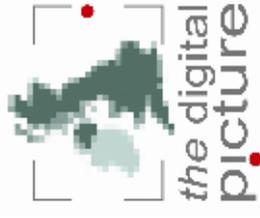


## *the Digital Picture*

The rise of digital images and their supporting technologies within arts education brings, without doubt, one of the biggest and most profound changes that the sector has ever seen. Everything, from teaching in the classroom to finding images in the library, is having to adapt to the new model.



**the Digital Picture** has grown directly from a desire within arts education communities to explore these changes. Through an open consultation, everyone in our art colleges and university departments, in all parts of the UK and at every level, will have a chance to affect the future.

This booklet contains 10 straightforward questions which we would ask you to answer as fully or as simply as you like or, alternatively, you can answer the questions online at [www.thedigitalpicture.ac.uk](http://www.thedigitalpicture.ac.uk). Whichever method you choose, your contribution will help to influence the future direction of many aspects of UK arts education relating to digital images. Furthermore, if you would like to play a bigger part in the project, **the Digital Picture** will be holding a series of workshops/expert seminars in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (they are free of charge to anyone who wants to attend), and will be holding *virtual* seminars via a dedicated email discussion group (see page 22).



**“The Digital Picture is a very interesting development and we think the findings should prove to be essential reading for anyone involved in arts education.”**

Boyd and Evans

Checking between Flights,  
Boyd and Evans, 1985, Crown ©

## Question 1 of 10 – Increase in digital images

Arts education, like everywhere else, has felt the rapid growth of computer-based, digital technologies in recent years. The benefits of these new technologies can



usually be clearly seen; for example, we all recognise the increased opportunities for sharing information (including images). This applies not only within our teaching and learning environments, but also across other parts of the country, and even other continents. However, inevitably,

there is another, less positive side to the steady advance of new technologies; one obvious effect being that many technologies that have been used successfully for years disappear as a result. In September 2003, well-known slide projector manufacturer, Kodak, announced that production and sales of their machines would end in June 2004, with service and support ceasing in 2011. Slides have been a mainstay of arts education for a very long time and a shift towards new image formats is clearly a significant occurrence.

**“..in recent years, slide projectors have declined in usage, replaced by alternative projection technologies.”**

[www.kodak.com/US/en/corp/pressReleases/pr20030926-01.shtml](http://www.kodak.com/US/en/corp/pressReleases/pr20030926-01.shtml)

Nonetheless, the rise of digital images will certainly continue (especially with constant improvements in digital cameras and projectors) and, for many in arts education, the fact that they are rapidly becoming a core part of the educational toolset is a clear demonstration of, and reason for embracing, the practical value of the digital revolution.



## Question 1 of 10 – Increase in digital images

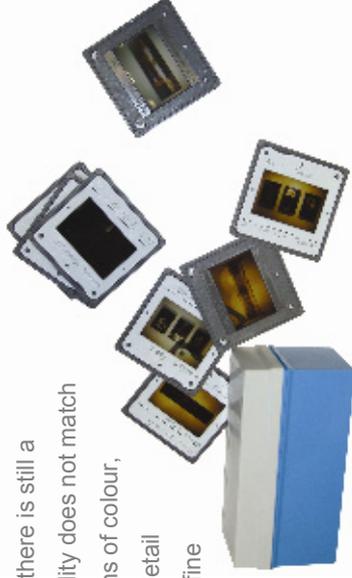
**Digital images are on the increase in arts education. What overall impact does this increase have on you?**

- It improves things for me in the learning and teaching environment    Agree      Disagree
- I worry about the loss of traditional products, skills or knowledge    Agree      Disagree
- It helps me to be more computer literate    Agree      Disagree
- It has no impact on me    Agree      Disagree

Please use the space below to add any other comments on this topic.

## Question 2 of 10 – Fit for the purpose

There is much debate within art and photographic communities about the quality of digital images, especially when compared to photography and traditional printing media. Although digital imaging technologies and projectors have improved immensely over recent years, there is still a perception that the image quality does not match that of traditional slides in terms of colour, contrast, clarity and depth of detail (resolution), especially where fine details need to be examined; for example, in the study of art history. It may well be true that the level of affordable



digital media has not attained a high enough quality for certain purposes but this may not be the case throughout the arts education sector. It is quite feasible for a lecturer to simply want an image (perhaps a photograph of a particular building) for illustrating a point in a presentation. To him/her, the depth of detail or precise colour balances may not be important, as long as the educational point is made.



