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Translating Visual to Textual Resources: Editorial and Technological Support for Electronic Publishing

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Abstract

This article is an extension of a presentation that occurred at the 2018 College Art Association, Visual Resources Association affiliate session in Los Angeles. The session was entitled, "Shifting Sands: New Trends in Visual Resource Services." It is a case study based upon the author's personal experience of twelve years working as the production editor for UC Irvine's *Journal for Learning through the Arts*. It is suggested that visual resources curators are well-positioned to support electronic publishing ventures. With the plethora of online tools supporting digital technology, there are opportunities for visual resources professionals to support more than the use of images at their institutions. Other examples of ways to expand a visual resources toolkit are provided that the author hopes professionals will find translatable to their situations.

**Author Bio & Acknowledgements**

Maureen Burns is an information professional with over 30 years of experience developing and managing teaching resources of analog and digital images at UC Irvine, the Getty Villa, and CSULB. Presently working on a consulting basis, through IMAGinED, Burns is handling sales for Archivision and is partnering on a CSU Archives Japanese American history digitization project as well as other image-focused work. With a doctorate in Educational Administration from the UCI/UCLA joint Leadership program, Burns provides editorial support for the electronic *Journal for Learning through the Arts* and works as a project coordinator for a UCI NSF K-12 arts integration professional development grant. She is currently serving as the Content Editor for the online *VRA Bulletin* and participating in the work of VRA's Development and Financial Advisory Committees as well as the VRA Foundation's Regional Workshop Team. She is a past VRA president and past director of the VRA Foundation.

With the transition from analog to digital images in visual resources collections over the last twenty years has come a concomitant expansion in the roles that image curators and other like-minded information professionals play in their institutions. A number of engaging panels at professional conferences have recently focused on what has been termed "scope drift" demonstrating a wide variety of possible paths a visual resources professional might take to expand traditional services. This article is an extension of a presentation that occurred at the 2018 College Art Association, Visual Resources Association affiliate session in Los Angeles. The session was entitled, "Shifting Sands: New Trends in Visual Resource Services." It is essentially a case study based upon personal experience that the author hopes other find translatable to their situations.

In 2004, after completing a doctorate in Educational Administration at the University of California, Los Angeles and Irvine (UCLA and UCI), my mentor and dissertation advisor, Professor Liane Brouillette, mentioned that she wanted to start a scholarly journal focused on research into arts integration in K-12 schools. Her own research activities were starting to demonstrate that teaching subjects, such as science, to elementary school children using the performing and visual arts, makes scientific concepts and vocabulary more accessible and understandable, especially to English language learners.[1]

