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Endless Images: A SoCal Summer Mini-Conference

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Endless Images: A SoCal Summer Mini-Conference

Abstract

This article reports on the Endless Images mini-conference that took place on August 14 and 15, 2016, in Laguna Beach, California, and provides concise summaries of each presentation. Three professional organizations—the Visual Resources Association (VRA), the Society of California Archivists (SCA), and the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA)—sponsored the event. The goal was to bring together professionals from each of these like-minded organizations to showcase their digital projects and explore the connections in their work. Twenty presentations in two sessions and a lightning round highlight both the challenges and solutions that characterize the current digital projects landscape across all disciplines.

Keywords

Endless Images, Visual Resources Association, Society of California Archivists, Art Libraries Society of North America, Laguna Beach, archives, libraries, museums, visual resources collections, Laguna Art Museum, Festival of the Arts, Pageant of the Masters, Laguna College of Art + Design, Sherman Library and Gardens, grants, digital projects, linked open data, PDF/A, oral history, local history, stereographs, California Digital Library

Author Bio & Acknowledgements

VRA, SCA, and ARLIS/NA would like to express sincere appreciation to Jennifer Martinez Wormser, Christa Jech, and the student assistants in the Dennis and Leslie Power Library at LCAD who organized, implemented, moderated, provided tours, refreshments, and hosted the Endless Images mini-conference. Thank you to Antoinette Avila, from the UCI Libraries, for assisting with the moderating too.

Maureen Burns is an information professional with over 25 years of experience developing and managing teaching resources of analog and digital images at UC Irvine, the Getty Villa, and CSULB with a MA in Art History and EdD in Educational Administration. 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. She is currently serving as the Content Editor for the online *VRA Bulletin* and participating in the work of VRA's Slide and Transitional Media Task Force and Financial Advisory Committee. She is also a past VRA president and past director of the VRA Foundation.

Hannah Marie Marshall is an Implementation Manager on the Strategic Services team at Artstor and a Reference Librarian for the Carlsbad City Library. She received her B.A. in Art History from the University of California, Irvine and a MLIS from the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

After receiving her B.A. and M.L.S. degrees from Scripps College and the University of Maryland, respectively, Jennifer Martinez Wormser worked in the Special Collections Departments at UCLA and at San Diego State University, in the Manuscripts Department of the Huntington Library, and at the Sherman Library & Gardens before accepting her current position as the Library Director at Laguna College of Art + Design in 2010. She served as President of the Society of California Archivists, chaired its 2004 Program Committee, and served as co-chair of the society's Education and Outreach and Publicity Committees. She served on the California Historical Resources Advisory Board from 2005-2010, taught an archives and manuscripts course for San Jose

State University's School of Library and Information Science from 2006-2009, and recently developed and taught a class at Laguna College of Art + Design on the art and history of the book.

Endless Images: A SoCal Summer Mini-Conference

The Endless Images mini-conference took place on August 14 and 15, 2016, in Laguna Beach, California. Three professional organizations—the Visual Resources Association (VRA), the Society of California Archivists (SCA), and the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA)—sponsored the event in order to bring together professionals who may not fully realize the overlap between the digital work being undertaken by each group.

The mini-conference organizers, Jennifer Martinez Wormser and Maureen Burns, have decades of experience between them working at the intersection of archives, libraries, museums, and visual resources. While collaborating recently on Laguna College of Art + Design's image collection projects, they formed the idea for an event that would bring together Southern California professionals from each organization. Wormser, Director of the LCAD Library¹, and Burns, of IMAGinED Consulting, organized the Endless Images event to create an opportunity for members of these three groups to connect and showcase their work, lending visibility to both the challenges and solutions that characterize the digital projects landscape across all disciplines.

Why VRA², SCA³ and ARLIS/NA⁴? These three professional organizations are unique and distinctive in their own right, yet as Burns and Wormser discussed, there is a significant amount of overlapping effort among the constituencies of all three with respect to the care, management, curation, and dissemination of digital images. Bringing together members of these three groups would provide an opportunity for the cross-pollination of ideas and introduce colleagues with related interests to each other, many of whom might not otherwise have the opportunity to intersect professionally. With Laguna Beach's geographical location, history and longstanding commitment to the arts as a draw and backdrop for these discussions, the *Endless Images* summer program was born.