**“Then there’s image quality. The images produced by most consumers are dire... this will improve in time... but it still has a long way to go before it overtakes analogue photography. An average 35mm colour negative holds the equivalent of several gigabits of data.”**

John Naughton, Sunday Observer  
February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2003

## Question 2 of 10 – Fit for the purpose

**Digital images can be used in a number of ways, but are they better at some things than they are at others?**

- They are excellent for illustrating talks and lectures      Agree      Disagree
- They are only good for web or intranet pages      Agree      Disagree
- They are never good enough quality for studying closely or printing out      Agree      Disagree
- They are useful for creating new artwork      Agree      Disagree

*Please use the space below to add any other comments on this topic.*

### Question 3 of 10 – Effect on traditional education

As digital images and associated technologies become the norm, there are, naturally, elements of doubt and concern in some areas, particularly in relation to threatened changes in working practices and associated cultural shifts. Fear of change is often justified to some extent and any new media must be considered very carefully in terms of its broader impact. In 1936, Walter Benjamin discussed both the negative and the positive impact of mechanisation on art, in his book 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. In today's digital revolution, people in arts education might want to know things like whether there will be a decline in those arts that require large working environments, as more space is devoted to the much smaller computer terminal. Also, will librarians and tutors be made redundant as their contribution is replaced by much cheaper digital resources?



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**“Technology is not a teacher: its use cannot and should not replace interactions with responsive adults.”**

Digital images can play a useful role to support active learning, in Learning & Leading with Technology, May 2004 v31 i8 p34(3)

Some of these things will happen but digital images do, of course, offer huge benefits such as increasing access to art in terms of volume and scope. They also create opportunities for interacting with art that is otherwise inaccessible; for example, the prehistoric cave paintings at Lascaux, which have been closed to the public since 1963. Furthermore, other advantages of digital imagery, like the increased capacity to manipulate images and to share them amongst art students and staff, both internally and across the wider community, are obviously extremely valuable assets to arts education.

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### Question 3 of 10 – Effect on traditional education

**What effect do digital images have on more traditional aspects of arts education?**

- Using images on-screen reduces face-to-face contact with other arts people Agree     Disagree
- Access to many digital images is better than just visits to galleries Agree     Disagree
- We must not lose traditional media and approaches Agree     Disagree
- Arts education is much improved by digital images Agree     Disagree

Please use the space below to add any other comments on this topic.

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## Question 4 of 10 – Finding digital images

Some institutes will doubtlessly find the resources necessary for making available many digital images to their staff and students, even if this takes place over a long time. Such images could be made available via an intranet or Virtual Learning Environment or, if political and financial restraints allow, made accessible to the wider community through a co-ordinated, joining-up of resources from different

**go**

places on the internet. But this sort of approach wouldn't prevent people from

scanning in or creating their own images, though quality and copyright issues might have to be explored in these cases, and would not negate the use of other ways to access images. Already, there are a number of commercial or subscription companies who offer images to educational users (Bridgeman Art Library, ARTstor, SCRAN and Saskia) and several online services specifically set up for education (AHDS Visual Arts, EDINA and Artifact). It is also important to remember that a huge majority of people prefer to discover resources through commonly used Internet search engines (such as Google) and, although this brings many potential pitfalls, this approach will no doubt grow as the search engine companies mature and further recognise the needs of communities like arts education.



Because we value your thoughts and appreciate the time and effort you are giving up to fill in this consultation paper, AHDS Visual Arts is giving away a couple of digital cameras – so, if your name comes up, you can create your own digital images!

At the end of the project we will select two contributors who will each receive a high quality, pocket-sized digital camera.

N.B. To be eligible for the camera giveaway you will need to supply an email address – see page 21. Cameras may differ from the one shown in the picture.

## Question 4 of 10 – Finding digital images

If you wanted a particular image in digital format, what would be the ideal way to obtain it?