At the time, I was working as the director of UC Irvine's visual resources collection (VRC), where we were building a UC Shared Images project for all 10 University of California campuses.[2] Therefore, I was aware of the emerging developments at the California Digital Library (CDL).[3] CDL was rolling out a number of digital support services for the University of California and I had just discovered eScholarship, which serves as the institutional repository for the 10 University of California campuses and affiliated research centers.[4] In addition to teaching in the UCI School of Education, Dr. Brouillette is also the Director of one of these UC research entities called the Center for Leaning through the Arts and Sciences.[5] Being a repository, eScholarship is also an open access publishing platform offering: publishing and production tools, a full editorial and peer review system, and consulting services. I suggested to Liane that she consider making the Center's journal an electronic one, in order to take advantage of the new eScholarlship platform and CDL's support services.
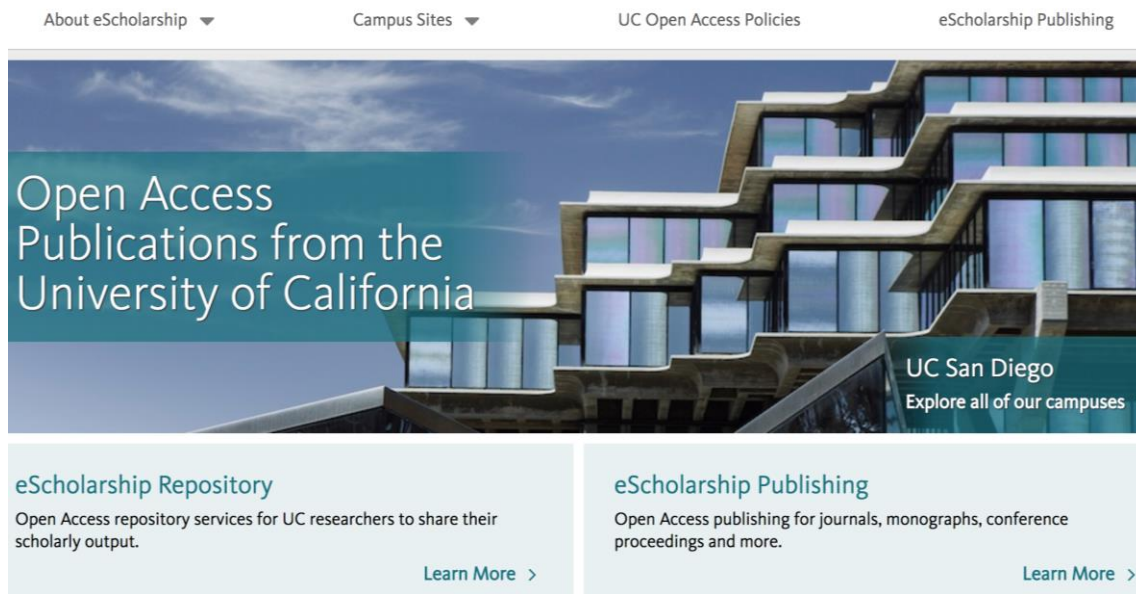
Figure 1 – eScholarship Landing Page

Although intrigued by my suggestion, Liane was hesitant because she thought that a traditional, hard copy journal would be preferable and more acceptable to the Academic Senate for faculty step reviews and promotions. Web-based systems like this were relatively new in the early-2000s and, although she was comfortable being the chief editor making decisions about the content, Dr. Brouillette was concerned that she did not have the time to learn how to use the online tools or to manage the workflow of an electronic journal. The challenge was, and still is, that being a tenured UC faculty member, she has a number of research, teaching, and community service responsibilities as well as being required to serve on departmental, campus, and UC system-wide committees. She added on directing a research center, which requires grant writing, project implementation, and research analysis.

CDL develops, trains, and provides trouble-shooting support for the electronic tools they develop, but the expectation is that the faculty and staff who want to use eScholarship will do the rest of the work. At the time, the UC Libraries took a similar view. There were no librarians whose job descriptions included support for digital scholarship (although this has since changed), so Liane found no help on that front. I was suitably grateful for all of Dr. Brouillette's guidance throughout my studies, dissertation, and defense that I offered to assist her with the technical work and she declared me her "production editor." Twelve years later, I continue to provide support for the Journal for Learning through the Arts, and due in part to this experience, I felt comfortable enough with electronic journals to take on the content editor job for the *Visual Resources Association Bulletin*.[6]

