

THE RESEARCH LIBRARIES GROUP: NEW INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO ART AND ARCHITECTURE INFORMATION*

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History and Overview

The Research Libraries Group (RLG) is an international consortium of 150 universities, independent research libraries, archives, historical societies, museums and other institutions devoted to improving access to information that supports research and learning. RLG's headquarters is in Mountain View, California, approximately 30 miles south of San Francisco in the heart of Silicon Valley. Last year we opened an office in London. With a staff of 100, RLG maintains several on-line services:

- the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN), a bibliographic database of 82 million records contributed by 600 institutions
- CitaDel, a citations access and document delivery service of 24 databases
- Marcadia, a copy cataloging service for retrospective conversion of cataloging records
- Arial, software that sends and receives page images of scanned documents over the Internet

These information products and services provide access to a rich array of bibliographic and archival records for books, periodicals, newspapers, articles, conference papers, Festschriften, dissertations, manuscripts, personal papers, archival collections, oral histories, auction and exhibition catalogs and visual images.

RLG was founded in 1974 by Columbia, Harvard, and Yale universities plus the New York Public Library. The initial goals of the four institutions continue to inform RLG's programs and services to its members: to build a shared on-line database of their library collections, and cooperation in acquisition, delivery, and preservation of information. Membership in RLG is open to any not-for-profit or

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charitable institution with an educational, cultural, or scientific mission. Today RLG is an international alliance of 157 members, including the national libraries of Spain, Switzerland, England, Scotland, Wales, the United States, and Australia; the major research university libraries in North America and the United Kingdom; the libraries of the major art museums in North America plus the National Art Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum; independent research libraries such as the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Huntington Library, and the Newberry Library; and historical societies and archives. From RLG's inception, members have focused on identifying and resolving issues of library service that could not be addressed successfully by a single institution. Collective action is based on individual institutional strengths. RLG's members use collaboration and the operating arm provided by RLG staff to push past existing barriers and develop best practices and standards, implement new methodologies and technologies, and enlarge their users' and their own research information universe. RLG members pool their expertise and create projects to improve local and global access to research information, and to contribute to the creation and promulgation of best practices and standards in information management and delivery. There are two categories of membership:

- General members - institutions that serve a clientele of more than 5,000 faculty, academic staff, research staff, professional staff, students, fellows, and/or members.
- Special members - institutions serving 5,000 or fewer such users.

Members govern RLG through an elected board of Governors drawn from the membership. There are no non-members, benefactors, politicians, or heads of corporations on the RLG board. Many of the projects and programs of RLG are driven by program groups, comprised of members whose collections fall within certain subject categories: Art and Architecture; Primary Sources which encompasses archives, manuscripts, and special collections; East Asian Studies; Jewish Studies, Middle Eastern Studies; and Law.

The Art and Architecture Group

In 1979 the libraries of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Art Institute of Chicago, and Cleveland Museum of Art joined RLG, and soon after formed the Art and Architecture Program Committee, the predecessor of the present Art and Architecture Group. Members of the Art & Architecture Group include museum and academic libraries in North America with specialized research collections on art, architecture, and design. Members include the National Galleries of the United States and Canada, as well as more specialized art libraries such as the

Freer Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution and the Fashion Institute of Technology. Our most recent members are the National Art Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Getty Information Institute. Members of the AAG are eager to forge and strengthen communication with their counterparts in Europe and elsewhere, and to explore possible collaborations that address common concerns and needs. The AAG is managed by an elected Steering Committee, consisting of six members, and is assisted by the RLG Member Services Officer for Art and Visual Culture, Katharine Martinez. It is governed by bylaws and guided by a strategic plan.

Art and Architecture Group members are heavily involved in RLG's SHARES (Shared Resources Service) Program. Interlibrary loan and reciprocal access privileges as a complement to ownership is the motivating force behind SHARES. With policies and procedures developed and refined by SHARES participants for over a decade, the unique and highly successful program allows RGL member institutions to expand and enhance their collections through access to and delivery of materials owned by other research institutions within the RLG community.