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¹ For more information about the LCAD Library, see: http://www.lcad.edu/library.

² The Southern California chapter of the Visual Resources Association was formed in 1995 and the VRA itself in 1982; The VRA is the only professional organization devoted exclusively to visual materials including their history, classification, production, use, and conservation. For more information, see: http://vraweb.org/about/chapters/southern-california/.

³ The Society of California Archivists, formed in 1971, currently has more than 500 members and is devoted to the support and development of individuals and institutions that collect, care for, and provide access to the documentary heritage of California and adjoining areas. More information can be found at: http://www.calarchivists.org/.

⁴ Founded in 1972, the Art Libraries Society of North America has 17 chapters, including one in Southern California, which provide a network for communication and cooperation among art libraries and provide opportunities for ideas, projects, and programs to develop. For more information, see: http://southerncalifornia.arlisna.org/.



Laguna Beach Sunset [Photo by Maureen Burns, 2016]

Laguna Beach is one of Southern California's most famous summer destinations, a beautiful coastal area between Los Angeles and San Diego with picturesque beaches, rugged canyons, quaint shops, fine dining, and a thriving arts community (http://www.visitlagunabeach.com/). Laguna's early history as an art colony stems from the first decades of the twentieth century, and the city today continues to embrace its artistic legacy and traditions through its galleries, art museum, art college, summer festivals, and arts-related public programs. The event took full advantage of all Laguna has to offer by starting out with afternoon tours of the Laguna Art Museum (http://lagunaartmuseum.org/) on Sunday, followed by a no-host alfresco dinner at Urth Caffé. The grand finale of the first night was attending Laguna's famous eighty-year tradition of the Pageant of the Masters *tableaux vivants* performance at the Festival of Arts (https://www.foapom.com/).

The Pageant is a unique experience in its theatrical illusion of masterpieces made from real people posing to look like original artworks. It is combined with the Festival of the Arts, one of the nation's oldest juried art shows dating back to the turn of the century, showcasing the work of Orange County, California, artists. Attendees had time to look at the wide range of styles, subjects, and media in the art festival before the evening performance, during which many gasps of wonder and delight could be heard. Several attendees in our group said that attending a

⁵ For more information about the history of Laguna, see the Laguna Beach Historical Society's Web site at http://www.lagunabeachhistory.org/ and some great images at https://lagunabeachhistory.smugmug.com/Postcards/i-W3JRd5P.

performance of the Pageant of the Masters was a personal "bucket list" item for them, and they appreciated having an opportunity to enjoy the show on a warm summer evening with colleagues old and new.



Laguna Art Museum Library [Photo provided by Jennifer Martinez Wormser, 2016]

Lindy Narver, a long-time ARLIS and VRA member, graciously provided tours of the Laguna Art Museum library⁶ on Sunday afternoon and arranged for a docent to lead attendees through the museum's current exhibitions. The library is focused on California art, with a special emphasis on Laguna Beach area artists, who have a long, fascinating, history in this art colony. In addition to over 5,000 books in the collection, the library also maintains artist files, and houses both the museum's and Laguna Art Association's historical records and archives. Lindy spoke about the unique challenges that small museum libraries face in terms of resources and space, and of her work preparing archival materials in anticipation of the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Laguna Art Association coming in 2018.

There were several special exhibitions on display at the Laguna Art Museum, including "Peter Krasnow: Maverick Modernist" and "The Wave Portfolio: Photographs by Anthony Friedkin." Between the museum and the Pageant of the Arts participants, who were able to attend the first half-day of the mini-conference, were able to wander the town and enjoy some uniquely Southern California cultural experiences.

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⁶ For more information, see: http://lagunaartmuseum.org/library/.

⁷ The Laguna Art Museum Web site has more detailed summaries of these exhibitions and examples of the artists' work at: http://lagunaartmuseum.org/peter-krasnow-maverick-modernist/ and http://lagunaartmuseum.org/anthony-friedkin-the-wave-portfolio/.



