

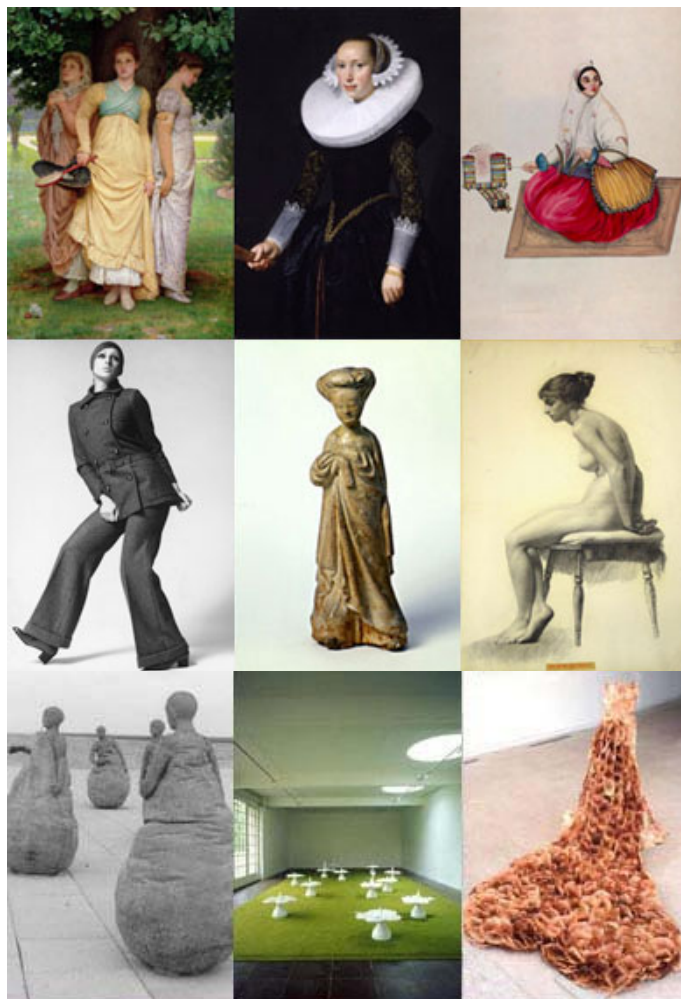


Project Document Cover Sheet

Project Information			
Project Acronym	VADS		
Project Title	Enhancing the VADS Image Collection		
Start Date	1 October 2008	End Date	30 September 2009
Lead Institution	University for the Creative Arts		
Project Director	Rosemary Lynch		
Project Manager & contact details	Amy Robinson University for the Creative Arts Falkner Road Farnham Surrey GU9 7DS Tel: 01252 892723 amy@vads.ac.uk		
Partner Institutions	N/A		
Project Web URL	http://www.vads.ac.uk		
Programme Name (and number)	Enriching Digital Resources – Digitisation Programme		
Programme Manager	Ben Showers		

Document Name			
Document Title	Final Report		
Reporting Period			
Author(s) & project role	Amy Robinson Project Manager		
Date	August 2009	Filename	vadsfinalreport
URL			
Access	<input type="checkbox"/> Project and JISC internal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General dissemination	

Document History		
Version	Date	Comments
1	10 August 2009	First draft
2	7 December 2009	Incorporating feedback from JISC



Enhancing the VADS Image Collection

JISC Final Report

Amy Robinson

August 2009

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
1. Executive Summary	4
2. Background	5
3. Aims and Objectives	5
4. Methodology	7
5. Implementation	7
6. Outputs and Results	10
7. Outcomes	13
8. Conclusions	14
9. Implications	15
10. References	16
11. Appendices	18
Appendix A: New Collections	18
Appendix B: Dissemination Activities	22

Acknowledgements

The 'Enhancing the VADS Image Collection' project was funded through the 'Enriching Digital Resources' strand of the JISC Digitisation Programme. Special thanks are due to the JISC Digitisation Programme for their guidance and support throughout the project.

Project team: Rosemary Lynch (Project Director), Amy Robinson, Carlos Silva, Marie-Therese Gramstadt

Steering group:

Rosemary Lynch (Head of Library and Learning Services, UCA); Leigh Garrett (VADS Director); Carolyn Bew (Academic Developer, Higher Education Academy Art, Design and Media Subject Centre); Jess Crilly (Learning Resources Manager, University of the Arts London); Jules Findley, (Course Leader Fashion, Promotion and Imaging, UCA); Karla Youngs (Director, JISC Digital Media); Pauline Ridley, (Learning Area Co-ordinator, Visual Practices, Learnhigher CETL, Centre for Learning and Teaching, University of Brighton); Nathan Scrimshaw (Imagio Digitisation Project Officer, UCA); Sarah Sutherland (Lecturer in MA, UCA); Frances Teasdale (Central Services Manager and Head of Collections, Library and Learning Services, UCA).

The project is grateful to all of the teaching, research and library staff, students, artists and designers, curators, independent researchers, and members of the public who took part in the user analysis and to all of the institutions who have generously contributed new content to the VADS image collection during the course of the project.

1. Executive Summary

The VADS image collection (vads.ac.uk) is unique within the UK. The education community has contributed collections with the purpose of bringing together in one place a range of image resources, available free at the point of use, to support learning, teaching and research. The collection now numbers in excess of 100,000 images, and covers the full range of the visual arts including fine art, architecture, media, applied arts and design. It is cited and promoted as a key source for visual arts images by libraries and art departments across the world.

