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2023 Mid-Year State of the Visual Resources Association Address

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2023 Mid-Year State of the Visual Resources Association Address

Abstract

During the online VRA Mid-Year Meeting held on Thursday, March 23, 2023, the VRA President updated the membership on recent changes, including the merger of the VRA and the VRA Foundation and shifting the Annual Conference to the fall. The President also highlighted new and ongoing efforts by the Executive Board, committees, and groups. This article provides the transcript.

Keywords

Visual Resources Association (VRA), Visual Resources Association Foundation (VRAF), annual address, Executive Board, annual report, visual resources.

Author Bio & Acknowledgements

John Trendler is the Curator of Visual Resources at Scripps College and the President of the Visual Resources Association. At Scripps College, he has served on committees including the Multimedia Literacy Committee and the Claremont College's Digital Library Advisory Committee and presented in workshops including "Digital Assets in the Classroom" and "Aim to Achieve: Visual Literacy and Special Collections." From 2003 to 2005 John served as Secretary of the VRA's Southern California Chapter and between 2007 and 2011 served as Chapter Chair. John joined the VRA's Executive Board as Public Relations and Communications officer from 2012 to 2016, and as President in 2021.

Hello! In case you don't know, I'm John Trendler, the President of the Visual Resources Association and it's my pleasure to welcome you to the all-new 2023 midyear extravaganza – where there'll be meetings, workshops, lightning talks, social time, and more!

We created this new, open, online midyear programming because our annual conference has moved from spring to fall. We hope this move will reduce scheduling conflicts and increase conference attendance. I cannot thank the Executive Board members enough for their hard work and devotion to the Association. It's a great group and I'm honored to work alongside them.

Over the past year, we've held monthly board meetings via Zoom and asynchronous discussions in BaseCamp. I'm happy to report that the merger of the VRA and its Foundation has been completed. There may be a few more loose ends to tie up, but we are now one unified nonprofit organization. I want to thank everyone who put their time and effort into making this happen.

The Board has been reviewing the most recent Strategic Plan to see which action items have been completed and which will need to be rolled over into the next Strategic Plan. We'll be sharing more information about this soon. We've also been reviewing the VRA Policies and Procedures manual since there have been changes to the roles, structure, and rules of the Association.

In an effort to increase membership and reduce barriers, the Board voted to lower the membership fee while also creating the VRA Advocate membership level which helps to offset the cost. If you're able to, please consider joining or renewing at the VRA Advocate level. We also worked with a Development Consultant, which resulted in the initiation of a Planned Giving program that will ensure the long-term sustainability of our Association. We still have work to do on this but I'm excited to see this opportunity develop.

To keep everyone informed of Association business, programs, and initiatives, we've instituted Quarterly Newsletters and Monthly Memos from the President. I have to both acknowledge and thank Public Relations and Communications Officer Margaret McKee for putting these together.

In an effort to increase transparency and engagement, we've been holding monthly office hours where anyone is welcome to drop in and chat with members of the Board. It's a great opportunity to ask questions, share feedback, or just get to know more about the Board. Although many things have changed in the past few years, our Association remains committed to advancing the field of visual resource management and supporting those who work in it.

We offer financial support through our grants and travel awards program, we support the publication of scholarly research through the *VRA Bulletin*, and we provide educational opportunities through regional workshops, educational institutes, and conference programming. VRA's Emerging Professionals and Students group (or VREPS) continues to provide professional development opportunities like their Cover Letter and Resume Review sessions. And the Equitable Action Committee advances and supports equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion through programs like their monthly community hours and programming like the upcoming "Bystander Intervention in the Workplace" workshop.

I've only mentioned a fraction of the great work being done by the VRA's committees, programs, and groups, and we'll hear more from some of them later today and tomorrow. The VRA is a vital association that plays a crucial role in advancing the field of visual resource management. Our work is essential in ensuring that valuable visual materials are preserved, accessible, and used ethically and effectively. I'm constantly impressed by the Association and am happy to be a part of it. I look forward to seeing you all in San Antonio this fall!

Thank you for your time.