Participants in SHARES agree to expedite interlibrary loans with other participants and have created incentives for superior response and delivery. One of the benefits of participation is access to restricted, noncirculating, and special collections materials. In addition, RLG has established effective procedures for on-site privileges, giving visiting scholars, faculty and professional staff additional access to materials, resource, and many of the services accorded to their resident counterparts at the host institution.

Art and Architecture Group members have seized the opportunities RLG creates for them to get involved in collective projects, both to preserve and make accessible collections of valuable materials and to jointly develop best practices that can be used in other endeavors. Two notable projects of the AAG demonstrate the achievements that are result of collaboration. In 1979 the library directors at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Cleveland Museum of Art created a union database of art auction catalogs owned by the three libraries, calling it SCIPIO, which stands for Sales Catalogs Index Project Input Online. With initial funding from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, a special database was mounted by RLG in 1981, and other RLG libraries began to enter their records in the database. SCIPIO is the only online union catalog of auction catalog records in existence. It provides bibliographic access to valuable sources of information on the provenance of art objects and rare books, the history of collecting, and contemporary and historical market trends. SCIPIO describes art and rare books auction sales catalogs dating from the late sixteenth century to

currently scheduled auctions that have not yet been held. Records contain information on dates and places of sale, catalog title, the auction house, sellers, institutional holdings, and other information. Containing more than 200,000 records as of July 1997 with daily additions of new entries, SCIPIO consists of records for auction sales catalogs from all major North American and European auction houses as well as important private sales. In order to guarantee that current auction houses' publications are being completely recorded in SCIPIO and to guarantee that the records are entered as soon as the catalogs are received, the SCIPIO contributors have divided up responsibility for certain houses among themselves: the Metropolitan Museum of art, for example, has committed to subscribe to all the categories of catalogs offered by Hotel Druot, and to catalog Hotel Druot sales catalogs as soon as they arrive in the mail. In the current fiscal year RLG will be loading records for auction sales catalogs from the Getty's Provenance Index. Ten Art and Architecture Group members currently input catalog records for art catalogs into the SCIPIO file. This past summer RLG converted the file to the MARC format, which enables far more libraries to input their records.

The Art Serials Preservation Project is another collaboration success story for the Art and Architecture Group. Within a consortium which prides itself on facilitating access to collections, art periodicals pose enormous challenges: they are often printed on clay-coated paper that becomes brittle and damaged over time; hence they cannot be photocopied or borrowed on interlibrary loan. In 1989 a number of Art and Architecture Group members launched a project to address these preservation and access problems relating to rare art and architecture periodicals. One hundred major rare art serial titles were selected by the working group, and in 1991 RLG obtain a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for preservation microfilm. It has been a very complex project, that we are just completing this year. Not only were the titles rare, but in some cases no one library had a complete set. RLG staff with expertise in preservation and microfilming standards set technical requirements for the project and guided the selection process that resulted in the microfilming contract going to Mid-Atlantic Preservation Services. The project was also technically difficult since it meant microfilming text and image of varying intensities on the same page. The participating libraries all received a microfilm of their own collection titles, and RLG is about to announce a distributor, so libraries can purchase either individual titles or the entire set of over 600 reels of microfilm.

RLG Partnership with the Getty Information Institute

In order to more effectively address the current information needs of art historians and to offer researchers comprehensive and coherent sets of electronic databases and tools, RLG and the Getty Information Institute recently agreed to form a partnership. The goal of the Distributed Database Initiative, as it is called, is to achieve efficiencies in building and distributing certain Getty databases: the Bibliography of the History of Art, the Provenance Index, and the Getty vocabularies and authority files, and to harness the two organizations' infrastructures and expertise to address other challenges and opportunities. For many years RLG staff had already enjoyed a working relationship with Getty staff, developed as they worked together to mount the Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals and the Art and Architecture Thesaurus, so the partnership was briskly launched in April 1996, and by the end of the calendar year RLG and Getty staff had successfully merged RAA, RILA, and BHA into one database and offered it as an RLG subscription service available to libraries. Behind the scenes, we continue to work on interoperability between Getty and RLG servers, to design procedures to improve communication amongst the international group of contributors to the Getty databases, and to facilitate data transfer from a great variety of sources, in a variety of formats between contributors, Getty offices, and RLG. In our current fiscal year the Distributed Database Initiative will focus on mounting the Getty's Provenance Index and testing the use of Getty vocabularies as searching tools to provide enhance access to a variety of RLG databases.