Laguna College of Art + **Design** [Photo provided by Laguna College of Art + Design, 2016]

A full day of substantive programming took place on Monday, August 15, at the Laguna College of Art + Design⁸, with twenty presentations for the approximately fifty attendees. The day was structured into morning and afternoon sessions, with lunch followed by a lightning round in the middle. The first session, "Grants, Curation, Digital Projects, and Instruction," comprised four presentations addressing digital projects from their inception to engagement with users of the materials. The lightning rounds were lively, short presentations covering a wide range of topics, from diverse digital content and grant projects to newer formats and technological tools. The second session, "Description, Metadata, and Preservation" explored systems for managing digital content, clever approaches for obtaining descriptive information, as well as tactics for extending the reach of the materials and ensuring their preservation. For more information about the presentations, search on "Endless Images" in VRA SlideShare http://www.slideshare.net/VisResAssoc and see Appendix A below.

The Endless Images mini-conference ended with a reception at the Sherman Library & Gardens (http://www.slgardens.org/) in nearby Corona del Mar. The gardens have plant life from various parts of the world along with sculpture and fountains in a tranquil setting. Attendees could tour the library with its fine history collections focused on the Pacific Southwest and wander the gardens. The evening reception provided ample opportunities to discuss the events of

⁸ Founded in 1961, the Laguna College of Art + Design offers twelve undergraduate BFA majors and four MFA programs in an intimate environment where technology and tradition mix in the arts and creative industries (http://www.lcad.edu).

the Endless Images conference as well as to decompress and meet like-minded colleagues from three intersecting organizations.



Sherman Library & Gardens Reception [Photo by Jennifer Martinez Wormser, 2016]

Evaluation surveys circulated to conference attendees online provided feedback that expressed an appreciation for the value of a local, affordable conference experience. They remarked on the in-depth discussions and analysis of digital image collection management provided by the program and the opportunity to network with local professionals in related fields. Proceeds from the program were distributed among the sponsoring organizations.

Appendix A

Morning Session - Grants, Curation, Digital Projects & Instruction

Limitless Images, Limited Resources: Challenges of a Small Private Library

Paul Wormser, Library Director Sherman Library & Gardens

 $\underline{http://www.slgardens.org/library}$

Wormser discussed the workflow and project management approaches taken in order to process a large image collection at the Sherman Library, despite limited resources. The collection of about 75,000 images of great research interest came from the Newport Nautical Museum. It consists of a variety of oceangoing vessels and other nautical images from the Newport Beach area. These archival materials came to the Sherman Library in a variety of analog and digital

formats, each with its own set of issues in terms of digitization, description, and preservation. The director has enlisted volunteers with the specialized knowledge required to do high-level subject description and categorization. There is currently a database with about 24,000 items and the next challenge is broader access and delivery on a tight budget.

Granting Wishes: Roles and Challenges Implementing Grants with Multiple Partners

Greg Williams, Director of Archives and Special Collections

Maureen Burns, Consultant

Rachel Mandell, Digital Archivist

California State University, Dominguez Hills

http://www.csujad.com/

The team provided three different perspectives on the California State University Japanese American Digitization project and generalized some lessons learned about grants that involve multiple partners. Williams provided the big picture perspective of the successful grant writer with tips based on recent NEH and National Park Service experiences. As the person ultimately responsible for accomplishing all the project goals, he also mentioned the importance of matching the project goals to the grant's principles and connecting with program officers. Burns discussed the types of research and work a consultant might provide to help with the added burden of grant project work to busy schedules. She shared information about the obstacles she has experienced working on a variety of collaborative grant projects and the indicators of success for grant managers to consider. Rachel Mandell described what it is like in the trenches, wearing many different hats and juggling a heavy processing workload. She manages production activities such as: handling archival materials, scanning, cataloging, developing best practices, troubleshooting technical issues, and keeping multiple campus partners on the same page with their contributions. It is a great learning experience for all, but one should attend to the gaps.