- I would like my institute to provide all the images that I need      Agree     Disagree
- There should be an online 'one-stop-shop' for arts images      Agree     Disagree
- Browsing via internet search engines is the best way      Agree     Disagree
- I would like to have the resources to scan it in or create it myself      Agree     Disagree

Please use the space below to add any other comments on this topic.

## Question 5 of 10 – Technological resources

Whilst most arts lecturers and tutors will acknowledge the fact that tools such as Microsoft's PowerPoint are commonly used, there can be a mismatch between the apparent functionality of such tools and their own needs.

One example of this is the common arts practice

of using dual projectors to illustrate

differences/comparisons between two or

more images, something that would be

difficult to achieve with many current digital

tools. However, it should be acknowledged that

new tools and advanced versions of current software

are coming onto the market all the time.



**“In the seemingly inexorable rise of technology in schools, the data projector has recently been demonstrated to be the piece of equipment whose popularity is growing fastest.”**

The Guardian, Tuesday September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2003

Many arts institutes now have sophisticated display hardware, advanced computer suites and fully integrated networks and associated facilities. However, in some users' minds there can still be uncertainty about plugging one machine into another, or about things working at all. Also, new equipment does cost money, and needs constant support and upgrading, and this can have a major impact on the availability of digital images or the tools to make the most of them. But, prices are constantly dropping and continuity and availability of technological resources should improve, especially as institutes improve their basic infrastructure. All that aside, to those who have already discovered tangible uses of such technology, the issues relating to a slow adaptation process are far outweighed by the positive benefits.

## Question 5 of 10 – Technological resources

**The successful use of digital images depends on technology.**

**What issues does this raise?**

- The benefits of new technologies will far outweigh any problems      Agree     Disagree
- I have no confidence in the reliability of technology      Agree     Disagree
- Our institute is fully kitted out with the latest technology      Agree     Disagree
- I cannot get the tools I need      Agree     Disagree
- New technology costs too much      Agree     Disagree

Please use the space below to add any other comments on this topic.

## Question 6 of 10 – Usefulness

A MORI survey published in February 2005 looked at issues relating to the Internet ([www.common-info.org.uk/audienceresearch.shtml](http://www.common-info.org.uk/audienceresearch.shtml)). It discovered that 92% of users believe that reliability of information is an important factor in accessing websites. This fact comes as no surprise to the education sector where students or lecturers using any image resource, digital or not, need to be sure that what they are using has a sufficient degree of integrity. Also, whilst it may not matter to some users if colours are not calibrated to a very specific standard, it is likely that poor searching or browsing facilities will directly impact on their usage of resources on web, intranet or Virtual Learning Environment. Ignoring the needs of those for whom a resource is developed can be an expensive mistake: in the House of Commons' 3rd report on the recent £50m failure of the UK e-University (published 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 2005) it was noted that:

**‘the UK e-University failed largely because it took a supply-driven rather than demand led approach’.**

Focusing on user demands is particularly important for the many users who have difficulties with badly thought out websites; for example, those with learning or physical impairments. In this respect, images pose a number of problems since, often, their information value cannot necessarily be accessed by those with visual impairments or less sophisticated technology. It may be



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that good descriptions or structured metadata can help with this sort of problem, and with searching for digital images in general, but the creation of such extra information can be quite a burden for those creating resources.

## Question 6 of 10 – Usefulness

**Are there particular aspects of digital images that improve or reduce their usefulness?**

- I need to know they must come from a reliable source      Agree      Disagree
- Things like colour, contrast and clarity are unimportant      Agree      Disagree
- Browsing and searching for images should be easy for all users      Agree      Disagree
- Added information or metadata is not essential to my work      Agree      Disagree

*Please use the space below to add any other comments on this topic.*

## Question 7 of 10 – Ownership

One of the strengths of digital images lies in the fact that they can be shared, re-used and manipulated in ways that were impossible before the advent of computers.

However, this also means that they can be mistreated with the same ease, i.e. it is

now straightforward to produce perfect copies of digital images without regard to copyright or intellectual property rights (IPR), and broadcast or publish them without due reward, or credit, to the rightful owner of the material.

