

# Letter from the Chairman and Executive Director

November 2004

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As we write this letter, students, faculty members, curators, and staff at 216 colleges, museums, and universities are beginning to use the images and data from the ARTstor collections. While the collections continue to grow and the tools to make use of them are being updated, we – both the staff of ARTstor and the broad community of people who are working with us – are beginning to learn about how such a resource can help support educational and scholarly work. It is still very early in the process, but we wanted to thank all of those who are exploring this ever-changing terrain with us.

Participating institutions include 41 community colleges in addition to the many small liberal arts colleges and larger research universities and museums. The wide range of types and sizes of institutions provides an encouraging sign of ARTstor's potential to serve users in a great diversity of environments. In this sense, the Internet's ability to serve as a powerful "democratizer" is more clear than ever: it can dramatically increase access to important materials for those institutions and individuals who cannot afford to create or maintain their own substantial digital image collections.

The Internet itself is only part of the chain that links us to users; along the way the ARTstor image collections travel through firewalls, load balancers, and local area networks as well. For this reason, we believe that ARTstor's offline image viewer – a tool that allows any user to prepare and access groups of images for off-line local use – provides a crucial capacity to users of the ARTstor collections. A presentation (or studying for a mid-term) can proceed as planned no matter how the Internet is behaving. In this newsletter, we describe the plans for the viewer in more detail as well as other technology developments at ARTstor.

We are also pleased to report that we have launched two pilot programs: first, we are working with ten participating institutions to explore the costs and benefits of having ARTstor host an institution's own collections and serve them back to that institution (in the ARTstor software) alongside content in the ARTstor Digital Library. We are starting to learn a great deal by working with partners on image collections such as maps of Africa (Stanford), photography of the Women's Suffrage Movement (Bryn Mawr); Astronomy (Sewanee); Insects (Denison), and Botany (Grinnell). It seems to us that the potential of ARTstor's software to serve as a campus wide platform for the use of educational images and image-management is well worth understanding.

In a second (and separate) pilot program, we have also enlisted the help of thirteen public and private K-12 schools to explore how to make best use of ARTstor in primary and secondary education. While the hosting pilot is discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this newsletter, more news on the recently launched K-12 pilot program will be available in the next issue.

Finally, the core of ARTstor continues to be a growing set of collections, built with partners all over the world, for the sake of educational and scholarly use. Four of these projects (sculpture from the Berlin State Museums, architectural images from the Clarence Ward Archive, art and architecture of Islam, and the history of women in photographs from the Schlesinger Library) are described in the Collections portion of this newsletter. These collections demonstrate how ARTstor will continue to serve users by adding materials from less well explored areas and disciplines, while we continue to add further depth and quality to the traditional areas of painting, drawing, sculpture, and architecture. There is a very great deal of disk space on our servers and thus we are able to add depth to the ARTstor collections and expand their reach as well.

We do not consider the launch of ARTstor as any sort of resting point – rather, we recognize that it represents the beginning of a great deal of work that needs to be done. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and suggestions, and to working together in the future.

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

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