

Art library uses online image database to serve museum and school

CAMIO® provides a way to share and access fine art images for students, instructors, lecturers and exhibitors



Situation

You'll find two things in abundance at the Art Institute of Chicago: art and artists. The institution, located in downtown Chicago, is both a premier museum and art school. Since opening in 1879, the institution focuses on preserving the great artworks of the world as well as producing great artists. Among its treasures are the cultural icons Nighthawks and American Gothic, and on its list of students at the School of the Art institute are wellknown names such as Orson Welles, Cynthia Rowley, and Walt Disney.

Leigh Gates knows both sides of the institute very well. She's the visual resources librarian and her role is supporting everything from student projects and course lectures to exhibition-related talks and museum education programs. Many of the requests she handles are for images not just from the museum's collections, but from other collections as well. And that's been the challenge: finding an easy way to share and access fine art images.

Solution

Through the institute's active involvement with other fine arts museums, the team was introduced to the Art Museum Image Consortium (AMICO) Library in 1997. That solution would later be replaced with RLG's CAMIO and become part of the OCLC family of solutions.

CAMIO, or Catalog of Art Museum Images Online, is a database of fine art images from many prominent museums licensed for academic use. More than 5000 years worth of paintings, sculptures, costumes, textiles, jewelry and more are available as downloadable images. The benefits of the

AT A GLANCE

- Founded in 1879 as a museum and school
- Ryerson and Burnham Libraries supports both school and museum
- Famous for its collections of Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and American paintings
- 38,500 digital images in library database

“It's a wonderful way for the Art institute to get images of beautiful objects out there for people to use.”

fine arts image library solution were obvious to Gates and as a result “we immediately became subscribers and have been ever since.”

Gates downloads images she needs from CAMIO to support the institute's school and museum educational needs. “It's a wonderful way for the Art institute to get images of beautiful objects out there for people to use.” And she knows firsthand about that demand. “We have voracious users,” says Gates. So keeping them well supplied with fine art images makes her job a lot easier.

Results

According to Gates, CAMIO is extremely useful to support the art school courses. “We look at the curriculum to understand what's going to be needed. Then we start harvesting images from CAMIO and adding them to our local database.” Once in that database, the images are

Art library uses online image database to serve museum and school

Continued



available to students and instructors at the school. Users are also found in the museum, whom Gates supports by locating specific images for the education department and traveling speakers. While users are oblivious to exactly where the images come from, their feedback indicates that they appreciate what Gates has been doing with CAMIO. “They like the quality and type of images they can now find in our local database,” she says.

For more information about CAMIO, visit

www.oclc.org/camio/, call 1-800-848-5878,

or send e-mail to camio@oclc.org.