

FY2009 Learning Technologies Grants Proposal
(COVER PAGE)

Project Information

Humanities Digital Media Archive
Project Title

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Project Director

Lamar Dodd School of Art
Requesting Department

\$14,899
Amount Requested Year 1 (≤\$15,000)

Amount Requested Year 2 (≤\$15,000)

Project Director's Signature

Proposal Endorsement Signatures

Department Head

Dean

Proposal Abstract (100-word maximum)

Visual thinking is an increasingly important part of modern pedagogy as digital media of all types enrich the classroom experience. Digital images are finding their way into almost every classroom at UGA and the Lamar Dodd School of Art Digital Image Archive is at the vanguard of this process. We are building a unique database, unlike any commercial product, that reflects the strengths of the humanities at UGA. The sources we will offer will provide students and faculty with a digital media clearinghouse that will allow them to engage with various academic subjects more dynamically and visually.

Section I. Project Description

General Description of Project:

- *Nature of the innovation*

The project creates a web-based archive of digital images for students and faculty alike. The images it provides will be critical to classroom instruction, ongoing research, and the development of new research. The goals of the humanities digital media resource project are threefold: 1. To support the learning environment of students and faculty; 2. To create a searchable archive to access and distribute both instructional and research information in digital format via a web interface; and 3. To be both robust and flexible enough to ensure growth and to allow new departments to join the project as desired. The project will benefit undergraduates, graduates, and faculty within the humanities and will stimulate cross-campus collaboration by providing a point of contact between disciplines for sharing digital resources and the information embedded in those resources. There are now millions of images available on the Web, but they are not systematically catalogued or indexed and many are not of suitable quality for study and research purposes or even for classroom use. This archive will put a growing body of visual images in the hands of students and teachers in a format that records the kind of information that those users need for classroom and research purposes and will provide those digital images at the quality demanded by a first rate learning environment. Students will be able easily to access visual images presented in class and then to search for other similar (or not) images and thus deepen their learning and spark their own research projects. Faculty will be able easily to access visual images for classroom presentation and discussion will be able to work on detailed research projects rooted in visual thinking and visual images. Because the project will ensure that visual records, as well as other types of data, are easily accessible, it will also facilitate cross-discipline sharing by allowing patrons to use multi-media resources that exceed disciplinary boundaries.

In its current form, the digital image database is an ongoing archive of undergraduate, graduate, and faculty research projects undertaken at the Lamar Dodd School of Art. Funding will allow us to expand the digital image archive to include students and faculty work from other disciplines – first Classics, then other humanities and science departments as more and more teaching and research comes to include visual thinking and images. Because faculty and student contributors will provide the University with the rights to use this data, we will have a searchable archive of both past and continuing research that might otherwise be lost due to graduations or graduate student and faculty departures from the University. Ultimately, the existing high-quality digital image archive provides a template for digital media resources in the humanities at the University of Georgia.

This grant will result in a web-media resource webpage with links to the digital media archives of each of the participants in phase one of the project. The Lamar Dodd School of Art digital media archive will provide the template, but, as the first test case, Classics will develop its own set of archive content based on their discipline-specific needs. Classics already

has a database of about 5,000 digitized images and so that department is well positioned for this first cross-disciplinary outreach. As the project grows, new participating departments will populate their own web archive pages with digital media specific to their discipline. All of these databases will be linked via a web “clearinghouse” page. The advantage of this project is that it allows users to login and search both their discipline-specific media archives as well as interdisciplinary offerings provided by each partner department. Each archive will be independent, but searchable through a single web media site. Independence is necessary because Art is cataloged differently than Classics, Romance Languages, History, and so on, but they will also be connected via the “clearinghouse.” This is a major benefit (and innovation) of this project in that it provides students and instructors at the University of Georgia with discipline-correct and quality controlled information for research and teaching, but within a cross-disciplinary framework. While the Internet has fostered an environment in which visual materials are readily available, quality and accuracy usually suffer and certain subject-specific materials are difficult, if not impossible, to find on the Web. Students and faculty will benefit from being able to access these high-quality materials via a searchable archive. For example, we will be able to show students high quality images of the extant papyrus scrolls of early Greek texts or medieval manuscripts that will allow them to simulate the experience of reading a 6th century CE Codex online. Further, undergraduate and graduate students will benefit from a more-extensive range of visual materials both in classroom lectures and in individual and collaborative research projects.

- *Need/rationale*

This database is the first of its kind in the Southeast. There are commercially available resources, but they are expensive, proprietary, and limited. Ultimately, they do not meet our needs because they cannot speak to the unique research carried out at UGA. Unlike standard, commercially available resources, this archive will reflect the strengths of the humanities and sciences at UGA. This archive is organic and responsive to its users because they drive its content. Much of the research at the University of Georgia, as at any university, is idiosyncratic and cannot be reduced to strict canonical works. As a result, it is absolutely vital to move beyond such narrowly defined approaches to more flexible and responsive approaches.

Currently, faculty can and do contribute images from their own personal image collections. Students participate by contributing images from their own developing collections as well. The following is illustrative of how beneficial this approach is. In the School of Art, there are five study abroad programs that take students all over the world. While they are studying and traveling, they collect images of the various cultures and places they visit, as well as the cultural production of those places, and contribute them to the growing archive. Students and faculty create a learning community by sharing their research and ideas. Such sharing fosters a “meeting of minds” for all who will eventually have access to

these collections. Further, sharing personal collections clears certain copyright restrictions.