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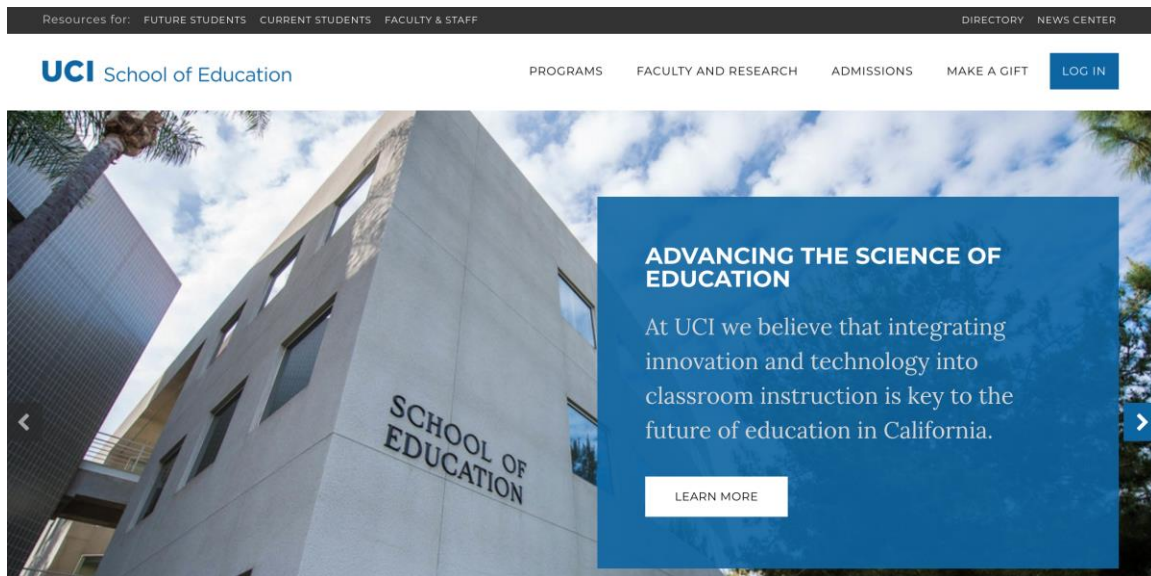
Figure 2 – UC Irvine's School of Education Landing Page

Since Dr. Brouillette works in UCI's School of Education and the Visual Resources Collection, where I worked, was in the School of Humanities, I could not officially make this work a part of my managerial responsibilities.[7] But, this work could easily be done remotely since eScholarship is a Web-based system and being on campus forty-hours a week made work on the journal more feasible logistically, allowing me to meet with Liane over lunch or after VRC hours. I was eager to learn more about eScholarship and add to my visual resources toolkit. She compensates me, and a copy editor, by building the electronic publishing work into her grant applications to pay us as contract workers. To my mind, this electronic publishing work seemed a logical extension of the work of a visual resources curator. We provide personalized services and work closely with the primary faculty we support, usually in the arts and humanities. Also, traditional analog responsibilities were shifting to digital technology, admittedly with more of a focus on digital images, so many hands-on, service-oriented tasks were already being taken on for students and faculty in an expanding number of departments—the UCI VRC was purposely trying to become a campus-wide service facility.

Digitizing slide collections and building born digital collections led quickly to system development that not only allowed for descriptive cataloging, but image discovery and retrieval through the Web, and the use of new presentation tools. At UC, we saw the potential for sharing digital images between the ten campuses early on starting in 1996 with the Library of UC Images, a collaboration between the UC visual resources collections and a technical support unit on the Berkeley campus.[8] Once CDL came on the scene, this collaboration expanded to include the UC libraries with an Image Demonstrator project delivering the images and descriptive metadata in Luna Imaging's Insight software in 2003, which evolved into the UC Shared Images project starting in 2007—it is still delivering UC system-wide images in Artstor.[9] By the time Liane and I started to work together on an electronic journal, I had developed useful system skills from a variety of databases and Web-based electronic tools as well as advanced project management experience.

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Dr. Brouillette and I began our exploration of the CDL's eScholarship offerings and first discovered that they had tools to manage more than journals, such as making working papers and paper series accessible. This turned out to be a terrific place to upload information about UCI's ArtsBridge program, which was bringing the arts to K-12 schools through university outreach. It was quick and easy to upload this information. All we had to do was develop a form, so that contributors could provide the informational metadata that needed to be loaded into the online system with the paper or series.[10] Dr. Brouillette's Center for Learning through the Arts became the research arm of this UCI program as it expanded to become ArtsBridge America and went nationwide.

ArtsBridge America provided us with access to enthusiastic arts educators and motivated researchers to guide the journal by being on the editorial board and to serve as reviewers, as well as ready-made contributors and a broad reader base. Setting up the electronic Journal for Learning through the Arts was a close collaboration between the content and production editors. I handled all of the communications with CDL to determine technological requirements and guided Liane through the set-up process. Together we wrote and populated the Web site with information about the Center, the aims and scope of the journal, submission guidelines, policies about reviewing, copyright, etc. CDL thankfully provided samples and boilerplate to help get us started and plenty of online and personal support was provided to learn the system and assist us.