The 'Enhancing the VADS Image Collection' project has enabled VADS to greatly enhance the online image collection, making fundamental changes both in terms of the user interface and to the underlying metadata which would have been impossible otherwise. The project utilised the expertise of existing VADS staff and was guided by a steering group which brought together a range of expertise from across the visual arts sector.

The project had three overarching aims: to improve image searching and retrieval; to enable VADS images to be accessed more easily; and to facilitate increased use of the collection by academics. To achieve this, the project has developed OAI-PMH capabilities on the VADS database; developed and applied a general top level hierarchical taxonomy to the VADS collections; implemented a combination of controlled terms and free to edit user tags; and enabled academic users to create, annotate and publish their own image sets. The project also included an investigation into the needs of users and non-users of the digital collection.

It was clear from the audience research that there were a number of other changes that could be made to the site which would improve the resource for academic users and VADS has endeavoured to integrate additional, popular requests into the project.

In response to the demand from the arts education sector, the project has also moved beyond its original scope to make thousands of additional high quality images available online from a number of unique and important art collections in UK education; thousands more have been identified for future digitisation.

The project has also allowed VADS to promote the image collection on a national scale; working particularly with the arts library community with whom VADS has strong links.

The main outcome of this project is an enhanced user interface with enriched metadata which makes more efficient use of an already existing digital collection. These enhancements have been made in direct response to feedback from members of the education community and will benefit lecturers, researchers and students as well as the wider audience of artists, designers, teachers, independent researchers and members of the general public.

The project has undoubtedly increased awareness of the VADS image resources through its research, dissemination and promotional activities. Whilst it is too early to comment in detail on the impact that the individual website enhancements have had from this project as the functionality is just being rolled out, it is clear from user feedback that the VADS image collection and our efforts to re-invigorate the website in the months before the project, have already had significant impact.

2. Background

- 2.1 The VADS image collection (vads.ac.uk) has grown considerably over the twelve years of its existence. Some three hundred educational institutions, museums and individual artists have contributed images and metadata to the VADS image collection since its inception, and there are currently over 100,000 images ranging across fine art, architecture, media, applied arts and design. The collection is unique in UK terms, in that it has been contributed to by the UK education community itself for the purpose of bringing together in one place a range of image resources, available free at the point of use, to support learning, teaching and research. The images and metadata are of an extremely high quality. VADS holds high resolution copies of most of its images and the contextual and catalogue information that accompanies these is the product of extensive expert research.
- 2.2 Whilst the visual arts are the focus of the VADS image collection, it has applicability across many other domains, including other areas of the arts, humanities, social sciences and culture, and covers a breadth of topics from 18th century politics, women's suffrage, war propaganda and haute couture to street life in 1970s East London.
- 2.3 The VADS image collection is cited and promoted as a key source for visual arts images by libraries and art departments across the world. The collection provides much needed quality image content for lectures, coursework, use in virtual learning environments, and presentations, and has been used in everything from academic conferences to the Women's Institute (WI). It has led to exhibitions and contributed to new research and the images are frequently used in academic books, journal articles and other arts publications.
- 2.4 As a testament to its popularity, the service is continually approached by members of the arts education community to contribute their digitised collections. In the months prior to the project, VADS added collections from London Metropolitan University, University of the Arts London, Glasgow School of Art, and the Central Saint Martins Museum and Study Collection. VADS is always striving to improve the usefulness of the collection for its users and to encourage others. In April 2008, it revamped the design of the web interface and introduced new features such as 'image of the day'.
- 2.5 The 'Enhancing the VADS Image Collection' project has given VADS the funds to take much larger steps to enhance the online image collection, making fundamental changes both in terms of the user interface and to the underlying metadata which would have been impossible otherwise.

3. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 The aims of the project are listed below with a brief rationale for each:
 - *To enable VADS images to be accessed more easily*
Rationale: To place VADS image resources at the heart of educational image provision and make VADS a key component of the JISC Information Environment, helping to fulfil the vision of the JISC Images Working Group. This will enable VADS to expose quality assured, standards compliant metadata to the growing Institutional Repository network, JISC funded aggregator services, and other OAI compliant institutional databases, and give VADS the capability of harvesting images from other sources to augment its collection.
 - *To enable greater academic use of the collection*
Rationale: VADS resources are relatively well used in UK teaching and research, however, more could be done in understanding exactly how these images are used and which images apply to specific courses and curricula. Here VADS will give users the ability to annotate and publish their own sets of images based around particular topics, themes, interests and course work. This will provide opportunities to use and re-use the collection in innovative and

potentially rejuvenating ways and maximise the value of the collection to its core academic audience.

- *To enable more efficient image search and retrieval*

Rationale: The result of the tremendous breadth of material in the VADS collection, from a wide range of sources, is that searching across the collection in a systematic way becomes increasingly challenging as the collection grows. The image collections tend to make sense in isolation, and enhancements to existing metadata will be required to enable more systematic search and retrieval across multiple collections.

This aim is not about wholesale re-cataloguing of image metadata, but rather we will apply a simple two level classification scheme based on the Art, Design, Architecture and Media (ADAM) Subject Headings – a Dewey Decimal based classification scheme similar to that used by Intute, but Arts focussed – which will facilitate a systematic browsing of the collection as a whole. In tandem with this controlled approach to metadata enhancement, we will also look to apply some level of user tagging.

