The ability to automatically add their collections to WorldCat. The company offers a free 60 day hosted trial or a full-evaluation copy of the software for interested institutions.

One More Option

One other option that I have not yet discussed is the use of publicly available Websites and databases of art images. If you are interested, there are many free images on the Internet from reputable sources. A series of articles evaluating publicly available art databases accessible via the Web was published in the September, October, and November/December 2004 issues of Searcher Magazine. (The full text is available online: http://www.infotoday.com/searcher/sept04/ mattison.shtml.) The primary reason I neglected to mention this option before now is because Furman never really considered using free Websites as a permanent solution to our image access problem. While many of our students use the Internet to obtain access to art images, free Websites won’t fulfill all of our needs in the classroom. Our Art professors require greater image quality and image manipulation.

Issues to Consider

As you look for the best solution to your own problem, here are some things to keep in mind.

Metadata — It is important to consider the metadata that goes along with the images. Who is going to create it? How much will there be for each item? Can you add, edit, or delete metadata? You could put all the images in the world into a database, but without some good indexing and metadata to go with them you may never be able to get them out again.

image Quality — If you decide to build your own database, the size and quality of the images in the database is going to affect the amount of storage you require for the database. If you subscribe to a database of images, you have no control over the quality of the images or accompanying metadata.

Functionality — What kinds of things do you want to do with the images? Zoom-in and/or zoom-out? Re-sizing? Side-by-side viewing of images? Downloading? Export for use in a presentation or on a Website? Do you want to use the database for something other than images, such as video, audio, and/or document files? What kind of print quality do you need to have?

Life of the Product — When picking a product, think long term. What ever type of service and/or product you choose, you will most likely have to live with it for a number of years. Choose some...

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