Collections
access to collections
What we say doesn’t match what visitors see
only one shark – not the one I remember ...
sharks!
searching museum collections
• much work on “access” not based on evidence of what people really do
• few real studies of interactions with museum databases
• lots of data available, most un-analysed

Defining Needs
• Year's worth of search log data

126,999 queries: Sept 1, 2005 to Aug. 31, 2006

Guggenheim Collection: Prototype Search Log Analysis
• 73% of searches were successful
  ➝ more that 1/4 were not

• the usage curve strongly matched the academic year and the days of the week
  ➝ significant dips on weekends
  ➝ exhibition program influences searches

• artists names are searched significantly more often than other things
  ➝ 63% of searches made more than 10 times

Guggenheim Collection: Prototype Search Log Analysis
• Search terms are very diverse
  ➔ most popular search term 'picasso' made up only 2.8% of searches = a very long tail

• Tail differs from the 'head'
  ➔ more likely to be for subject-related topics, and combinations of categories

• Spelling errors = 36% of unsuccessful searches
  ➔ spelling errors = 50% of unsuccessful artist’s name searches
“the people watching this were not searching for "museum" content; they were searching for "calligraphy" content.”


There’s no such thing as “museum content”
reference questions
From: J. P. xxxxx@xxxxxx.com
Date: Sat, 26 Aug 2006 11:24:43 -0700
To: timeline@metmuseum.org
Subject: Looking for a painting

Please help:

I have been looking on and off for years for this painting. The painting is of a very well dressed renaissance man standing in a room (a library) in front of him on a table is a large hour glass. The painting has very rich colors. I have talked to a lot of people and they have said they have seen this painting but can't remember its name or the name of the artist.

Could you please use your resources to find this painting?
What “J. P.” knows:  
- painting
- Renaissance
- standing
- man
- very well dressed
- library
- hourglass
- table
- rich colors

What a Met curator knows:  

**Portrait of a Man**  
ca. 1520–25  
Moretto da Brescia (Alessandro Bonvicino)  
(Italian, Brescian, born about 1498, died 1554)  
Oil on canvas; 34 1/4 x 32 in. (87 x 81.3 cm)  
Rogers Fund, 1928 (28.79)

Provenance: Maffei, Brescia (by 1760, as "Ritratto d'uomo con carta in mano, ed Orologio, di Callisto da Lodi"); by descent to contessa Beatrice Erizzo Maffei Fenaroli Avogadro, Palazzo Fenaroli, Brescia (by 1853–at least 1857, as by Moretto); her daughter, contessa Maria Livia Fenaroli Avogadro, later marchesa Fassati, Brescia (in 1862); her son, marchese Ippolito Fassati, Milan (by 1878–at least 1912); [Elia Volpi, Florence, by 1915–16; sold to Knoedler]; [Knoedler, New York, 1916–28; sold to MMA]
volunteer supplied tags might help

- bangs
- beard
- border
- cape
- contemplation
- elbow
- hourglass
- landscape
- learned
- man
- mountain
- moustache
- nobleman
- painting
- portrait
- ring
- robe
- Renaissance

http://www.steve.museum
“our catalogues may be out of date before they have left the press”, 1910
could tagging help?
What is Tagging?

Web sites tagged “museum” in del.icio.us

http://www.steve.museum
What is Tagging?

now over 2,626,034 images tagged “museum” in flickr.com

http://www.steve.museum
What is Tagging?

citeULike.org - organize your academic citations
What is Tagging?

The ESP Game

Taboo Words
- BOAT
- SHIP
- PEOPLE
- HAT
- CRUISE
- WATER

Your Guesses
- FERRY
- DOCK
- BLUE
- RED
- DRESS
- WOMEN

Type your next guess:

Your partner has entered a guess

espgame.org - match your partner’s tags

http://www.steve.museum
Tagging Objects?

It seems simple ...
but it’s not so simple ...
Tagging Objects?

not simple at all ...

http://www.steve.museum
a research project
THE ART MUSEUM SOCIAL TAGGING PROJECT

About steve
Tag Art
Get Code
Application Development
Research
Discussions
Reference
Press
Steering Committee

Join the first experiment in social tagging of art museum collections.