Taking the above into account, the objectives of the project were as follows:

Objectives:

- Develop OAI-PMH capabilities on the VADS database and provide at least one outgoing data mapping to Dublin Core
- Test the process of metadata harvesting by linking with one other OAI compliant archive
- Assess other mechanisms for data sharing ensuring VADS can be flexible in future initiatives, including OpenSearch and RSS
- Consolidate existing VADS user studies and analysis, and undertake remaining academic usage analysis
- Identify three academic end users and through controlled testing prove the concept of publishing and annotating image sets around specific course teaching
- Develop the functionality on the VADS website to enable these academic test users to annotate and publish their image sets
- Implement the annotate image sets tool functionality for other users
- To apply a general top level hierarchical taxonomy to VADS collections
- To investigate further, through controlled user studies, the implementation of user tagging
- To implement a combination of controlled terms and free to edit user tags, enabling improved searching of the collection
- To design and develop the VADS interface to include the controlled taxonomy and user driven folksonomy, facilitating enhanced cross search and retrieval of VADS images

3.2 The aims of the project remained unchanged throughout, but the list of objectives for achieving this was expanded in response to user feedback. Firstly, the project has made a number of additional changes to the user interface in response to the feedback given by academic users and collection owners. Secondly, in response to continuing demand from the UK arts education community to host digital resources on VADS, the project has added a further 6800 images and high quality metadata to the VADS collection, contributed freely by a number of different universities, arts colleges and museums across the UK. VADS has also been approached by a number of institutions during the project to add further items which are currently being digitised, totalling a potential 200,000+ images (see Appendix A).

4. Methodology

- 4.1 VADS has a 12 year history of providing a data service to the UK Higher and Further Education communities that specialises in visual arts and culture. This project utilised the expertise of existing VADS staff in the areas of digital content curation and best practice, web development, and subject knowledge in the visual arts. The VADS team comprised the VADS' Collections Manager and Software Developer and a part-time Project Officer was recruited to be responsible for the development of the VADS taxonomy.
- 4.2 The day-to-day management of the project was provided by the VADS Collections Manager, who was also responsible for undertaking audience research, web interface design, and dissemination. The VADS Software Developer was responsible for all development including setting up the OAI-PMH services and developing enhanced functionality for the website. Overall direction of the project was provided by the Head of Library and Learning Services at the University for the Creative Arts. The University also appointed a new Director for VADS who took up post in April 2009 and has taken responsibility for seeking new funding and exploring new models in order to sustain the VADS service to education beyond the end of the project (see section 9.1).
- 4.3 The project was guided by a steering group which brought together a range of expertise in visual arts education, image curation, librarianship and e-learning. The role of the steering group was to oversee the general direction of the project, advise on enhancements made to the VADS image archive, contribute to dissemination and promotion, and advise on the sustainability plan.
- 4.4 Addressing issues of interoperability and standards were fundamental objectives of this project. The project addressed interoperability by making the VADS image collection accessible and searchable through a number of other portals and by ensuring that this data is available to other harvesting initiatives in the future. The project also addressed issues of metadata quality and consistency, by developing a simple, over-arching subject classification for the VADS collection and trialling user tagging. The project worked with core standards, such as VRA Core 4 for metadata, OAI-PMH and Dublin Core for harvesting, and a subject-specialist, arts-based taxonomy for its classification.

5. Implementation

- 5.1 The project utilised the JISC project management guidelines to plan the work, and the components of the project plan (objectives, risk management, budget etc) and the work packages were regularly reviewed by the Collections Manager so that any problems could be flagged up and addressed at an early stage. A one-page version of the work package document was created for quick and easy reference by team members and was regularly updated as work was completed. The Collections Manager and Software Developer worked together on a day-to-day basis and the Projects Officer worked remotely and maintained frequent contact by telephone and email. Meetings were held on a monthly basis with all of the team and the Project Director to review progress.

5.2 *Interoperability*

Early project activity focused on developing VADS as an OAI conforming repository and identifying relevant services in the JISC Information Environment and other complementary databases with which to make this data more widely accessible. Initially the team decided to focus on sharing data with the OAIster repository which is an established service that provides access to over 22 million records for digital resources from over 1000 institutions worldwide. Once the harvesting process had been tested with OAIster, the data feed was registered in the Open Archives Initiative Registry of Data Providers, OpenDOAR, and made available to the Intute

Repository Search. Whilst this work was in progress, the recruitment process was also underway for the VADS Director and Projects Officer posts.

5.3 In October 2008, VADS was also invited by the JISC-funded BBC UK Centuryshare Project to contribute content to their demonstrator. This project brought together items of content from various trusted public sector sources and presented them on a timeline, from sources such as the British Film Institute, Hansard, regional screen archives and museums, the BBC Archive, as well as VADS. Latterly, VADS has also been approached by Edina to contribute content to the Visual Sound and Media Portal Demonstrator. This project is investigating the value and feasibility of a national portal for higher and further education for both time-based media and image collections across a variety of subjects, and VADS data has been made available to the project. VADS has also made collection level records available in the Information Environment Service Registry and Intute: Arts and Humanities.