For the first issue of the Journal for Learning through the Arts, Liane decided to invite some colleagues who were doing cutting-edge research on arts education and integration to contribute articles.[11] She wanted to get it out quickly to draw other potential authors in with the high quality of the articles. With this first issue, I encountered a great deal of hesitance on the part of Professor Brouillette and the authors to use the online tools that CDL provided, so I developed another form to get the articles' informational metadata from the authors and did all of the uploading for them, realizing that I was the person that needed to help them wrap their heads around using the online journal tools. Doing this was an opportunity for me to really get to know the system, increase my own comfort levels, and to develop more Web site information to make it easier for authors to understand how to do it themselves.

Liane decided to use some of her grant funding to do a print run of this first issue. It felt like this was defeating the purpose of the electronic journal since PDFs of articles can be downloaded or printed and articles can be shared through e-mail, Facebook, or Twitter. Yet, it was a good exercise, graphically demonstrating the difficulty of trying to create a print issue in-house and the high cost of doing so. It was not attempted again after the first issue.

The first manifestation of eScholarship was powered by Bepress.[12] CDL thought through and planned eScholarship, but to get it up and running quickly, they started out using the cutting-edge tools developed by Bepress, also relying on their technical support. Over time, the decision was made to migrate eScholarship into the Public Knowledge Project's Open Journal Systems, community open source and open access tools for journal management and a publishing system, so that CDL could better customize it for their own purposes and be more responsive to their user base through in-house technical support as well as contribute to its development.[13] You can see what the CDL's Open Journal System looks like behind the scenes in this figure.

Figure 3 – Production Editor View of Journal for Learning through the Arts in the Open Journal Systems

The Bepress tools were simpler to use, but the OJS is more powerful and flexible providing the ability to add new features based on community response. The takeaway here is that there is nothing static about scholarly publishing and your support staff needs to be agile enough to adjust to, what sometimes amounts to, big changes in the online tools.

Once this occurred, CDL added the option to start monograph series too, so that entire books could also be uploaded to the system and published in both electronic and print forms. This process involved the author in the process and is a much more elaborate undertaking. We have experienced CDL trying out partnerships with different publishers and a variety of publishing tools, which has been a bit hard to keep up with. This service is currently limited to PDF publication on the eScholarship site with links to print-on-demand services, but they are now partnering with UC Press to develop a book production workflow with expanded services. The Center has three monographs currently online: *Arts = Education: Connecting Learning Communities in Los Angeles* by Amy Shimson-Santo; *The Poets of El Sol* by Sue Cronmiller; and *Help your Child to Thrive: Making the Best of a Struggling Public Education System* by Liane Brouillette.[14]

As the possibilities for electronic scholarship changes and expands, eScholarship continues to evolve. From 2005 to 2017, the Center for Learning through the Arts has uploaded 192 publications total to our eScholarship paper series, monographs, and journal, the majority of which have been published in the latter, with volume 13 coming soon. Looking at the statistics for the journal alone, just for the month of January of 2018, there were 2,078 total requests, with 768 being full downloads and 1,310 being viewed online. The reach of the electronic journal is truly global—we have had a nice percentage of article submissions from around the world and this can be seen in the readership statistics as well. This publication effort has been accomplished through essentially a partnership between one faculty member and one visual resources professional, with

some additional support from guest editors and copy editors. It would not have been possible for us without the California Digital Library guiding and supporting all of these electronic publishing options for the University of California (for which we are exceedingly grateful), but we have learned that we also have to be agile enough to go with the flow of inevitable technical change.