Information Needs in the Humanities

Between 1985 and 1988 RLG undertook an assessment of information needs in eight humanities disciplines, and published a report that summarized the conclusions and recommendations that were the result¹. That report has significantly influenced RLG's priorities and members' projects and priorities in the years since 1988. In this paper I will focus on how RLG has worked to address the information needs described in the section of the report on art history.

In the 1988 report the following goals to address information needs in art and architecture were emphasized:

- Comprehensive cataloging of museum bulletins, auction catalogs, exhibition catalogs, artists' books, trade catalogs and art newspapers

¹ Constance C. Gould. *Information Needs in the Humanities. An Assessment* (Mountain View: The Research Libraries Group, Inc., 1988)

- Retrospective conversion of key abstracting and indexing tools, such as the Repertoire d'Art et d'Archaeology, RILA, and the Bibliography of the History of Art
- Efforts to link North American networks to European bibliographic databases
- Access to automated records for art objects, photograph collections, and architectural drawings
- Support for expanded controlled vocabularies for the arts, including the Art & Architecture Thesaurus, Union List of Artists' Names, and Thesaurus of Geographic Names, accessible on-line
- Access to the Getty's Provenance Index

Goal #1 Comprehensive cataloging of museum bulletins, auction catalogs, exhibition catalogs, artists' books, trade catalogs and art newspapers

RLG's largest database is RLIN, a bibliographic database of 82 million records contributed by 600 institutions. RLIN is both a technical processing support system and a reference resource for 10,000 active users per year. It supports Latin and non-Latin scripts. Why would an institution that is not a member of RLG contribute its records to RLIN? The answer is that libraries and archives that want their records to be available to the international scholarly community find that RLIN enables them to promote their collections in the company of peer institutions. Institutions that contribute their records to RLIN retain ownership of their records; only the owning library can change, enhance, or delete the records for their collection. Users can search RLIN by author, title, ISBN number, and any searchable MARC field. Access to RLIN is easy: an institution can open a search account by paying a \$200 access fee. Each search costs 90 cents and there is a three dollar charge for each hour you are connected to RLIN. RLG members receive reduced rates as part of their membership benefits.

For many of the museum members of RLG, membership centers around their commitment to RLIN. Because RLIN significantly extends the unique strengths of any one museum library's holdings, the RLG museum members have been particularly active in efforts to enrich the database, by defining and promoting high standards in the quality of the records. It was the art librarians' desire to establish minimal-level standards for art exhibition catalogs that led to the base-level standard for cataloging books now widely used in RLG libraries. Art and Architecture Group members have devoted significant staff time to retrospective conversion projects, some forming mini-consortiums with other RLG members to obtain foundations grants for retrospective conversion projects. As a result, RLIN is a premier resource for locating art exhibition catalogs, artists' books, art periodicals, and art auction catalogs. According to Jeannette Dixon, Librarian and

Director of Electronic Communications at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, „RLIN is the Cadillac of art databases.“

There are two Art and Architecture Group projects currently underway to improve access to research material that has been previously difficult to identify and locate: the Monographic Series Cataloging Project, and the Inaccessible Domain Materials Project. Coordinating collection development decisions across a membership as varied as the Art and Architecture Group has been a challenge, but the group is proud of its success in coordinating the acquisition and timely cataloging of monographic series. As we all know, monographic series are notorious as difficult bibliographic items to catalog and retrieve: they are part monograph, part serial. Individual volumes are not necessarily published in sequentially numbered order, and the parent/child relationship between a volume and the series is not always evident on the title page or its verso. To meet this bibliographic challenge, a subset of Art and Architecture Group members have each committed to acquiring certain key monographic series, and also to fully catalog each title in the series. For each series a „parent“ record is created, with information entered in the 505 field of that record that documents the individual titles in the series. The record for each individual title in a series includes a link to the parent record for the series.

