

# Letter from the Chairman and Executive Director

April 2006

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The past few months have been a time of continuing expansion at ARTstor, and also a time when we have had an increased sense of the ways in which we are part of a growing network – an infrastructure that connects creators and users, repositories and scholars. Growth of our activities only matters if we continue to figure out the best ways to build bridges – bridges between libraries and instructional technologists, between visual resource departments and remote collections, between those who care for objects or sites or create art and those who want to use images for educational use. That means that we need to work alongside all those who have a stake in striking good balances and crafting good solutions. For example, in March, the Metropolitan Museum of Art announced that it would make available, through ARTstor, image files to scholars that are of sufficient size and quality to be used in scholarly publications without charging a fee for such use. This program is described by Susan Chun, the General Manager for Collections Information Planning at the Met, on page three. We are pleased to be able to help provide this service, and believe that this kind of collaboration – between content owners and educational users – is what a connected environment with shared values can enable.

Similarly we are exploring the extent to which ARTstor can share more content between and among educational and cultural institutions, to encourage the sharing of information about how ARTstor is used (for example, to provide ways for users to share image groups that they have constructed for a certain lecture or on a certain topic), or to solicit cataloging and tagging from our users so as to enrich the ways that others can find various images. All of these potential “network effects” only start to make sense as the numbers of users, contributors, and collections grow and as ARTstor becomes more integrated into various institutional environments.

Seeking such integration has meant working directly with the colleges, schools, and museums that we serve, responding to their suggestions. Since October, we have:

- Launched an effort to cluster duplicate images;
- Announced a policy that will (in addition to the unusual project with the Metropolitan Museum) allow larger-sized downloads of the images from certain collections outside of the ARTstor software;
- Released a new version of the offline image viewer that adds the capacity to print presentation “slides”, to add or remove captions from the images, to allow automatic re-authentication, and to improve performance for Mac users;
- Released upgrades to the site that make it easier to navigate and use;
- Released an XML gateway that allows participating institutions to use metasearch engines to search ARTstor in an integrated way with other electronic resources.

The collections that we are adding – and which are described in more detail elsewhere in this newsletter – continue to add depth and scope to the library, to upgrade the quality of images that are central to the teaching canon, and to provide searchable access to previously sequestered collections. Collections continue to be acquired, processed, and released to the library. These include exceptional new collections from the Getty Museum, Cornell University Library, and the Sarah Quill Archive.

At the same time, ARTstor continues to grow in new directions. Having announced availability to K-12 schools in October, 29 have joined as participants. In total, the number of participating schools, colleges, universities, art schools, and museums stands at 583. Pilot programs have

been launched in the UK and Australia, and we hope to be distributing the library to some institutions in those countries in the Fall.

Ten or twenty years from now, we may possibly know the “right answers” to today’s digitization challenges. For now, however, as we continue to learn, we are committed to being innovative, active, responsive and as useful to the educational and cultural community as we can.

With all good wishes,  
James Shulman, *Executive Director*  
Neil Rudenstine, *Chairman*

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