5.4 Lessons learnt: some of these UK portal services are project-funded and in early development. The project hopes that the impact of sharing its metadata will be greater in the longer term as these harvesting initiatives develop further and as VADS shares its content through even more outlets e.g. discussions are currently underway with Europeana¹ and the National Library of Australia's Trove.²

5.5 *Interface Enhancements*

In early 2008, the VADS website was re-launched with a new design and the image management system was converted from a proprietary database to a custom-built open-source solution. For this project VADS staff continued to develop the website in-house using open source MySQL and PHP technologies, XHTML and CSS. Interface enhancements were firstly developed on the VADS test website and development was an iterative process with all of the team contributing to testing, identifying bugs, and providing feedback on usability. New functionality went through several rapid rounds of testing by the project team followed by refinements as well as academic user testing. The project team also investigated the usability of websites and other arts databases familiar to the arts community and drew on these in enhancing the user interface. For example, the team looked at the application of user tagging on the websites of the Brooklyn Museum, Powerhouse Museum and the Steve Museum Social Tagging Project as well as the popular photo sharing site Flickr. VADS has also made use of the Steve Museum blacklist of terms to prevent spamming and offensive terms from appearing on the site.

5.6 *Audience Research*

Further user analysis was also conducted to inform the development of the project. In planning this work, the project drew on the JISC toolkits for audience research³ and the usage and impact of digitised resources,⁴ and also conducted a short literature review of relevant user studies. Feedback about the VADS website and a variety of qualitative and quantitative information was gathered through a survey of VADS' target audience circulated directly to 1545 members of the UK Higher and Further Arts Education community to include both current and potential users of the site. This was followed up with in-depth interviews with 17 users and collection depositors; as well as feedback sought by email from a number of users, enquirers, and collection depositors; the advice of the project steering group; and continued participation and meetings with relevant professional organisations such as ARLIS and ACADI. The project has also examined usage statistics for the VADS image collection and analysed user enquiries, citations, and referrals to the site. This research has enriched our understanding of our audience and fed into the development of the project.

¹ National Library of the Netherlands, 'Europeana'
<<http://www.europeana.eu/portal/>>

² National Library of Australia, 'Trove'
<<http://trove.nla.gov.au/>>

³ Quirk, R., Olver, M., Hammond, M., and Davies, C. (2009) 'The Guide to Researching Audiences'
http://sca.jiscinvolve.org/files/2009/07/sca_audiences_guide_v1-03.pdf

⁴ Meyer, E., Eccles, K., Thelwall, M. and Madsen, C. (2009) 'Usage and Impact Study of JISC-funded Phase 1 Digitisation Projects & the Toolkit for the Impact of Digitised Scholarly Resources (TIDSR): Final Report'
http://microsites.oii.ox.ac.uk/tidsr/system/files/TIDSR_FinalReport_20July2009.pdf

5.7 Subject Classification

In March 2009, the project began developing a simple, over-arching classification scheme for the VADS collections so that users could easily see the range and nature of the material available and to enable browsing of the collections as a whole. An initial period of research was undertaken to develop the scheme, which looked at the approaches taken by standard classification schemes in the visual arts (such as the ADAM headings, the Art and Architecture Thesaurus, and Library of Congress Subject Headings); the schemes used by other image collections (such as Tate Insight, the National Gallery, and those used by commercial collections); and lastly, taking a user-driven approach by examining the popular search terms used on the VADS site. A major challenge for this part of the project was the balance that had to be met between developing a scheme of sufficient detail to be useful and the time available to the project to implement it on the VADS image collection. In parallel to this work, VADS also developed a suitable web-based administration system for allocating terms to the images. The next stage in the work package was to use this system to assign the images with relevant categories, and in the final stages of the project the team will be creating a suitable interface to present the enhanced metadata on the VADS site.

5.8 Lessons learnt: A single over-arching classification scheme ideally should be built in right from the initial creation of a resource, rather than applying subject terms retrospectively as we have needed to do in this project.

5.9 Publicity

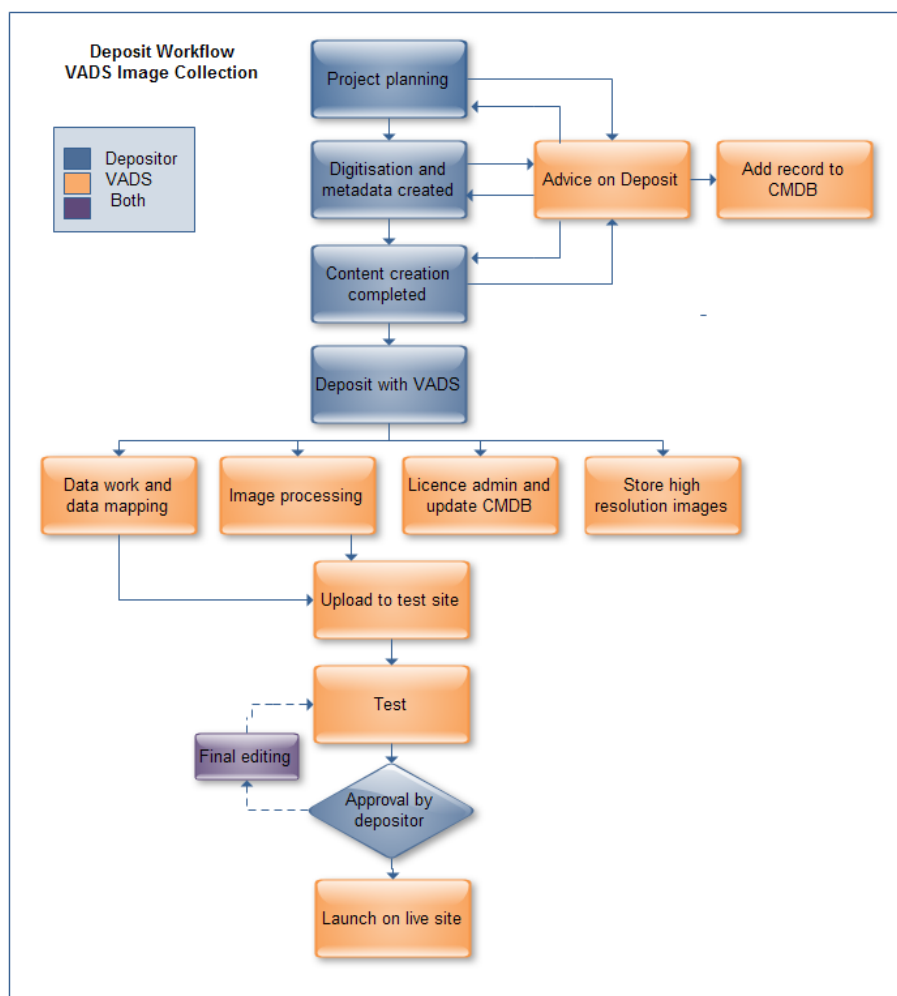
The team recognised that publicity and promotion of the collection was key to engaging new and potential users in accordance with the project's aims, and a dissemination plan was developed at the outset of the project. VADS already had a network of champions through the UK arts library community who promoted VADS every year in their institutions in inductions and library training. However, the team recognised that library training sessions may not be attended by everyone; that information about various different library services may be conveyed at the same time; and for expediency and convenience staff and students often turn to search engines.

