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Open Content at the Getty Research Institute

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Open Content at the Getty Research Institute

Abstract

The Getty launched its Open Content Program in August 2013. The Open Content Program makes high-resolution images, which are either in the public domain or to which the Getty holds the copyrights, available for download free of charge via the Getty's website (www.getty.edu). This article provides an overview of the approach used by the Getty Research Institute.

The Origins of the Open Content Program at the Getty

As access to digital content increases, navigating the waters of copyright and fair use becomes more and more complicated. There seems to be some tension in our profession between the strong emphasis on providing access and the myriad of use restrictions we must impose. In response to this tension, the Getty launched its Open Content Program in August 2013.¹ The Open Content Program makes high-resolution images, which are either in the public domain or to which the Getty holds the copyrights, available for download free of charge. These images may be used for any purpose and permission is not required. According to the Getty's website, "The Getty adopted the Open Content Program because we recognized the need to share images of works of art for free and without restriction, so that all those who create or appreciate art – scholars, artists, art lovers, and entrepreneurs – will have greater access to high quality digital images for their studies and projects."²

At the time of its launch in mid-August, 2013, the Getty's Open Content Program contained 4,600 images, all from the J. Paul Getty Museum. In addition to announcing the launch of the Open Content Program, the Press Release touched upon future plans and potential additions from the other programs on campus. It stated, "The Getty Research Institute is currently determining which images from its special collections can be made available under the program."³ Shortly after the launch, the Information Systems department at the Getty Research Institute (GRI) was asked to contribute 5,400 images to the Open Content Program by mid-October, 2013.

Phase 1: Following the Museum's Lead

For the GRI, contributing images to the Open Content Program presented numerous challenges, the most formidable of which was the general lack of item-level metadata in our special collections. With the deadline so close, the Information Systems and Digital Services teams had to think creatively. After much discussion, we decided to export images and metadata from our digital asset management system, TEAMS.⁴ When individuals, both internal and external, need images of collection materials for publication or exhibition, the images are delivered from TEAMS. As a result of this workflow, images in TEAMS have a one-to-one correspondence with their accompanying metadata records. While this item-level relationship was essential to the project, there were drawbacks to using TEAMS as well. The metadata in TEAMS varies greatly in quality and does not consistently adhere to descriptive metadata standards. This inconsistency, along with contextual considerations and potential privacy and third-party rights issues, required the Head of Digital Services to manually vet all 5,400 images.

1. "Getty Announces New Program Lifting Restrictions on Use of Digital Images," August 12, 2013, *The Getty Trust, Press Materials*, accessed July 22, 2014, http://news.getty.edu/press_materials.cfm#2-3-5812.

2. "Open Content Program," *The Getty*, accessed July 22, 2014, <http://www.getty.edu/about/opencontent.html>.

3. "Getty Announces New Program."

⁴ Artesia Technology's TEAMS is the Getty-wide digital asset management system. In 2004, OpenText acquired Artesia. Artesia has since been re-branded, becoming the Open Text Digital Media Group; however, the DAM is locally known as TEAMS at the Getty. See: <http://www.opentext.com/what-we-do/products/opentext-product-offerings-catalog/rebranded-products/artesia-is-now-opentext>

Once the images had been selected, we created crosswalks and transformed the metadata exported from TEAMS so that it could be reused for two purposes: to embed metadata in the high-resolution Open Content images, and to create metadata records for each image in the Getty Search Gateway. The Getty Search Gateway is our cross-campus meta-search engine, and it is the primary discovery system for the Open Content Program. We relied on the Museum's IT department for the creation of the necessary image stack and the embedding of the metadata in the high-resolution images. This process was relatively smooth, however, there was one major problem with the TEAMS metadata export: the data was not encoded in UTF-8 and therefore did not display diacritics correctly. In fact, so many different character encodings were used that we could not solve this problem programmatically; each diacritic had to be edited manually.

Abbildung der grossen Mosquée so der Türckische Kaysser Orcanus II in der alten Residenz Stadt Bursa in klein Asien erbauet hat / Türkische Mosquée so zu Pest zusehen



[+ Enlarge](#) | [Download \(28 MB\)](#)

This image is available for download, without charge, under the Getty's [Open Content Program](#).

Title: Abbildung der grossen Mosquée so der Türckische Kaysser Orcanus II in der alten Residenz Stadt Bursa in klein Asien erbauet hat / Türkische Mosquée so zu Pest zusehen

Collection Title: Entwurf einer historischen Architectur : in Abbildung unterschiedener berühmten Gebäude, des Alterthums, und fremder Völcker, umb aus den Geschicht-Büchern, Gedächtnüss-Müntzen, Ruinen, und eigholten wahrhafften Abrissen, von Augen zu stellen ... : alles mit grosses Mühe gezeichnet, und auf eigene Unkosten

Type: Prints

Creator: Fischer von Erlach, Johann Bernhard, 1656-1723

Role: Author

Medium: Etching

Object Number: 83-B1865

Source: GRI Digital Collections

Date: 1725

Description: Signed by B. as etcher.

Figure 1. Screen shot depicting a Phase 1 GRI Open Content Record. For access to all images in the Getty's Open Content Program, visit: <http://hdl.handle.net/10020/openContentInGSG>.