Here's how:
- Tag Art
- Museums
- Researchers
- Developers

What is steve? Steve is a research project whose participants are building a tagging tool, collecting tags, analyzing data, and engaging in discussion. We hope to apply what we learn to improving access to works of art. Here's a diagram of steve's world.
social tagging environment

- who assigns how many terms?
- how does users' tagging differ?

works of art

- single museum context
- multiple museum context

folksonomy

- what kinds of terms are assigned?
- are the same terms used?
- are terms found in?

works of art

- terms assigned 1
- terms assigned 2
- terms assigned 3
- terms assigned 4

vocabulary sources

- do terms represent known or needed content?
- are terms applicable to?

works of art

- wordNet
- museum records
- Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT)
- Union List of Artists Names (ULAN)
- searches of art image databases

http://www.steve.museum
**Research Agenda: Tagging Environment**

- **who assigns how many terms?**
- **works of art**
- **assign terms**
- **single museum context**
- **how does users’ tagging differ?**

**vocabulary sources**

- **social tagging environment**
- **single museum context**
- **multiple museum context**
- **folksonomy**

**Steve Research Project**

- **works of art**
- **assign terms**

**Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AA)**

**Union List of Artists Names (ULAN)**

**searches of art image databases**

**are terms applicable to?**

- **are the same terms used?**
- **how does users’ tagging differ?**

**terms found in?**

- ** hindley@stevemuseum.**
Research Agenda: Folksonomy

- what kinds of terms are assigned?
- are the same terms used?
- how does users' tagging differ?
- are terms found in?

Steve Research Project

Steve Research Project
Research Agenda: Vocabulary Sources

- wordNet
- museum records
- Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT)
- Union List of Artists Names (ULAN)
- searches of art image databases
Research Agenda: Works of Art

- are terms applicable to?
- works of art

Vocabulary sources
- Social tagging environment
- Single museum context
- Multiple museum context
- Folksonomy

Terms assigned:
- 1 word
- 2 terms
- 3 terms
- 4 terms

Works of Art

Museum records
- Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AA T)
- Union List of Artists Names (ULAN)

Searches of art image databases

Are terms applicable to? Are the same terms used? How does users’ tagging differ? Are terms found in?
Tags Searches and Museum Documentation

Tags could improve search

Successful searches

Unsuccessful Searches

Museum Documentation not used in search

http://www.steve.museum
an open source tagger
download from
http://www.steve.museum
Why tag art?
See art you haven’t seen before.
Look in a new way.
Describe works of art in your own words.
Exchange your ideas with the community of art lovers.
Let others see the hidden aspects you didn’t normally see.
Create personal relationship to works.
Let museums know what you see.
The more you tag, the richer the experience for all.

Log in, register, or just start tagging images.

Login ID

Password

Log in

Learn more about Steve

Send us your feedback

Steve Tagger

THE ART MUSEUM SOCIAL TAGGING PROJECT

wood couple prim

http://www.steve.museum
Tagging works

http://www.steve.museum
Steve Tagger

The Art Museum Social Tagging Project

SET 4
104 REMAINING

Start Here

Show Metadata

http://www.steve.museum
How does the tagging tool work?

Select more than one image and then click "start tagging."

Choose Works to Tag
early results
> 41,872 tags collected so far

[1,780 works]
~70% (32,898 terms) don’t match any part of museum documentation
Useful? 92.5% new terms
26 blacklist terms

Very little misuse
Term Set 1: Taggers are supplying more tags without metadata (avg 5.75) than with metadata (avg 4.5).

Term Set 1: metadata vs. no metadata
Term Set 1: Taggers are supplying far more tags with sets (6317 | 5.8 avg per user) than no sets (3882 | 4.6 per user).
Steve Term Review

Term Review

Preliminary Results

http://www.steve.museum
 ✓ danger
 ✓ lost at sea
 ✓ likely to die
 ✓ storm
 ✓ sharks
 ✓ desperation

 x rocky shore
 x dolphins

 ?? David Hockney

Taggers supply useful terms
Preliminary Results

Museums could use social tagging: by role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role/Gallery Type</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collections Information/Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curatorial</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational/Exhibitions/Publications</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management/Executive</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations and Administration</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level of Agreement**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't Know
- No Response

http://www.steve.museum
early results

published reports at
http://www.steve.museum
or
http://www.archimuse.com/research/steve.html
Can we learn from tagging?
Visitor Feedback

Can we learn from tagging?
Visitor Interests
“when given the choice to comment on the exhibition or works with in it, nine out of ten people chose to comment on a specific piece.”


echoed by

Point of Intersection

http://www.steve.museum
Can we learn from tagging?

Visitor Engagement

http://www.steve.museum
Can we learn from tagging?

Visitor Context: steve art tagger in Facebook

http://www.steve.museum
Visitor Contexts: different juxtapositions
Edward Hicks (American, 1780–1849), *Peaceable Kingdom*, ca. 1830–32
Oil on canvas; 17 7/8 x 23 7/8 in. (45.4 x 60.6 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

**Co-existence**

http://www.steve.museum
Tag Art!

http://tagger.steve.museum
Thank you
jtrant@archimuse.com
http://www.archimuse.com
http://conference.archimuse.com/jtrants/