- *Relevance of the project to unit and University priorities*

This initiative supports twenty-first century scholarship in the humanities. Students are multi-media savvy and faculty and the University must adapt to meet their needs. Technology helps close the gap between students and ever-changing forms of knowledge. This archive will provide students with rich resources for study, and faculty will have access to expanding media sources that will enrich their teaching. Students have come to expect dynamic classroom presentations involving multi-media; the digital media options the database offers will encourage faculty to build those types of classroom experiences. The protean nature of digital media stimulates creativity and takes both students and faculty outside the well-traveled sphere of library research. The use of digital media in lectures is not the limit of the technology however; rather the scholar of today and tomorrow will increasingly incorporate technology into research as well. Sources like electronic publications directly result from the new possibilities for circulating research that are provided by the Web and students increasingly rely on them. Further, students' familiarity with using the Web often leads them to new types of synthetic thinking. This project can promote that type of innovation. The very act of browsing in the humanities digital media archive increases the likelihood that users will make new connections between media of different disciplines and lead to new discoveries that open new directions in research. This archive offers the user a tool with which they can seize emerging technologies for the enhancement of research ideas. A coordinated, searchable visual archive such as the one proposed here fosters interdisciplinary collaboration just as libraries have been the research, learning, and social centers on campuses for previous generations.

The start up phase will conclude with the development and linking of two working databases (Lamar Dodd School of Art and Classics) which will act as a foundation for a larger set, building and bringing together all of the humanities digital media collections at the University of Georgia. The structure of these databases will enable sharing of collections through the use of XML (extensible markup language). Using the underlying structure of the humanities digital media archive created during the start-up phase as a pattern, we will build more databases here at the University of Georgia. The resulting digital media archive will increase the university's national standing by encourage humanities divisions across the country to coordinate with UGA and share their collections with us.

- *Specific courses benefiting from the project*

All courses being taught with the use of digital images in the Art School, the Classics program with directly benefit.

- *Number of students served including undergraduate, graduate/professional or both*

All students, 1000 undergraduates and 100 graduates, who are enrolled in 13 undergraduate and 10 graduate programs in the Art School. All students in the Classics program, 120 majors/minors and 19 graduate students and almost 1500 students enrolled in lower-level Classics courses.

Section II. Budget

List technology, facilities, and other resources requested

Item	Quantity	Total Cost	Requested from LTG	Funded by other sources
Software Development*	1 (Classics)	\$6,000	\$6,000	0
Implementation and Tech Support	4 (Emy Decker, David Barber, Joseph Willey, Josh Keister)	\$6,000	\$6,000	
Mac Book Pro 15" screen laptop	1	\$2,100	\$2,100	0
Canon Rebel XT SLR 8 megapixel digital camera	1	\$799	\$799	0

Grand total requested = \$14,899

*All database modifications will be executed by the Consortium for Internet Imaging and Database Systems (CIIDS)

- *Budget justification narration*

This development of a web interface is for multiple academic units within the University. This database will stimulate interdisciplinary collaboration. These modifications to the database will improve upon our existing system and allow for other units within the University of Georgia to have a template for creating new digital image databases so that we can build cross-campus, multi-disciplinary shared digital media collections. The amount requested is not large as we are creating a model, in this beginning phase, for what we anticipate will be a much larger scale University-wide project.

- Timeline for the development of the project using the following format

Date	Objective	Persons Responsible
As soon as funds are available, CIIDS will be tasked to work on the	Media archives will be complete after 1 year	Emy Decker, Director of Visual Resources David Barber, IT Senior

database code to create web interfaces for Classics		Manager, CIIDS
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Section III. Learning Outcomes

- Learning outcomes and how resources will be used to achieve these outcomes*

The world is increasingly visual and students will have to perform in environments that require them to understand and properly use images. The database will expose students to a broader range of images in their classes resulting in their being even more adept at understanding and using visual data. The Lamar Dodd School of Art Digital Image Archive, which increases by approximately 510 images per month, will continue to grow in number of image holdings, and the retrieval of these images will be more effective with the more sophisticated search functions of the database that funding will make possible. As more departments collaborate in the digital image resource project, students will directly benefit from digital images in many areas of study. Each addition will help nuance the student's understanding of the impact that visuality has, and will continue to have, on modern culture. As other units work to build digital image archives in their subject areas, ours will provide an easy pattern to emulate, and many units on University of Georgia's campus will have the opportunity to collaborate in this digital media resource project.
- Methods for evaluating the project and learning outcomes*

The method for evaluating this phase of the project includes evaluation forms, within the web application, that will be made available for users to respond with their input about the efficacy of all aspects of the system. Further, the efficacy of the start-up activities will be monitored through use patterns and by tracking the growth of each discipline-specific section. In addition, faculty will be asked to evaluate their students' use of visual data in their projects and rank their students' facility with this type of resource. Each discipline has its own normative skills and, as a result, instructors and graduate student teaching assistants are the best resource for establishing positive, neutral, or negative outcomes that are discipline specific.

The database itself will also undergo review and vetting. Ongoing interdisciplinary juries will examine the content of the archives as well as the feedback forms offered by each discipline. Periodically, every three years, an external review of the media archive will take place. Specifically, units outside the University of Georgia will be given an opportunity to login and provide their critical feedback about the archive. Requests for enhancement or modification will provide technical feedback and will help further determine the course for the construction of the additional subject archives in the humanities.
- Potential applications in other academic areas*

Many units on University of Georgia's campus will have the opportunity to collaborate in this digital media resource project after the initial phase

involving Classics and the Lamar Dodd School of Art. Faculty will have access to digital images in a wide range of academic disciplines all linked to one common “clearinghouse” website.

Section IV. Support Plan

- *Staffing and resources to be used to continue the initiative following LTG funding*
The Director of the Visual Resources Center will be responsible for overseeing the project and scheduling the implementation and use of the system. Data entry will be regulated by VRC Director as well. The technical staff of Classics (1 part time student), and the Lamar Dodd School of Art (2 full time staff) will communicate and assist each other with implementation.