Reaching Out, Reaching In: Effects of Piloting Linked Open Data on Artists' Books at the University California, Irvine

Emilee Matthews, Research Librarian for Visual Arts

University of California, Irvine

http://www.lib.uci.edu/sites/all/plodab/index.php

Matthews discussed the reception and applications of a project piloting linked open data for a collection of artists' books. She touched on the relevant teaching use cases that shaped the tool as well as its pedagogical applications. Matthews related this project to similar efforts at other institutions and summarized the lessons learned in the first year of the grant-sponsored project, such as: the importance of the discovery interface, the role of faculty feedback, and the necessity for such tools to contribute meaningfully to scholarly conversations by obtaining student contributions and engaging notions of authority. Of particular interest, are the ways in which it has provided opportunities for faculty and student specialists to contribute to the project, resulting in better overall buy-in. Matthews discussed the Association of College and Research Libraries' new information literacy framework that posits research as inquiry, authority as constructed, and scholarship as conversation.

Guided Resource Inquiries: Integrating Course and Archives Literacy Assignments Online

Steve Kutay, Digital Services Librarian

California State University, Northridge

http://library.csun.edu/SCA

Kutay provided an overview of a Guided Resource Inquiry (GRI) tool called Scalar, which is a digital container or sandbox to deliver prompts, primary media, and external resources. The objective of using this tool at CSUN was to integrate primary sources into course learning, stimulate critical thinking and analysis, contextualize course subject matter, emulate nonlinear research processes, and motivate students to visit the archives. They found Scalar to be a flexible tool that can also be linked to campus learning management systems. In the first year, four instructors used it for six courses. The pre- and post-course assessments captured positive impact metrics that indicated learning improvement. The assembly process was time-consuming and is an area that needs work, but this effort provided a way to collaborate with faculty and strengthen information literacy in the area of primary sources among students.

Lightning Round

Can You Dig It? Diamonds in Your Own Black Yard: Excavating and Preserving Audiovisual Gems within the Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company Records Kelly Besser and Yasmin Dessem, UCLA Library

The Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company Records, an UCLA archival collection providing a century's worth of rich documentation about one of the first black-owned and operated life insurance companies in the country, was highlighted. Besser and Dessem discussed the vital role Golden State Mutual played in the community, the preservation challenges presented by myriad formats, metadata issues, the grants to launch digitization and access projects, and the rarity and significance of the African American home movies in archives. The audio and video materials have been digitized and are of particular interest at http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/ft8489n95g/ or http://goo.gl/jn86jB and extended information can be found in their detailed article in the YRA Bulletin volume 43, issue 1, 2016.

Viewing Stereographs with Your Smartphone

Krystal Boehlert, J. Paul Getty Museum

Boehlert provided information about the fascinating collections of digitized stereographs available online and explained how to turn your smartphone into a stereograph viewer. She highlighted the use of the apps called stereogranimator http://stereo.nypl.org/ and stereogram https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.davidquaid.stereogramV2&hl=en. The Getty's extensive stereograph digitization project and batch metadata processes were also discussed. Extended information can be found in her detailed article in the WRA Bulletin volume 43, issue 1, 2016.

Digitization and PDF/A

Rand Boyd, Chapman University

Chapman received an NEH grant to digitize 60,000 war letters

http://www.chapman.edu/research-and-institutions/cawl/. Knowing they wanted to use an archival standard of PDF for the project, they researched and decided to use PDF/A-1B because of its stability for long-term preservation. The tagged image file format and optical character recognition text are combined into a single PDF/A. Descriptive metadata with keywords and

Library of Congress subject headings were added to the file properties (visible in Acrobat) to facilitate advanced searching.

Managing the Digital Assets of 'UCI Stories' Oral History Project

Bonnie Corral, UC Irvine

For UCI's 50th anniversary, over 50 videotaped interviews took place with faculty, staff, students, and others associated with the campus to create UCI Stories http://ucistories.lib.uci.edu/. These oral histories were transcribed by an external vendor and cataloged in Excel. Clips were put into YouTube and linked to UCI Space http://ucispace.lib.uci.edu/ with preservation copies being placed in Merritt https://merritt.cdlib.org/, a repository service for the UC community. A granular digital migration checklist was an additional outcome of the project.