However, such issues, which are often ignored or misunderstood can be extremely complex, and the

ramifications of misuse are wide-reaching and potentially disastrous in both terms of legality and image usage. Nonetheless, many people in education, especially within libraries and legal departments, are very aware of the problems of ownership rights.



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**“Take away from English authors their copyrights, and you would very soon take away from England her authors.”**

Anthony Trollope, 1815-82, taken from his autobiography (1883), ch 6.

Constant debates and discussions, to try to find ways of resolving some of the ownership issues, take place within arts education and also with organisations like the Copyright Licensing Authority (<http://www.cla.co.uk/>) and the Design and Artists Copyright Society (<http://www.dacs.org.uk/>).



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## Question 7 of 10 – Ownership

**Digital images can be shared and re-used very easily. Should we worry about ownership?**

- I don't want other people to make money from using my image      Agree      Disagree
- Most images on the web are free for anyone to use      Agree      Disagree
- Using any image for educational purposes should not be illegal      Agree      Disagree
- My institute should take care of legal issues relating to digital images      Agree      Disagree

*Please use the space below to add any other comments on this topic.*



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## Question 8 of 10 – Support in using digital images

Many of those concerned with preserving or promoting the use of images do not have the time and/or appropriate training to achieve all that they would like to achieve in respect of digital images, nor to instigate such work by others. The lengthy time commitments, skills, knowledge, hardware and resources necessary for digitization on any significant scale are usually found in the ICT departments of colleges or universities,



rather than in arts faculties. Also, although many arts education institutes now have substantial systems set up, the whole language and procedural side of utilising digital resources can be confusing or

daunting to someone who is not used to

them. However, as the new technology matures and its place in our environment is better understood, there is a natural increase in our knowledge about it. This soon filters out to more and more people, either through new skills being taught, an increase in understanding through regular usage or through improved access to those people with the appropriate knowledge.

Gradually, many of the problems will get smoothed out and, as a consequence, budgets, procedures and training programmes will begin to evolve in much more positive directions.

**“It is obvious that the art school must come to terms with the new environment. In order to digest the unfamiliar codes and relationships created by our new electronic faculties, they must be normalised as a part of the working environment.”**

Stroud Cornock, from 'Media Handling' report to Fine Art Board of Ipswich Civic College, 1965-66 session

## Question 8 of 10 – Support in using digital images

**What considerations need to be made to help you get the most out of digital images in arts education?**

- I feel that I can always turn to an expert when I need advice or support      Agree     Disagree
- More money should be made available for digital images      Agree     Disagree
- My institute's procedures for digital issues are clear and easy to understand      Agree     Disagree
- I cannot get the training I need      Agree     Disagree

Please use the space below to add any other comments on this topic.

## Question 9 of 10 – Digital images in research

For many people in education, digital image research will mean finding pictures to illustrate presentations, lectures or essays. For these purposes, digital images, if made accessible in the right numbers, formats and subjects, obviously serve a very useful purpose. However, research relating to digital images obviously does not stop there. As well as the dissemination of high-quality image collections for researchers to make use of, there is also plenty of scope in the development of new ways of using images, and, of course, research into advanced imaging systems; for example, virtual reality or content based image retrieval.



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These two images were digitised as part of a research project called Russian Visual Arts: Art Criticism in Context, 1814-1909 established jointly by the universities of Exeter and Sheffield.

As technologies and processes are understood and exploited further, digital images may also have a significant role to play in research that focuses on the creation of the image itself: practice-based research. What is certain is that the use of digital images in the arts will be an increasingly important part of research across the UK.

**“At the heart of research across all disciplines is the determination to understand the world which we make and inhabit. The arts and humanities bring to that search approaches and understandings that are unique to our disciplines, and it is on these that we must build the heart of our case.”**

Geoffrey Crossick, The Guardian, 2003

## Question 9 of 10 – Digital images in research

**Digital images have a role in research, but are there issues surrounding their use in this area?**

- They offer great opportunities for practice-based research      Agree      Disagree
- Existing online image resources are not sufficient for my research      Agree      Disagree
- Digital images are an essential part of publishing research online      Agree      Disagree
- We need more research relating to digital images      Agree      Disagree

*Please use the space below to add any other comments on this topic.*

## Question 10 of 10 – How important?

Of the nine subjects outlined in the previous questions, which are the most important for you?