I would like to suggest that visual resources curators are well-positioned to support electronic publishing ventures, based on the fruitful experience of working with Dr. Brouillette on the Center for Learning through the Arts and Sciences eScholarship publications. There are a variety of reasons why this seems practical and possible. For example, most visual resources curators have an educational background in art, art history, architecture, archaeology, education, humanities, and/or library & information science. They understand what it takes to do graduate research and writing, with an ability to empathize with both editor and author. Spending a full forty-hours a week on campus, a VR staff member can better stay on top of workflow—managing the journal, tracking the progress of each article as it goes through peer review and revisions, organizing the journal issue, and staying focused on the completion of each issue or other publication. For example, although the Open Journal Systems tracks this progression, I developed a color-coded Google spreadsheet so the content editor can see at a glance where we are at with a given issue and collaborative next steps can be recorded and implemented as demonstrated in the figure below.[15]

Figure 4 – Color-Coded Article Tracking for the *Journal for Learning through the Arts*

Many visual resource centers are located in academic departments, which are in close proximity to the scholars that they support, for easy face-to-face communication, but curators are also skilled at online communications with those more distant, from authors to system developers and technical support personnel. Information professionals have the technical skills to use & manage web-based systems being agile enough to deal with the inevitable changes as electronic publishing progresses. Finally, there is a detail-orientation and degree of focus and follow-through that a visual resources curator can

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provide to scholarly publishing endeavors. In many cases, faculty members most likely cannot take on this extra work because of the many demands on their time.

With the plethora of online tools supporting digital technology, there are opportunities for visual resources professionals to support more than the use of images at their institutions. I encourage artists and art historians as well as visual resources curators (and other archivists), librarians, and museum professionals to consider the benefits of collaborating on electronic publications. These benefits include: obtaining a better understanding of the research process; developing common goals to share research and practical experiences; dividing the work up to develop functional and sustainable collaborations; and, maximizing the strengths of the scholars to deeply understand the content and the information professionals to bring it to fruition through production. It is a win/win situation furthering multiple fields of endeavor—getting quality research out on electronic platforms and continuing to improve the tools and systems that make it possible.

In recent e-mail exchanges, Dr. Brouillette stated, "Without your help, I would simply have had to close the journal down. . . .Thanks ever so much for keeping the journal alive!" These 12 years of electronic journal collaboration have been a fascinating learning experience and the content editor's appreciation for the effort makes it all the more worthwhile.

When starting to consult in 2009, I questioned how applicable my visual resources experience would be outside of a photographic collection context. The earliest opportunities that opened up were jobs related to my doctoral studies in education, for example, the work on production support for the *Journal for Learning through the Arts*, discussed above. When more grants rolled in to the Center for Learning through the Arts and Sciences, Dr. Brouillette hired me to help manage these projects and handle the administrative work since my many years of VRC work provided me with a firm foundation in UCI policy and procedures (something faculty often find frustrating). Starting with an Improving Teacher Quality State grant from the U.S. Department of Education, I continue to coordinate a large, multi-year National Science Foundation grant through which UCI is training K-12 teachers how to integrate the arts and sciences in California's elementary school classrooms (subjects which often get short shrift).[16] Starting with three years of on-the-ground teacher professional development and videotaping all activities, the ESCAPE project has progressed to online courses for teachers providing opportunities to learn more about Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) development as well as tools and digital workflows for video.

Figure 5 – ESCAPE Project Landing Page

The visual resources experience led to work that is more closely related to images too. A terrific colleague, Trudy Levy, invited me to participate in a great project developed by the California Digital Library in conjunction with the California State Library called the Local History Digital Resources Project (LHDRP). Trudy was on track for retirement and asked me to take on some of the technical work to help her ease into it. The LHDRP provided historical societies, public libraries, and other special collections with the equipment, metadata standards, and workflow training to digitize their image collections and make them accessible in the Online Archive of California and Calisphere.[17] The subcontracted portion of this work involved participating in training activities and image scan quality control. This provided several years of work that was more of an extension of past VRC activities and contact with a new range of like-minded colleagues in different archival contexts.

