Eileen Otrovsky - Primary Persona

Russian Art Professor

Resourceful Adapter

Description

Eilleen jumped on the digital band wagon a few years back. Since Eilleen teaches a sub-discipline, the 19th Century Russian Avant Garde art movement, there are not any text books that fit her subject. Her students requested that she make her course images available online so that they wouldn't have to go to the Art History building's basement to view color plates. She now provides her students with a website of images that supplement the material she presents in lecture and posts a digital course reader online.

Establishing her first course gallery was overwhelming. Eileen did not feel directly rewarded for the 25 hours a week she spent scanning and describing images. Although a student helped her, she still felt that this activity was outside of her core interests. Eilleen is always in the process of publishing her "next book", and these extracurricular activities became a burden.

After her first digital semester, she was scheduled to teach the same course the following semester. She realized that the large amount of images she amassed could potentially be reused with minor changes. She started to collect more images, and started to search for images online to lessen the burden of digitizing her own images. Her department has recognized the potential benefits, and has become more supportive of her needs by providing her with digital copies of copystand images requested for course use.

In the past few years her collection has grown past 1000 images. In order to organize her collection, Eilleen originally threw her images in folders representing broad categories. This approach had provided enough organization so that she didn't have to spend alot of time finding her images. Now that her image collection has grown, she has noticed that some images should live in multiple places. As a result, copies of her images live in separate categories and multiple powerpoint presentations. Although she has ample space on her hard drive she is concerned that she will eventually run into space problems. She has also grown wary of keeping track of her images' various locations.

Images are Eilleen's life blood. Unlike most other disciplines, the images determine the concepts and structure of her lecture. As she prepares for a lecture, she meticulously chooses and organizes her images and explores concepts and themes in her head as she works through this process. Once this process is complete, she concretizes her thoughts as lecture notes based on the images final arrangement.

Eilleen has now reached a point where it is easier to present her lectures digitally. She has found that in some ways this approach is more flexible than the traditional slide projector. For example, many of her images are best compared horizontally due to their long widths. Using Powerpoint enables her to show images on top of each other as opposed to side to side.

Eileen does not see herself as a "techie" and finds it amusing when her other colleagues comment on her advanced abilities. In many ways, she still feels like a beginner. Before her first digital lecture, Eilleen went through a few dry runs in the lecture hall to become more accustomed to the technology. It still causes her great distress when the projector flickers or her computer does not cooperate in the middle of a lecture, but her tolerance for these random distruptions has increased semester by semester.

Eileen has also taken great pleasure in sharing images with some of her gsi's. She views herself as their mentor, and has shared much of her collection with them as a way to bootstrap their own research. Her students appreciate her generosity and use her images in their own sections for teaching. She is very open to sharing but is afraid that one day she will get in trouble for owning and distributing images that are not hers. Although she tries to keep separate images that she has purchased or taken personally from those taken from other web sites, her diligence waxes and wanes.

Goals

- Spend time on activities that support her research and writing.
- Decrease barriers between her students and the content
- Allow her students and TAs to leverage her collection
- Inspire students to consider Art History as an intellectual pursuit
- Easy access to relevant images.
- Stay Organized

Level of Expertise

Office products, basic functionality image repository software, email, on-line shopping

Tools

- Ppt for images
- Word for "lecture guide"