Gathering Images of Post-War Whittier

Erin Fletcher, Whittier Public Library

The Whittier Public Library has a Local History Room with a robust online presence http://www.cityofwhittier.org/depts/lhr/default.asp. They received a NEH common heritage grant to digitize historical materials and make them accessible. An open call went out to the community and a digitization event helped to enhance their existing archives. Among these notable new collections are images of Quonset huts in Whittier providing temporary housing for WWII veterans and another with matchbooks advertising historical Whittier area businesses.

Announcing Visual Resources in Instruction: A UCLA Grant-Funded Project Janine Henri, UC Los Angeles

The Art History Department and the Library's Center for Digital Humanities are partnering and plan to have students do more research on images, participate in cataloging, and create Omeka exhibits. Full access to Artstor's suite of online content and tools has been a tough sell campuswide because of UCLA's strong digital library program, and it is hoped this project will demonstrate the need to build localized teaching resources http://www.cdh.ucla.edu/projects/visual-resources-collection-for-teaching-and-learning/.

Is the Original Always Better than the Remake? Raw Camera Moving Image Files Laura Uglean Jackson, UC Irvine

Drawing from the experiences of the UC Irvine Libraries' Special Collections and Archives' acquisition of a 2.5 terabyte collection of raw moving image files, Jackson discussed the issues associated with the management, storage, access, and preservation of such materials. Since raw uncompressed originals are proprietary, unwieldy, hard to share, hard to use, and hard to open, lossy derivatives provided better access and ease of management, countering traditional archival theory prescribing the use of the original record https://special.lib.uci.edu/collections.

Can I Request a Copy of this Image?

Christine Kim, UC Irvine

The papers of Jacques Derrida, the famous critical theorist who taught at UC Irvine, are held in the UCI Libraries' Special Collections and Archives http://special.lib.uci.edu/collections. It is a collection that gets heavy use and international requests for access to or copies of the materials. The previously used paper-based reproduction request form was frustrating and slow for both

researchers and the librarians. A Web-based request form was developed that can be submitted online. The online requests are automatically routed to a database that e-mails the librarians who can quickly send a decision or copies to researchers.

Finding an Onramp to the DPLA: LMU's Partnership with Calisphere

Shilpa Rele, Loyola Marymount University

For seven years, Loyola has been building digital collections and wanted to extend their reach through exposure in the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). Many institutions need to partner with a content hub to get their materials into DPLA. Loyola worked with the California Digital Library, who managed to harvested their digital materials' metadata from CONTENTdm and expose it in Calisphere and DPLA. The usage of the library's digital materials has increased enormously because of this http://library.lmu.edu/digitallibraryprogram/digitalcollections/.

New VRA Embedded Metadata Tools

Greg Reser, UC San Diego

VRA has been building tools to make it easier to embed metadata in digital images using Adobe Bridge http://metadatadeluxe.pbworks.com/w/page/20792238/FrontPage. They just released a new tool that takes advantage of the Getty Vocabularies' linked open data. Another improvement provided is the ability to keep the VRA Bridge panel open, so you can see it being populated while you catalog. It uses the VRA Core 4.0 display fields, but you can drop down and open up the index view too. It functions well with Excel and you choose your import/export metadata format, so that in the end, the metadata travels with the image.

The Color Film Emergency Project

Jackie Spafford, UC Santa Barbara

The Society of Architectural Historians has started a Color Film Emergency Project to try to digitize 35mm slide collections that have research value and are at risk of being lost http://www.sah.org/. They are focusing on built environment content captured in faculty slide collections. The VRA is partnering with them on this venture, and so far, a survey of collections and special interest group meetings resulted in the search for regional storage partners and processing collaborations. Williams College jumped in on the first test case and are providing collection assessment, digitization, and cataloging. The results will be shared via SAHARA http://www.sah.org/publications-and-research/sahara, the Artstor Shared Shelf Commons, or other open access online venues. The search for additional institutional partners continues, the need to clarify agreements with collection owners has emerged, and the challenge of finding the funding to sustain these projects has to be resolved.