Meanwhile, Scott Gilchrist, Founder and President of Archivision, approached me about handling sales for this commercial vendor of high quality digital images of the built environment and public art.[18] Susan Jane Williams was doing this work, but if I stepped in, she could focus on cataloging the images and providing extensive descriptive metadata as well as VRA committee work to develop data standards and tools. Being a sales representative was something that I had never done before, but with 25 years of VRC work under my belt, I had purchased digital images from a number of vendors over the years, so understood the process of commercial image acquisition. It has been quite interesting to flip perspectives and learn more about these small business owners who do much of the same work of a VR curator—shooting and selecting images, building comprehensive digital collections, describing the images, and developing tools for discovery, access, and use.[19]

Opportunities to provide image collection appraisals and technical advisory services for those who have already built extensive image collections or want to share the digital collections that they are building through their research and teaching, began to also surface. The Laguna College of Art and Design had a large 35mm slide collection that they hired me to appraise and provide suggestions for digitization and disposition. I

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eventually assisted with planning workflow, developing cataloging guidelines, assisting with image description, and migrating the institutional collection of faculty and student art work into ARTstor's Shared Shelf, which is still underway.[20] Training students to catalog Alka Patel's expanding collection of field photography related to Islamic architecture and overseeing the projects' workflow and delivery has resulted in 15,000 images being added to Artstor's core content.[21] These projects require grant funding, but are ongoing and land firmly in a visual resources curator's bailiwick.

An LHDRP project participant recommended my services to the Archives Director, Greg Williams, at California State University, Dominguez Hills to help launch a collaborative effort to digitize the Japanese American history materials in the holdings of several CSU campuses and develop a functional model for ongoing planning and collaboration.[22] Reminiscent of the UC Shared Images project, mentioned above, where a distributed group of partners builds a viable collection of archival images for research, teaching, and study, this California State University Japanese American History Digitization project (CSUJAD) has allowed me to use both the experience of a visual resources curator and bring some of my education expertise into play as well as to learn a great deal about the issues associated with digitizing various media in archival collections and contextualizing it to make the collection useful. It has involved assistance with grant writing and reporting, site visits to appraise collections, the development of technical specifications and metadata guidelines for the group, the ongoing development of a controlled vocabulary for Japanese American history, system and workflow analyses, preservation recommendations, website development, and more. Many grants require an educational component to engage the public in the use of digitized collections and so the CSUJAD has also developed physical and online exhibitions, symposia, collection user guides, K-12 teaching guides and lesson plans, teacher workshops, and other community events to engage the general public in the development and use of digital content.

This sampling of examples is intended to demonstrate how translatable a visual resources skill set can be to a variety of fields of endeavor, both new and familiar. Although visual resources contexts and administrative support varies from institution to institution, it is hoped that the digital publishing, in particular, and other examples from consulting work, might inspire expanded notions of tools that can be added to a visual resources kit. It is suggested that visual resources curators should have confidence in the skills they have developed, but should continue to look for new ways to apply them. There is always something new to learn and a can-do, hands-on attitude can bring new experiences to insure that this brave new world of potential visual resources services doesn't pass you by.

In conclusion, the Visual Resources Association published a white paper in 2009 to advocate for visual resources management.[23] Although that was almost ten years ago, there is much thought-provoking information that still resonates about the value of visual resources work and strategic directions to consider in the light of new technologies. The section on "Visual Resources and Change" provides examples of the traditional types of work accomplished in visual resources collections and explores six considerations to guide decisions about the further development of visual resources services. It is interesting to note that the latter matches up well with many of the new visual resources services presented in scope drift conference sessions and the information provided in this journal issue. Perhaps an update or new white paper to capture current thinking about

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visual resources services and some continued holistic thinking about profession is in order. The white paper's conclusion still seems pertinent: "Considering the complexity and enormous potential of the digital future, working collaboratively to share resources, staying current with emerging developments, and experimenting with educational implementation is the most logical way to move forward."