A perennial topic of discussion at ARLIS conferences over the years has been how to gain bibliographic control over vertical files and ephemera collections that all art libraries collect but have no easy way to record online so that researchers know they are there. Such „Inaccessible Domain Materials“ include folders of press clippings, artists' postcards, photos, and documents that we tend to group together under names of artists or galleries. A working group of RLG members was formed in 1994 to devise a standard level of description and access for such collections that are often ignored in traditional art library cataloging priorities. The RLG working group used as starting point the work done by the RLG Archives and Manuscripts Task Force on Standards, as well as done by other „core record“ projects. The resulting Working Group Report (URL: <http://www.rlg.org/indomat.html>) proposes a MARC based collection-level cataloging record designed for use in RLIN and MARC-compatible local systems that can be enhanced easily to include item-level description.

Goal #2 retrospective conversion of key abstracting and indexing tools, such as the Répertoire d'Art et d'Archaeology, RILA, and the Bibliography of the History of Art

The Bibliography of the History of Art (BHA) is the most comprehensive and up-to-date art history bibliography available worldwide, covering European and American art from late antiquity to the present. Through collaboration between the Getty Information Institute and the French Institut de l'Information Scientifique et Technique du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (INIST-CNRD), BHA indexes and abstracts art-related books, conference proceedings and dissertations, exhibition and dealer's catalogs, and articles from more than 2,500 periodicals. RLG's BHA file includes and extends the coverage of its two predecessor art indexes: RAA (Répertoire d'Art et d'Archéologie) from 1973 to 1989 and RILA (International Repertory of the Literature of Art) from 1975 to 1989. BHA is updated quarterly, and contains over 425,000 records as of March 1997 with approximately 6,000 added at each update.

Abstracts are in English and French. Subject Indexing includes persons, places, institutions, buildings, works of art, and topical subjects, with most subject terms in both English and French. Searches may be limited by language, country of publication, date of publication, article type (form or genre), and source (RILA, RAA, or BHA).

BHA complements another RLG file, The Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals, which is produced by the Avery Fine Arts and Architecture Library of Columbia University with support from the Getty Information Institute. The Avery Index database covers Archeology, Architecture, Architectural design, City planning, Furniture and decoration, Historic preservation, History of architecture, Interior design, Landscape architecture, and Urban planning, indexing over 1,000 periodicals published worldwide, from 1977 to the present. The index is updated daily, with over 201,000 records as of March 1997.

Goal #3 Efforts to link North American networks to European bibliographic databases

RLG is actively working with its European members, including the National Libraries of Scotland, Wales, Switzerland, and Spain, the members of CURL, the Consortium of University Research Libraries, in the UK, the American Academy in Rome, plus the National Art Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum to design the most effective way to enable interoperability, by utilizing Z39.50² and other communication protocols so that all members of RLG can have easy electronic access to each member's records. RLG has a strategic alliance for

² Z39.50 protocol provides a standard means for a search application to submit a query to databases without regard to the kind of hardware or software the databases uses.

technical cooperation with The Dutch Pica Foundation³, a cooperative, not-for-profit organization that develops systems and services for libraries and other information providing institutions, in the Netherlands and Germany, PICA and RLG signed an agreement to codevelop a document discovery and delivery service on the World Wide Web, called WebDOC. The new service will allow end users to search WebCAT, a special catalog of bibliographic records (maintained in parallel on both the RLG and Pica host computers), via Web browsers and to retrieve documents linked to them - full text, articles, maps, images, etc. - using Web technology. WebDOC interposes a licensing and accounting server between the catalog record and access to the whole document it describes, to verify that the user is covered by an institutional license or else to debit the user's personal account. WebDOC is the first phase of a broader strategic collaboration planned to achieve streamlined access to documents in paper form as well as digitized materials - and to give the end user a single interface for information retrieval, document request, electronically assisted document delivery, and conventional interlibrary loan. RLG and Pica intend to pool development resources in creating shareable software modules and to offer integrated end-user services to libraries and their patrons on both sides of the Atlantic. RGL's new partnership with the Getty Information Institute, gives us contact with European institutions that contribute to Getty database and projects, and has also greatly facilitated communication between RLG and various projects in the UK, including the Arts Humanities Data Service⁴, particularly its Visual Arts Data Service⁵, the ADAM Project⁶, an information gateway initiative, and the Museum Documentation Association⁷.