5.10 In response to this, VADS developed visually engaging publicity material and an induction pack to help librarians and academics in promoting the resource; utilised online marketing and search engine optimisation strategies to increase the visibility of VADS collections; and did a targeted mail-out to art, design and art history departments at every university and college in the country. In addition to this, VADS was promoted in presentations at relevant conferences (see Appendix B); and the project contributed news to the specialist arts education and library press, and has developed links with the University's press team to circulate news more widely to the media.

Additional Work Undertaken

5.11 Collection Development

In response to continuing demand from the UK arts education community to host digital resources on VADS, the project has added further high quality images and metadata to the online collection, which have been contributed freely by a number of different universities, arts colleges and museums across the UK and others have been identified for future deposit. The processes for making these digitised resources available through the site were already well established and are outlined in the workflow diagram below. VADS has worked with depositors who were at varying stages in their projects, from the initial planning stages through to an institution with collections that were already digitised but were laying dormant on a hard drive. In addition to this, the experience of the project shows there is still wide variation in terms of technical ability amongst depositors; a tremendous variation in the types of material being digitised in the visual arts (from posters to sculpture to slide collections) with varying metadata; and a wide variety of circumstances for the creation of those resources (from a side project being undertaken by one member of staff when time allows, to a large research-council funded project). The expertise and flexibility of VADS staff was key here in order to make this material available online. For example, by accepting deposits in differing formats and database structures, taking staged deposits, balancing the workloads and deadlines of multiple collection deposits, and enabling final proofing and editing to take place after the collections have been put online.



6. Outputs and Results

6.1 Website

In accordance with the project objectives, VADS has developed an OAI compliant repository and shared its data with a number of portals, developed a new user tagging tool, and developed its own subject classification with over 25,000 images classified to date. It has also created an image annotation and curation tool, which enables users to select groups of images, add their own commentary and publish them on the site, email them to others, or to keep them private for their own use.

6.2 VADS has endeavoured to make additional refinements to the site in response to user feedback. For example, the number of search results displayed per page can now be adjusted according to your preference; the search results can be sorted so that all the records with images appear first; and users can now download all their lightbox images in one go to their computer.

6.3 Whilst users have found the size of the images suitable for projection on to a whiteboard or for their students to use in their essays, there is also a need for very close examination of a work for research purposes, and one of the most common requests from users was to have access to larger or zoomable images. In response to this, the project has trialled the Zoomifier software on the private VADS test website.

6.4 In 2009 the National Portrait Gallery re-launched its website and also utilised the Zoomifier software to provide enhanced access to its images. The unauthorised publication of these images on Wikipedia has highlighted the potential for circumnavigating the Zoomifier software and obtaining high resolution images by stitching together the separate image tiles.⁵ VADS and our collection holders will therefore need to consider carefully whether and how it can provide access to enlarged images for educational users, whilst also balancing this with the need to protect these larger images from unauthorised uses.

6.5 In addition to improving the website for users, the project has also developed new administrative features to enhance the site for collection depositors and VADS staff. This includes a custom-built interface for VADS staff to rapidly assign subject terms to the images, and a new record editing feature which enables VADS' depositors to make edits to their metadata once their collections have been added to the site. This has further streamlined the deposit process and means that depositors can make changes at any time in response to new research or corrections sent in by users.

6.6 **Digital Content**

The project has added records for a further 6800 images to the VADS collection, contributed by a number of different academic projects from across the UK including images from the London College of Communication, London College of Fashion, London Metropolitan University, Manchester Metropolitan University, Waddesdon Manor, and the University of the Arts London Archives & Special Collections Centre. This new material covers a range of visual arts subjects including product design, architecture, town planning, interior design, graphic design, textile history, book design, typography, sculpture, ephemera, and advertising photography. A new learning resource has also been contributed by the Design Council Slide Collection which helps to put their images in context. Several of the expert curators, museum managers, librarians, and archivists who have contributed images to the VADS collection have also contributed blog posts on selected objects within their collections as part of a 'curator's choice' feature on the site.

