



When Drift becomes Current: Collaborating to Expand Beyond the Visual

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ARLIS/NA 2018 | Scope Drift: Blending and Rebranding in Visual Resources



Institutional Context

Purchase College



- 4,000 FTE
- “Art school” of the SUNY system
- Most popular majors consistently include music, graphic design, arts management, and painting + drawing

Visual Resources Center

- Housed in the Library since its founding in 1970
- For most of its history, the VRC primarily served the art history and theater Boards of Study
- Contains over 80,000 35mm slides, primarily pertain to the study of Western art history from the medieval period through the late 20th-century



The VRC before the Drift

- Staffed by a full-time visual resources curator until 2009. For budgetary reasons, position was changed to part-time in 2010. This led to instability in the position.
- In 2010, the VRC adopted EmbARK by GallerySystems.
- In late 2013, the VRC moved to SharedShelf.
- VRC staffing included one Image Cataloger, two to three graduate student assistants, and one paid student worker.





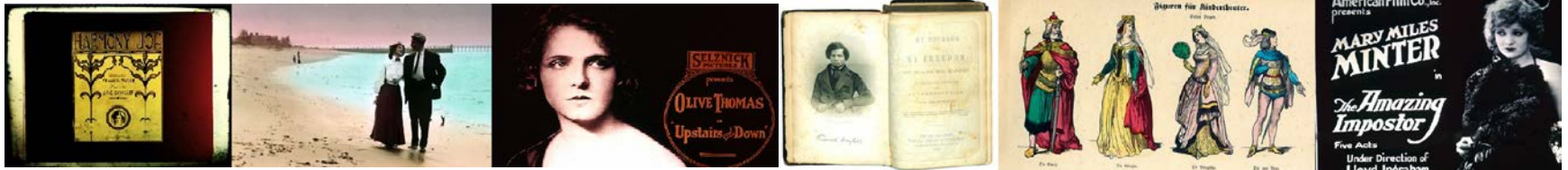
Creation of the Digital Collections Center

- Expanded mission, vision, and staff position
 - Opportunity to create *digital* collections not only *visual* collections
 - Creation of an institutional repository
- Funding the position was a challenging and time consuming process
 - Part time → Full Time Temporary → Full Time Permanent
- Rebranding to improve reputation and outreach
- Reimaging of the space and technology



Digital Collections Center, 2016-present

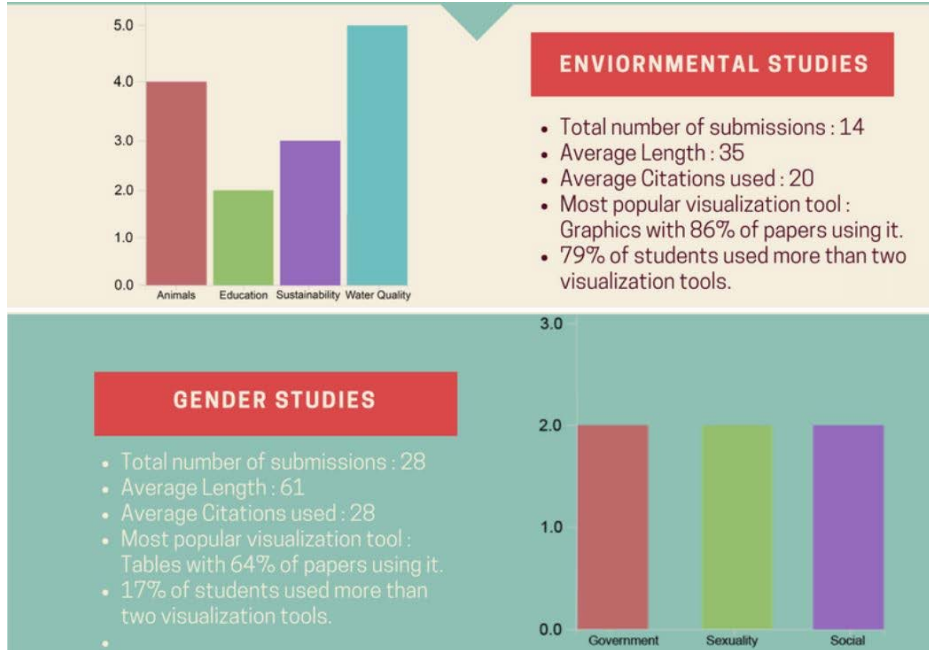
- Expanding Shared Shelf & Omeka: content, file formats, access
- New internships in archives and digital humanities; professional opportunities for Purchase students, with assessment impact affecting projects with faculty, staff, and administrators
- Institutional repository team: challenges with creation, immense potential
- Diversity of materials: oral histories, art + design lectures, special collections, graphic design, library archives, campus publications, etc
- Digital exhibitions
- New departmental communications, webpages, stories, etc



Outcomes of Scope Drift

- Diverse collections that serve more academic disciplines, faculty & students
 - Greater impact on humanities students, emphasis on professional training
 - Constructive internal collection assessments, inventories, re-housing, & digital discoverability
 - Heightened communications and visibility, for multiple entities on campus
 - Over 5,000 objects added to Shared Shelf & 9 new digital exhibitions on Omeka
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- Challenge: faculty / staff divide in the Library
 - Challenge: non-library faculty interest in digital collections potential, coursework collaborations, de-centralized faculty core

Digital Humanities with Institutional Data



- Most exciting scope drift outcome: digital humanities internships & internal assessment
- Utilizing DH methodology on digital collections yielded excellent results in just 3 semester long internships
- Further DH projects can create more data for campus use, can be focused on any number of collection types like IRs, images, audiovisuals, etc.

Digital Collections Center Vision

- Institutional repository development challenges and expansion
- Digitization of additional special collections such as student publications and artists' books
- Continued re-development and/or relocation of physical space
- Expansion of student internships, additional part-time staff positions
- Advocating for an Institutional Repository Manager position to collaborate with Digital Collections Curator



Thank you!

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Job Opportunity! Apply to be the Digital Collections Curator at Purchase College Library: jobs.purchase.edu (open until 3/15/2018)