- 1. Increase in digital images
- 2. Fit for the purpose
- 3. Effect on traditional education
- 4. Finding digital images
- 5. Technological resources
- 6. Usefulness
- 7. Ownership
- 8. Support in using digital images
- 9. Digital images in research

**Note:** please feel free to tick as many boxes as you like, but it might give us a clearer picture of what you consider to be particularly important if you restrict your selections to a smaller number.

Please use the space below to add any other comments on this topic.

## A few last details

Thank you for filling in the 10 questions – your contributions and thoughts are vital to this consultation, and to the arts education community as a whole. We would really appreciate it if you could give a few moments more to supply the following information which will help us to get a clearer picture of how the issues covered in the 10 questions relate to different groups of people in arts education.

**N.B.** Everything you provide in this document will be treated in the strictest confidence and no names will be used in any results.

Which of the following best describes your role:

- Student
- Support staff
- Artist
- Lecturer
- Managerial
- Researcher
- Librarian
- Art historian
- Other:

Which of the following areas are you involved in:

- Further education
- PhD study
- Higher education
- Post doctoral
- Masters
- Other:

Is your age:

- Under 18
- 18 – 30
- 31 - 50
- Over 50

If you would like to be informed about the results of this consultation, or involved in the virtual seminars, please provide your email address:

N.B. Providing an email address also makes you eligible for the camera giveaway (see page 8).

## About *the* Digital Picture

**the Digital Picture** has been established to get a clear picture of what issues, relating to digital images, exist across all areas of arts education. Whilst there are many benefits to the new formats and technologies, there are a number of less straightforward, and some extremely problematic, areas that need to be explored properly. These include things such as: lecturers having trouble getting the training they need; librarians concerned that thousands of slides may disappear; or students feeling that they cannot get the digital images they need for reference or use in their own work. It is anticipated that **the Digital Picture** will create a comprehensive overview of such problem areas in the UK and thus provide the arts education community with a UK-wide foundation for confronting and dealing with them.

### What happens next?

As well as the 10 questions, we will be running several *virtual* seminars via a dedicated email discussion group, and will be holding a series of **free-to-attend** workshops/expert seminars across the UK. If you would like to attend (anyone is welcome), please book your place at [www.thedigitalpicture.ac.uk](http://www.thedigitalpicture.ac.uk)

### Workshop dates and venues:

14 <sup>th</sup> April	University of Wales, Cardiff
20 <sup>th</sup> April	University of Manchester
5 <sup>th</sup> May	The Surrey Institute of Art & Design, University College
23 <sup>rd</sup> May	University of Ulster, Belfast
1 <sup>st</sup> June	Plymouth School of Art and Design
7 <sup>th</sup> June	Courtauld Institute of Art, London
9 <sup>th</sup> June	University of Northumbria at Newcastle
23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Glasgow School of Art

## About *the* Digital Picture

### AHDS Visual Arts

The coordinator of **the Digital Picture** is AHDS Visual Arts (part of the Arts and Humanities Data Service), an independent National body serving the needs of the visual arts education community. AHDS Visual Arts is based in Farnham, Surrey where it is hosted by Surrey Institute of Art & Design, University College. The main aim of the organization is to serve research and learning & teaching communities by:



**Preserving** valuable educational resources, in digital formats, for future generations.

**Presenting** high quality image collections and associated resources across the internet.

**Promoting** good practice in the digitisation, cataloguing and dissemination of online resources.

AHDS Visual Arts provides extensive and high quality online resources ([visualarts.ahds.ac.uk](http://visualarts.ahds.ac.uk)) which are **free** for educational use and cover the full range of visual arts subjects, including: painting; design; art history; architecture; sculpture; crafts; fashion; printmaking and, increasingly, digital media.

For more information, contact us - **tel.: 01252 892723**

**email: [info@visualarts.ahds.ac.uk](mailto:info@visualarts.ahds.ac.uk)**

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