6.7 In addition to this, VADS has also been approached by 12 collections during the course of the project to add further digital content to the catalogue, totalling a potential 200,000+ items, which are currently being digitised. This content includes fine art, costume, theatre design, product design, architectural history, cartoons and comics, amongst others topics. The table in Appendix A gives further details about the collections made live during the project; those collections which have been deposited and are in testing; and those currently being digitised.

6.8 **Repository**

Prior to the project, VADS stored high resolution copies of its images on archival quality CD and on the digital repository at the Centre for e-Research at King's College London. VADS has recently utilised funds for capital equipment provided by the AHRC to acquire the hardware needed to set up a dedicated repository for VADS collections based at the University for the Creative Arts.

6.9 Having sought guidance from the UCA IT Department to ensure that it was compatible with their computing infrastructure, VADS acquired two servers with 15 TB of space, and a backup system. Techniques for backing up and checksum were implemented and a secure interface to connect remotely to the servers is being developed. This purchase was essential for VADS to maintain its role as an image repository for the UK arts education community and the server can hold up to an estimated 375,000 high resolution images.

6.10 **Audience Research**

The user survey received 349 responses from across arts education and beyond, with respondents from 150 universities and colleges from both the UK and worldwide. In conjunction with the interviews and other interactions with our users outlined in Section 5.6, this has enabled us to draw up a set of additional recommendations for enhancing the website, some of which have been integrated into the project; as well as a short user report which is currently in draft; and a set of real-life examples of usage.

⁵ BBC News (2009) 'Gallery in Wikipedia legal threat'
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/arts_and_culture/8151989.stm>

6.11 The project found that for the UK arts academic audience, content is still very much king and by far the most frequent request was for VADS to expand the collection and to make more images available freely for use in learning, teaching and research. Respondents to the survey made requests for more coverage in particular areas, with contemporary material being the most frequently requested as well as more mainstream art history images.

6.12 Access to relevant, quality images is particularly vital for teaching in the visual arts and art history, in which lectures and seminars are usually entirely image-based and for many years staff have been reliant on the slide libraries built up by their institutions. Yet whilst many academic staff have transitioned to using digital images, there is still no licence for institutions to digitise their slide collections⁶; there is no single image portal that is available to visual arts education that fulfils all of an institution's image needs; and the cost of subscribing to all of these portals is prohibitive.⁷

"[VADS is] a very useful resource, particularly at a time when it is difficult to find quality digital images which are rights-cleared for educational use, I hope it continues to expand."

"My lectures are all PowerPoint so it's all very, very visual. And so for teaching I make really good use of it to find suitable images."

"If you're talking about period, if you're talking about context...but more than that, you can say, here is a website, over to you. The good students will use that and the bad students google stuff and bring up all sorts of rubbish... think before you go to google, vad it!"

The more people that know about [VADS] the better. I think that in particular in teaching if you're working in anything visual it's a nightmare...I scan in images and nick stuff off the internet because I want my students to see it."⁸

6.13 The project also found that the range of different users and uses of the VADS image collection is extremely vast and it is almost impossible to do justice to the number of different applications of the site's content. As well as an assortment of educational uses, the VADS collection has been used by museum staff, publishers and picture researchers, creative practitioners (ranging from potters to calligraphers to design firms), and members of the public (from independent art historians to members of the University of the Third Age). To give just a taste of some of the ways in which the image collection is being used, this includes: selecting and requesting items for exhibition, viewing and selecting items in preparation for a visit to the museum; finding inspiration for their own creative work, cataloguing their own collection, answering enquiries, use in museum handling sessions, research for publications and websites, researching their local or family history or learning about cultural history, for illustrated talks to community groups, and in developing educational software for schools.

6.14 Many of the survey respondents also commented that the design and layout of the VADS website was simple, easy to use, and visually attractive. As the Kultur project has noted previously, this is paramount for engaging a creative arts audience.⁹

⁶ ACADI (2009). DACS Petition, 5 March 2009. Negotiations to secure such a licence have been ongoing for several years but to date no agreement has been reached.

⁷ These issues were also apparent in the Digital Picture survey in 2005.

Pringle, M. (2005). 'The Digital Picture Report'.

http://thedigitalpicture.ac.uk/documents/pdf/digital_picture_final_report.pdf

The Pre-Raphaelite Resource Project also conducted audience research with students and staff from visual arts education and found that content is key and recommended Web 2.0 technologies were used sparingly.

Humphries, A. (2008). 'Pre-Raphaelite Resource Project: Audience Research Report'.

http://digitisation.jiscinvolve.org/files/2008/07/bmag_report_final.pdf

⁸ VADS User Survey and Interviews, 2009.

⁹ The importance of aesthetics is underlined by the experiences of the Kultur project which developed institutional repositories for three creative arts institutions using the EPrints software.