A major step to provide access to European data was accomplished when RLG recently mounted FRANCIS, produced by Institut de l'Information Scientifique et

³ URL: <http://www.pica.nl/>

⁴ The Arts and Humanities Data Service is a national service funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee of the UK's Higher Education Funding Councils to collect, describe, and preserve the electronic resources which result from research and teaching in the humanities. It will encourage scholarly use of its collections and make information about them available through an on-line catalogue. URL: <http://ahds.ac.uk/>

⁵ The Visual Arts Data Service (VADS) will provide the UK Higher Education community with access to networked digital research data in the visual arts, to agreed standards of best practice in the creation, collection, description, delivery and preservation of such resources. URL: <http://vads.ahds.ac.uk/>

⁶ ADAM, the Art, Design, Architecture & Media Information Gateway, is a project to build a searchable on-line catalogue describing Internet resources such as web sites or electronic mailing lists. URL: <http://adam.ac.uk/adam/>

⁷ The Museum Documentation Association (MDA) is funded by the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC) of the U.K. to encourage best practice in all aspects of museum documentation. URL: <http://www.open.gov.uk/mdocassn/>

Technique - Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (INIST-CNRS). It covers a wide range of multilingual, multidisciplinary information in the humanities, social sciences, and economics. It is strong in religion, the history of art, and literature - with particular emphasis on current trends in European and world literature. Records in the database start in 1984 and are updated monthly. As of July 1996 there are over one million records in the database, with approximately 6,300 added at each update. 80% of records include an author abstract in French and English.

Goal #4 Access to automated records for art objects, photograph collections, and architectural drawings

The Avery Architecture and Fine Arts Library at Columbia University is a leading participant in RLG efforts to make visual images more widely accessible. In 1989 the library launched the AVIADOR Project (Avery Videodisk Indexing of Architectural Drawings Online in RLIN), in which they participated in the development of the MARC format for visual images, and RLG pioneered in making that format available, incorporating a new field, entitled 'Component item' which allowed Avery library staff to catalog groups of architectural drawings while providing individual access to images for them. Avery then created around 2,300 records and linked them to 41,000 images on an analog videodisk. RLG and the Avery Library are currently exploring how to create digital images of approximately 15 years of the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, and link these heavily illustrated bit-mapped pages to the records for the corresponding articles in the *Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals*.

RLG is a sponsor of the Computer Interchange of Museum Information⁸ (CIMI) Project. The CIMI Consortium consists of 16 member organizations who have agreed to work cooperatively to solve problems relating to the electronic interchange of museum information. Because the key to long-term availability and wide access to information lies in the use of standards, CIMI's mission is to promote a standards based approach to the interchange of cultural heritage information. Based on extensive previous research into the creation of a Standards Framework, CIMI is investigating two international standards: SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language) for structuring data and Z39.50 for enabling high-quality search and retrieval, in a demonstration project entitled CHIO (Cultural Heritage Information Online).

⁸ URL: <http://www.cimi.org/>

Starting in September 1997 RLG, with Getty's assistance, is launching a new initiative to build a union catalog of museum object records. According to RLG's *Information Needs in the Humanities: An Assessment* 1988, art historians and historians want access to visual images and to information about visual images. The REACH Project is the first phase of an initiative to address those needs, (REACH stands for Record Export for Art and Cultural Heritage). The goal of the project is to export existing machine-readable data from heterogeneous museum collection management systems and analyze the research value of the resulting database when researchers use a single interface to search the database in conjunction with RLG's other resources, including bibliographic and archival records in RLIN®, auction catalog records in the SCIPPIO database, finding aids, plus abstracting and indexing tools such as the Bibliography of the History of Art.