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[1] The following provides an example of Professor Brouillette's recent research: Graham, N. J, & Brouillette, L. (2016). Using Arts Integration to Make Science Learning Memorable in the Upper Elementary Grades: A Quasi-Experimental Study. *Journal for Learning through the Arts*, 12(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.21977/D912133442 Retrieved from https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9x61c7kf

[2] Information about the current work of this University of California collaborative can be found at: https://wiki.library.ucsf.edu/display/UCLCKG/UC+Shared+Visual+Resource+CKG

[3] To learn more about the services offered by the California Digital Library, see: https://www.cdlib.org/

4 Additional information about eScholarship can be found here: https://escholarship.org/

[5] Brouillette's Center for Learning through the Arts and Sciences website can be found at: http://sites.uci.edu/class/

[6] The *Journal for Learning through the Arts* can be found at: https://escholarship.org/uc/class_lta

[7] For more information about the UCI School of Education, see: http://education.uci.edu/

[8] Burns, M. & Zimmerman, L. `If You Build It, Will They Come?' The Library of University of California Images in Transition in the *Visual Resources Association Bulletin* 29 (Winter 2002).

[9] The following articles provide more information about the evolution of the UC image sharing projects:
Burns, M. From Horse-drawn Wagon to Hot Rod: The University of California's Digital Image Service Experience co-published simultaneously in the *Archives and the Digital Library and the Journal of Archival Organization* 4, no. 1/2 (2006).
and
Zentall. L. & Burns, M. University of California Shared Image Collections: Convergence and Expansion, *Visual Resources Association Bulletin* 35, no. 2 (2008).

[10] The full range of UCI Center for Learning through the Arts and Sciences publications can be found here: https://escholarship.org/uc/class

[11] The first issue of the *Journal for Learning through the Arts* can be found at: https://escholarship.org/uc/class_lta/1/1

[12] For more information about Bepress, see: https://www.bepress.com/

[13] For more information about the Public Knowledge Project's Open Journal Systems, see: https://pkp.sfu.ca/ojs/

[14] To access the Center for Learning through the Arts and Sciences monograph series, see: https://escholarship.org/uc/class_las

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[15] The colors indicate the following about a given article: blue is ready to publish, green is in copy editing, violet is with the content editor, brown is sent out for review, yellow is waiting for the author to make revisions, orange is unknown status, red is declined, and white new articles waiting to be sent out for review.

[16] An issue of the *Journal for Learning through the Arts* was guest edited by a group from the U.S. Department of Education in 2010 to highlight the various programs that were funded through these Improving Teacher Quality State (ITQ) grants, see: https://escholarship.org/uc/class_lta/10/1. Dr. Brouillette and her research partners contributed an article entitled, "Increasing Engagement and Oral Language Skills of ELLs through the Arts in the Primary Grades." For more information about ITQ grants, see: https://www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/index.html. Information about National Science Foundation grants can be found at: https://www.nsf.gov/. The current UCI grant is called the Equitable Science Curriculum integrating Arts in Public Education (ESCAPE) and more information on this project can be found at: http://escape.uci.edu/

[17] For more information about the Local History Digital Resources Project, see: https://www.cdlib.org/services/access_publishing/dsc/projects/ and http://califalibrarygroup.pbworks.com/w/page/21274519/LHDRP%20Handbook%3A%201%20-%20Context. See the websites for more information about the Online Archive of California http://www.oac.cdlib.org/ and Calisphere https://calisphere.org/

[18] For more information about Archivision, see: http://archivision.com/educational/

[19] There was a session at the 2018 Visual Resources Association conference in Philadelphia entitled "Two-Way Street: VRA's Commercial Partners and Collaborations" and the presenters are working on an article for the next Visual Resources Bulletin issue.

[20] The Laguna College of Art and Design Library website can be found at https://www.lcad.edu/library/

[21] For more information about the Alka Patel Archives, see: http://www.artstor.org/collection/alka-patel-archive

[22] For more information about the Japanese American History Digitization Project, see: http://www.csujad.com/ and Williams, Gregory L.; Tyson, Sue; and Burns, Maureen (2015) "Building a Statewide Archival Collaborative: The California State University Japanese American Digitization Project," *VRA Bulletin*: Vol. 42: Iss. 1, Article 9.
Available at: https://online.vraweb.org/vrab/vol42/iss1/9

[23] The VRA white paper can be found at: http://vraweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/vra_white_paper.pdf

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