Afternoon Session - Description, Metadata & Preservation

Shared Shelf as a Means to Many Ends

Greg Reser, Metadata Specialist University of California, San Diego

http://libraries.ucsd.edu/about/digital-library/

Reser discussed the varied ways in which Shared Shelf is being used at UC San Diego to describe and deliver a range of content to multiple end-user environments--it is a pipeline to the UCSD Digital Collections DAMS. Greg summarized the local best practices that have been developed related to using cataloging forms, controlled lists, and the import/export functionality.

He also provided tips for managing storage volume and integrating customized metadata into other platforms. Of particular interest, is the way they are doing some pre-cataloging in a simple online form, asking faculty or other image donors to complete the information by further populating the metadata fields, and then having professional catalogers enhance and finalize the information. Part of this collaborative cataloging success can be attributed to the fact that all of this workflow is Web-based and accessible from anywhere. These improvements have resulted in the increased use of Shared Shelf and the integrated image collections in ARTstor.

Using CONTENTdm for Archival Projects

Lisa Crane, Western Americana Librarian Special Collections at the Claremont Colleges Library http://ccdl.libraries.claremont.edu/

Crane provided background information about the use of the CONTENTdm digital media management software as a local solution for the Claremont Colleges Digital Library. They have been digitizing their archival materials since 2003 and have 85 collections containing over 128,000 digital objects that cover a range of content and types of archival media. They evaluated 13 different systems before deciding on CONTENTdm. Among the reasons for choosing this software were the following: it is easy to learn, handles multimedia and various file types (object file names are important), works well with Dublin Core, has an abundance of metadata crosswalks, and continues to be developed and supported by OCLC. Provenance and original order are important when handling archival collections, making the compound objects feature very useful. It was also mentioned that CONTENTdm is customizable and strong in terms of interoperability.

Digitizing the GRI's Julius Shulman Photography Archive – Discovery and Preservation Teresa Soleau, Head of Library Systems & Digital Collections Getty Research Institute

http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/guides_bibliographies/shulman/

Soleau told the story of the extended project to digitize the Getty Research Institute's Julius Shulman Photograph archive, which had many different project managers and required multiple funding sources. She described the decisions that were made about the organization, description, processing, delivery, and preservation of the digitized content. The collection contains over 260,000 prints, negatives, and transparencies shot from the 1930s to 1990s. Shulman organized the images by each photography job. The Getty now owns the copyright and it is such a popular collection that they have made the images downloadable (with restrictions) from the Getty's Primo Search. Aggregate level cataloging was accomplished to make the collection accessible quickly, not item level. The collection is being preserved through ExLibris' Rosetta, which uses international preservation standards. An exciting collaboration with Historic Places LA is coming soon.

Calisphere: New Modes for Contributing, New Modes for Access

Adrian Turner, Data Services Manager for the Online Archive of California & Calisphere California Digital Library

http://www.oac.cdlib.org/ https://calisphere.org/

http://www.cdlib.org/

Turner discussed the new look and feel of the most updated version of Calisphere—a gateway to digital collections in California's libraries, archives, and museums. One notable aspect of the previous Calisphere site was the development of themed collections, aligning the archival items to the California State content standards to make them more accessible to K-12 schools. It turns out that this targeted group is only one small segment, with undergraduate college students and independent researchers being more regular users. The interface update addresses the needs of this broader user base. The themed collections with essays and lesson plans have morphed into exhibitions curated and interpreted by librarians, historians, and other experts. Contributors can now work with CDL to interact with the content and develop exhibit materials—they plan to make the ability to add exhibitions more seamless. Other important changes are in the areas of contributing content to Calisphere and driving traffic back to institutional content sources. There are now multiple ways to contribute digitized archival content with both METS ingest and metadata harvesting possible—using OAI-PMH, API, DC, MARC, MODS, etc. The only prerequisites are that the collections have to be published online (not just metadata only) and publicly accessible (Creative Commons licenses outlining sharing possibilities). CDL is now using an enterprise digital asset management system at the core, called Nuxeo, that has an optional pipeline to the UC's Merritt preservation system. CDL can also share the metadata with DPLA, since they are one of their a content hubs. DPLA links users back to the location where the institution has published the archival objects online. Calisphere materials are also linked to finding aids in the OAC. There is no charge to contribute and CDL currently has about 500,000 objects from 170 contributors.