Enhancing Educational Access to Art

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School of Information

Blanton Museum of Art

The University of Texas at Austin
Blanton Museum

... enriches and transforms the lives of learners of all ages by providing inspiring and relevant experiences with original works of art ...
Prints and Drawings

- Nationally recognized
- ~13,000
- Wide use on campus
Collection Management

- Extensive metadata
- Inconsistencies introduced over time
- Created by museum professionals
- Proprietary schema
- For museum staff and patrons
- Available within the museum
Web Interface

The Blanton Museum of Art

Prints - Flemish

records 1 to 15 of 107

• EmbARK Web kiosk
• Improves availability
• Limited search
Problems

• Low visibility
• Access through history or social memory
• Burden on Blanton staff
• Disassociated description
  – Museum professionals
  – Instructional goals
• Underutilization of collection
Approach

• Interview instructors to identify needs and challenges
• Use a standards-based, open-source infrastructure
  – Schema
  – Software
• Improve user access
  – Software
  – Relevance of metadata content
Instructor Interviews - Design

• Excellent record-keeping
  – Instructors, courses, prints
• Four instructors
• Different disciplines
  – Studio art
  – French
  – Architecture
• Use the collection regularly
• Semi-structured interviews
Interview Topics

• Courses
• Topics covered
• Significance of the collection in context of the topic
• Selection of prints
• Desired criteria for selection
• Other sources used
• Description of sample prints
Instructor Responses

• Courses
  – Roman Paris
• Topics covered
  – Artists in Cities
  – Printmaking as a form of protest
• Collection significance in context
  – Connection to history
  – Dialog with curators
• Selection of prints
  – Ask a curator
  – Past exhibits
  – Prints used in prior courses
Instructor Responses

• Desired criteria for selection
  – Content (columns, Christ, prison)
  – Time period
  – Style period (Mannerist, Early Renaissance, Baroque)
  – Materials
  – State
  – Artist
• Other sources used
  – NGA, MoMA, Google Images, ArtStor
Description of Sample Prints

• Description
  – historical layering, sculpture, rondelles, tondos, tension between landscape & architecture in Rome

• Tags
  – ruin, antique, pastoral, forum, columns, Corinthian fluted columns

• Tag categories
  – sculptural elements, architectural elements
Description of Sample Prints

• Description
  – line quality, unique approach to printing, "painting with the ink", drama, narrative, light, effortlessness

• Tags
  – figurative work, multi-figurative, Christ, religious, narrative, narration, action, activity, light, representational, drama

• Tag categories
  – genres of art; symbols; geography
Search for a Descriptive Schema

- Dublin Core
  - Open standard
  - Wide support
  - Too generic
- Custom Schema
  - Perfect fit
  - Lack of interoperability (silo)
- CDWA
  - Open standard (Getty)
  - Designed for artworks
  - Balance between flexibility and interoperability
Infrastructure

• DSpace, FEDORA
  – Wide adoption
  – Bare bones presentation
  – Sharp learning curve

• CollectiveAccess
  – Easy installation
  – Decent look-and-feel
  – Script-based customization
  – Built-in support for social media
CollectiveAccess

Enhancing Educational Access to Art

A prototype repository by
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Left: Two Peasant Women with Farm Animals

Quickly browse by:
- people
- terms
- object types
- collections

Or click "Browse" in the navigation bar to do a refined browse
Artwork Detail

Work: Arch of Septimius Severus and the Campidoglio, from the Vues de Rome et de ses environs [Views of Rome and Its Environs]

TAGS
arch, monument, Campidoglio, Roma

ADD YOUR RANK, TAGS AND COMMENT

Rank
Tags (separated by commas)
Next Steps

- Feedback from Blanton Staff and instructors
- Populate the collection to serve one course
- Enable instructors to add metadata
  - Not just tags
- Investigate social metadata issues
  - Authority of museum curators
  - Value addition in education
- Iterate and reiterate...
- Multi-use, multi-audience artwork repository
Come see our poster!

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