Evaluating the Workflow

Even before we finished Phase 1, we knew that the workflow we had used would be unsustainable for adding a larger set of images. A few months after the completion of Phase 1, we were asked to contribute another batch to the Open Content Program – this time over 70,000 images – so we took a hard look at the workflow to determine the steps for moving forward. It would be impossible to continue vetting each individual image for copyright, privacy concerns, and issues relating to the appropriateness of images outside the context of their collections. Not to mention the fact that we would be duplicating effort to create an image set this large in TEAMS (importing the files into a digital asset management system outside the main digital repository) and that it would take a very long time to catalog this new set at the item level. We also wanted to get away from relying on the Museum to embed metadata for us and felt strongly that the effort we put into this process should benefit not just those users who came to the content through the Getty Search Gateway, but also those users who discovered it through the GRI's Digital Collections.

Phase 2: Playing to Our Strengths

We brainstormed ways to address these concerns and came up with a brand new strategy for Phase 2. We would focus on large, homogeneous collections⁵ that were either in the public domain or to which we owned the copyrights (and that were unlikely to contain images that violated privacy or third party rights). We would deliver files directly from our digital repository, which meant that we would need to create and embed the access files ourselves and replace the current access files with these new, larger, embedded jpegs. This new process would ensure that users would gain access to the high-resolution Open Content access files no matter how they discovered the content. Images would not be cataloged individually, but we would use metadata from the most granular level available to create individual metadata records for each image.

Within our main Digital Collections, there is not usually a one-to-one relationship between image and metadata. Rather, we create intellectual entities that contain many images clustered around the same theme. For instance, descriptive metadata in *Foto Arte Minore: Max Hutzl photographs of art and architecture in Italy* is at the monument or site level (e.g. thirteen images of the Roman Forum are deposited together as a single digital object). When a user retrieves this object from our Digital Collections, he or she sees only the first image and must click on it to browse through the rest of the images. However, the Getty's Open Content Program requires that all images exist individually. Originally, this policy did not sit well with those in the archives and library because important information is often lost when images are taken outside of their context. Therefore, we developed a way to maintain these contextual relationships; we point to individual Open Content images through the Getty Search Gateway, but we always provide a link back to related images from the larger digital object.

4. For more information on the content of the collections chosen for Phase 2, see the following post on the *Getty Iris*: <http://blogs.getty.edu/iris/77000-images-of-tapestries-and-italian-monuments-join-open-content-program/>.

Title: Umbria—Terni—Terni—S. Lorenzo, Image 1

Author/Creator: Hutzel, Max

Creation Date: 1960-1990

Physical Desc.: Image 1 of 5

Summary: Exterior views of a restored romanesque church include details of the apse and renaissance portal. In the Hutzel collection are views of two paintings, the Martyrdom of St. Blaise and the Baptism of Christ, as well as a fresco fragment of the Nativity by Ottaviano Nelli. Interior views can be seen in the negatives (under NNP); they include a view of a cippus and a stone of some relevance.; Object Notes: Hutzel photo campaign date: October 5, 1982

Notes: German-born photographer and scholar Max Hutzel (1911-1988) photographed in Italy from the early 1960s until his death. The result of this project, referred to by Hutzel as Foto Arte Minore, is thorough documentation of art historical development in Italy up to the 18th century, including objects of the Etruscans and the Romans, as well as early Medieval, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque monuments. Images are organized by geographic region in Italy, then by province, city, site complex and monument.

Form/Genre: Black-and-white prints (photographs)

Format: Still image

ID/Acc. No.: 86.P.8

Is Part Of: Foto Arte Minore / Max Hutzel (accession number 06.P.0), <http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cat340573>

Use Restrictions: Digital images courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

Links
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Print

Figure 2. Screen shot depicting a Phase 2 GRI Open Content Record. For access to all images in the Getty's Open Content Program, visit:<http://hdl.handle.net/10020/openContentInGSG>.

Added Benefits and Broader Applications of Open Content at the GRI

The GRI's participation in the Getty's Open Content Program has had a positive effect on our overall digital strategy. The experience we gained embedding metadata into images for the Open Content Program inspired us to finally abandon the rights footers we had been adding to access files in favor of embedded metadata. As we move forward with adding more content to the Open Content Program, we will use these local guidelines for embedding descriptive metadata instead of those used in the earlier phases of the project, which were created specifically for Museum objects. Phase 2 also helped us get acquainted with the web services available for our new preservation repository, Ex Libris' Rosetta. This is knowledge that we will surely use going forward as our database grows and more batch processing of records is needed. In terms of larger policy decisions, the Open Content Program has pushed us to consider providing higher resolution files for all of the material to which we own the copyrights, a decision that could free up staff resources normally devoted to fulfilling image requests by allowing users to download their own images.⁶ Perhaps most important, the Open Content Program has cemented institutional support for digitization of relevant collections in order to add content to this resource that we expect will continue to be highly utilized by the general public and scholars alike.

5. We plan to explore processes for making high-resolution jpegs load more quickly in all environments.

References

“Getty Announces New Program Lifting Restrictions on Use of Digital Images.” August 12, 2013. The Getty Trust, Press Materials. Accessed July 22, 2014. http://news.getty.edu/press_materials.cfm#2-3-5812.

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