“Good quality images which are easily findable in a user friendly interface.”
“Clear, easy to use, intuitive, organised, exciting.”
“Graphic presentation is beautiful and clear, without distractions”
“Easy to use, clear, concise and full of some amazing images.”¹⁰

6.15 **Reach and Marketing**

VADS has used its strong links with the UK arts library community to promote the image collection to lecturers, researchers and students on a national scale. An induction pack and new publicity materials are being used by representatives from 77 UK universities, further education colleges, specialist arts institutions, as well as schools and other arts organisations, who have requested it for use in student inductions, library database training, fresher's fairs, conference packs, workshops, a launch event, and for circulation to colleagues and students. The packs have also been sent to every university and FE college that provides teaching in art, design, and art history in the UK. The project has also taken an initial step to target art and design teachers in pre-16 education by contributing content to NSEAD publications. The project has also had some unexpected publicity, through a forthcoming exhibition at the world's smallest art gallery in Settle, Yorkshire, a community project led by Professor Graham Taylor. The exhibition will be curated by villagers using images drawn from the VADS collection.¹¹

6.16 In early 2008 VADS held a student competition to design the new VADS brand, utilising the creative talent on VADS' own doorstep by engaging students from across UCA's graphic design and advertising courses. This gave students the opportunity to respond to a real life brief and also proved a cost effective means of developing a new brand for the service. Following this success, VADS again used student talent at UCA in this project to come up with designs for our new publicity materials, which contributed towards their portfolios and course assessment.

6.17 The VADS image collection already has good visibility on search engines compared to many other collection databases, with records indexed down to the individual item level and strong rankings for its core information pages (due to its longevity, the mass of external links pointing to the site, the maintenance of old URLs etc). As testament to this, VADS has even been approached by an advertising agency about potential sponsorship from a reputable company in the arts, due to the strong presence of one of VADS' subsidiary websites on Google. In the final stages of the project VADS is applying additional search engine optimisation and online marketing techniques to enhance its visibility for key search terms and phrases in the arts and will be monitoring the impact on usage statistics and search engine results over the coming months.

7. Outcomes

7.1 The main outcome of this project is an enhanced website with enriched metadata which makes more efficient use of an already existing digital collection. These enhancements have been made in direct response to feedback from members of the education community and will benefit lecturers, researchers and students as well as the wider audience of artists, designers, teachers, independent researchers and members of the general public.

7.2 The project has undoubtedly increased awareness of the VADS image resources through its audience research and promotional activities and VADS has also held a series of workshops on 'Digital Imagery: Creation and Importance in the Visual Arts' which have further promoted its work. We have asked members of the community to give feedback about the impact of their own inductions and other promotional activities which will be taking place over the new academic term, to evaluate and develop our marketing strategy further in the future.

Sheppard, V. and White, W. (2009), 'Kultur: Final Report', p. 7.
<http://kultur.eprints.org/Project%20Final%20report%20Mar%2009.pdf>

¹⁰ VADS User Survey, 2009.

¹¹ The Gallery on the Green, <http://www.galleryonthegreen.org.uk/>

- 7.3 The project has also reached beyond the original scope and has made thousands more high quality images available online from a number of unique and important art collections in UK education. By working with VADS, these valuable but sometimes little-known collections in our country's art colleges and university departments have been able to reach a much wider audience online. They have also benefited from the expertise of VADS' staff in this area and the use of an existing online system that is attuned to the needs of an arts academic audience.
- 7.4 In addition, the new digital repository at VADS will ensure that the digital data that is created through such projects isn't lost within just a few years of its creation. A few of the CDs supplied to VADS in the late 1990s have already begun to degrade and the migration of the original high resolution files to more suitable storage facilities was essential to ensure their longer term use.
- 7.5 The outcomes of this project can not only be seen in terms of the tangible resources it has created but also the value it has generated for the University in terms of increased skills, cross-departmental working, partnerships with other institutions, and raising UCA's profile. For example, in terms of cross-department collaborations, VADS has been asked to contribute its expertise on digital curation as part of an MA guest lecture series on curation along with staff from the Crafts Study Centre and the UCA Galleries. In terms of partnerships with other institutions, VADS is contributing to a number of innovative projects in our subject area and will be leading the JISC-funded Look-here! Consortium Project (see sections 9.1 and 9.2). VADS also continues to be approached by members of UCA and other institutions for advice on image curation issues such as funding, copyright and cataloguing.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Whilst it is too early to comment in detail on the impact that the individual website enhancements have had from this project as the functionality is just being rolled out, it is clear that the VADS image collection and our efforts to re-invigorate the website in the months before the project, have already had significant impact. Here is just some of the feedback received:

"Access has improved enormously in the last few months: the IWM site was almost impenetrable for years."

"First of all let me say how immensely good the whole VADS site is looking since your redesign. I particularly liked your Collections page with its different images. (VADS Collection Depositor)"

"It has built into a resource large enough to be worth checking out."

"...being on the site has led to one exhibition and a proposal for an online gallery on the virtual reality site Secondlife, all within a few months (VADS Collection Depositor)."

"[I like] just about everything: online images of adequate resolution of subjects I work with, lightbox, collections page, and resources (further links) page as well as the terms of use statement that allows for educational use."

"It provides quality images and some written material to prepare my lectures and presentations in the field of jewellery theory and history. VADS has been helping my MA students too."