The REACH testbed database will be comprised of at least 10,000 records from art and cultural heritage institutions. The focus of the project is on core data that accompanies and identifies museum objects, not their surrogates, including a broad range of both art objects and material culture artifacts. Some participants may additionally contribute digital images with the data. It is a given that users will expect and prefer images to accompany data. But there will always be records in the file without images, because in some cases the source of the data will not be the owner of the original object, or because the object has been lost or destroyed, and no visual record of the original remains.

In addition to the Museum Educational Site Licensing (MESL) Project, recently completed, there are currently underway other projects in the museum community that address digitizing museum collections (for the purpose of site licensing), including the Association of Art Museum Directors' Art Museum Image Consortium (AMICO) Project and the American Association of Museum's Museum Licensing Collective initiative. RLG hopes that its efforts to focus on data-related issues in the REACH Project will be applicable to those or other museum projects which involve digital images and their accompanying metadata.

The project originated as a follow-on to the Getty Information Institute's Museum Education Site Licensing (MESL) Project. The MESL project tested academic pedagogic use of digitized images and accompanying data from museum collections. For the REACH Project RLG has chosen to focus on data-related issues that were highlighted in the outcome of the MESL Project: the challenges involved when pooling data from heterogeneous museum collection management systems, and the need to continue testing the usefulness of museum information, particularly when a single search engine is available and when the data can be used within an networked environment of related resources.

RLG recognizes that there is no single standard for museum object records comparable to the MARC format for library materials, and that for the REACH Project several existing standards needed to be taken into account when designing a data element set. The fields in the REACH element set are based on fields in the following museum and cultural heritage standards: Categories for the Description of Works of Art (DCWA), Visual Resources Association's Core Categories, Dublin Core, Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) Data Dictionary, MESL Data Dictionary, Consortium for the Interchange of Museum Information (CIMI) Access Points, Museum Documentation Association Standards, and the CIDOC Information Categories.

We anticipate that users will expect to search the database for information discovery and delivery purposes, as well as for technical processing. The latter will occur in two instances: first, where museums are cataloging multiples (i.e. photographs, graphic arts, mass-produced items such as toasters, etc.) in their collections and when copy cataloging may allow efficiencies in processing, and secondly, technical processing use of the union catalog will also be done by slide librarians cataloging visual surrogates in slide libraries that reproduce the original objects represented in the union catalog, in order to speed up cataloging.

There are several questions that will be explored during the REACH Project, associated with the current and likely future use of museum data by researchers. Chief among them is the question whether museum object records are useful without digital images. Art historians have traditionally relied heavily on catalogue raisonnées and inventory projects where visual surrogates may not accompany every object record, such as the Inventories of American Painting and Sculpture of the National Museum of American Art, and the Provenance Index of the Getty Information Institute. Are research practices and scholar's attitudes similar in the case of material culture object records? A second set of questions arise when considering the value and use of individual object records vs. collection records. These questions suggest that what information goes into the Notes field of a record could be enormously valuable.

REACH was initiated by RLG and Getty Information Institute staff in discussions with officers of the Museum Computer Network, the MESL participants, vendors of museum collection management systems, and museum data experts. Recently RLG staff discussed the REACH Project with museum data experts in the UK, including officers of the Museum Documentation Association, and managers of the Arts and Humanities Data Service. The project has also been discussed with members and officers of the the Art Libraries Society of North America, the Art Libraries Society of the UK and Ireland, and the Visual Resources Association.

Within RLG, members of the Art and Architecture Group will be participating in the evaluation phase of the project.

As of July 1997 participants in the REACH Project include the following museums: Berkeley Art Museum, Brooklyn Museum, The Frick Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, Museum of Fine Arts (Boston), Mystic Seaport Museum, National Museum of American Art, National Park Service, Pierpont Morgan Library, Stranford University Museum of Art, and the Walker Art Center. Collection management system vendors include Cudra Associates, Digital Arts & Sciences Corporation, Willoughby Associates, and Re:Discovery Software.

The evaluation phase will draw on the expertise of many individuals, including staff and members of: Canadian Heritage Information Network, Chicago Historical Society, CIMI, Getty Information Institute, MESL participants, Museum Computer Network, Museum Documentation Association, Smithsonian Institution, RLG's Art & Architecture Group, and the Visual Resources Association Data Standards Committee.

Goal #5 Support for expanded controlled vocabularies for the arts, including the Art & Architecture Thesaurus, Union List of Artists' Names, and Thesaurus of Geographic Names, accessible on-line.

The REACH Project will facilitate analysis of search results when certain naming standards may not be universally applied. What kinds of search results will be available if participants do not use standard vocabularies for geographic names, subject terms, and personal names, for example? Can a search engine compensate for the lack of uniformity? To address this question, RLG will undertake a pilot project to offer users „assisted searching“ of the REACH testbed database, plus the SCPIO database, using Getty's „a.k.a.“ system as model. This is an experimental searching tool designed by the Getty that uses the Art & Architecture Thesaurus (AAT) and the Union List of Artist Names (ULAN) vocabularies to provide enhanced access to portions of their databases. Here is how „assisted searching“ would work: if you select the Art & Architecture Thesaurus, the search term(s) you enter will first be searched in the Art & Architecture Thesaurus (AAT) for possible vocabulary enhancement before going on to search the REACH and SCPIO databases. Your search can consist of one or more words. If an exact match for your search term is found in the AAT, that term, along with its synonyms and variants, will automatically be used to search the REACH and SCPIO databases. Search results will then be displayed in order of „relevance“.

Goal #6 Access to the Getty's Provenance Index

The Provenance Index is a Getty project to gather and disseminate information related to the history of collecting and the provenance of individual works of art, from sales catalogues, archival records, and museum files. The project has focused on the following genres of material and geographic areas:

INVENTORIES: Unpublished archival information from pre-19th-century inventories of paintings and other works of art in Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands. A record has been created for each inventory, and in addition, individual records have been created for each object in that inventory, with links to the parent record, i.e., the inventory record. Cataloging records for the manuscripts inventories will live with other archival and manuscripts records in RLIN, while the records for individual works of art as described in the inventory will go into the union catalog of museum object records. Links will be created between records for individual works of art and the record for the inventory in which the work of art is found, and vice versa.

SALE CATALOGUES: Includes British sale catalogues (1801-1825); French, Dutch, and Belgian catalogues (1801-1810); and 17th- and 18th-century catalogues from Germany and Scandinavia. A record has been created for each sale catalogue, plus a record for each lot within the catalogue, with a link to the parent record. RLG will load cataloging records for individual sale catalogs into the SCPIO file, while records for the works of art included in each sale catalog will be loaded into the union catalog of museum object records. Links will be created between records for individual works of art and the record for the sales catalog in which the work of art is found, and vice versa.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS: An inventory of roughly 32,000 paintings by artists born before 1900 found in many American museums, and in a substantial number of British and Irish museums, with records that document the provenance of approximately one-third of the paintings. These records will be loaded into the union catalog of museum object records, with links connecting records for individual paintings with records for previous owners of the painting.

The Provenance Index is the product of the combined effort of the Provenance Documentation Collaborative, which consists of European and US institutions. Current members of the Collaborative are National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC), The Frick Art Reference Library (New York), The Mellon Centre (London), Gemeentearchief (Amsterdam), Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg), Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie (The Hague), Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique (Brussels), Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana (Rome), Fondazione Pietro Accorsi (Turin), Terza Università di Roma, Dipartimento di

Studi Storico-Artistici (Rome), Kunsthalle (Hamburg), and Bibliothèque et Archives des Musées de France au Musées du Louvre (Paris).

Conclusion

Research and learning are undergoing enormous changes, and more changes are coming, as technology offers new possibilities and as scholars continue to expand their teaching and research methods. RLG is the instrument used by its members to address these information issues that must be solved in a multi-institutional context. Our collective goal is to facilitate the discovery and delivery of information, and to meet that goal a consortial approach has proven to be most successful.

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