"I use VADS frequently to access collections around the country and discover works relevant to exhibitions we are curating at Mascalls Gallery. From looking at VADS I have discovered collections including UECLAA, London College of Fashion, the Tom Eckersley Archive and University of Brighton Design Archives. All of these institutions have then been very helpful and supportive in lending works. Having all the images available online made selecting the

works straight forward and the light box is wonderfully simple for a curator.”¹²

9. Implications

- 9.1 VADS has been able to build on and extend its established partnerships with museums, galleries and archive collections within the sector, leading to a successful bid for the ‘Look-here!’ project. Funded through the Institutional Skills and Strategies strand of the JISC E-content Programme, the ‘Look-here!’ project will investigate the complete digitisation life-cycle and the development of a sustainable business model to support this work across the visual arts sector. This project will be led by VADS in partnership with the University of Southampton, University for the Creative Arts, University of the Arts London, University of Brighton, Arts University College Bournemouth, and University College Falmouth. One of the main outcomes of the project will be the part digitisation of six institutional collections and their online delivery through VADS.
- 9.2 The VADS team is also continuing to participate in a number of other related projects in the sector which will contribute to VADS’ sustainability. For example, VADS was a partner in the recent Kultur institutional repositories project¹³ and is consultant to the Open Educational Resources Art, Design and Media (ADM-OER) Project¹⁴ and has recently been asked about providing a digital repository for recording art works from the recently successful Creative Campus Initiative bid.¹⁵
- 9.3 Whilst the ‘Enhancing the VADS Image Collection’ project has taken some small steps to target art teachers in schools, more research could be done to understand their specific needs and how to target them most effectively. VADS’ resources have been created by HE/FE primarily for use in post-16 education, but our audience research indicates that there is far wider potential educational use.
- 9.4 The project has found a number of issues with gathering information about the usage of online resources particularly in the arts. For example, images are normally cited with the name of the artist or copyright holder but not the online resource where it was found. This has implications for the wider arts institutional repository landscape as it will be more difficult to track overall usage of these (in exhibitions, publications etc) than scientific e-prints where traditional bibliometrics may be more easily applied.
- 9.5 Responses to the user survey included a number of requests for more coverage of particular subject areas, such as contemporary art which is underrepresented in the major arts image subscription databases. VADS should undertake a detailed gap analysis with users and seek out particular content in response to the needs of the learning, teaching and research community.
- 9.6 Future enhancements to the VADS image collection might usefully include:
- Facilities for personalisation, such as ‘your recent searches’ and ‘suggested searches’.

¹² VADS User Survey and Interviews, 2009.

¹³ Kultur was a JISC-funded project which created an institutional repository model for research output in the creative and applied arts, a discipline area where repository development is so far underdeveloped. The project partners were the University of Southampton, University of the Arts London, University for the Creative Arts, and VADS.

Kultur Project
<http://kultur.eprints.org/>

¹⁴ Admopened’s Blog
<http://admopened.wordpress.com/>

¹⁵ The Creative Campus Initiative is a consortium of 13 universities who will be delivering a series of cultural events in the run up to the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. The project is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE).

University for the Creative Arts (2009), ‘University for the Creative Arts secures £1 million for Cultural Olympiad’
<http://www.ucreative.ac.uk/index.cfm?articleid=23745>

- The option to sort search results by relevance, i.e. the number of occurrences of a search term or whether the search term occurs in key fields.
- More detailed website statistics on the usage of individual collections.
- To promote the image collection, VADS could have a presence on relevant social networking sites, for example, VADS could release a small sub-set of images (with the relevant permissions) on Flickr Commons¹⁶ and the Facebook Artshare Application.¹⁷

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<<http://admopened.wordpress.com/>>

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The Gallery on the Green

<<http://www.galleryonthegreen.org.uk/>>

¹⁶ Flickr: The Commons

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¹⁷ Artshare Application

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Version 2
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11. Appendixes

Appendix A: New Collections

This list includes the collections made live during the project and future collections in preparation or negotiation:

Institution	Collection Title	Brief Description	Current Stage
London College of Fashion	Gala Archive	The archives of Gala, Miner's and Crystal, three prominent cosmetics companies operating during and after the Second World War. A valuable resource for the study of the history of cosmetics, advertising photography, fashion promotion and women in the Second World War.	Live
University of the Arts London Archives and Special Collections Centre	Eckersley Archive	The archives of Tom Eckersley, one of the foremost British poster designers and graphic communicators of the twentieth century. Eckersley was also a teacher of poster arts and established the first graphic design course in Britain.	Live
London Metropolitan University	Peter King Archive	The archive of 1950s British sculptor Peter King, who worked as Henry Moore's assistant along with Anthony Caro.	Live
London College of Communication	Netherlands Decorated Books Collection	A collection of decorated books from the London College of Communication Library, part of University of the Arts London, which provides primary source material for bookbinding research and is also of use to graphic design and typographical researchers.	Live
Manchester Metropolitan	Design Council Slide Collection	Mainly British design from 1945 to 1990, as well as many	Live

University		images illustrating design from other countries and from earlier periods. The collection also contains a large number of original and unique images that record directly many of the Council's own activities.	
Winchester School of Art	Pockets of History	New digital photographs of over three hundred tie-on pockets of the 1700 and 1800s from across 30 different collections.	Live
University of Westminster	Arts on Film	A large range of films on art produced in the UK since the 1950s, and is a unique record of British and international post-war art, as well as of documentary film-making in the UK.	Test site
Waddesdon Manor, National Trust	Trade Card Collection	An important collection of 18th-century trade cards. These documents which were produced by shop keepers, craftsmen and tradesmen to advertise their shops and wares, give a detailed glimpse into the consumer world of the 1700s.	Test site
University of the Arts London Archives and Special Collections Centre	Comic Book Collection	The collection contains comics and graphic annuals, including popular titles in the UK such as 'The Eagle' featuring Dan Dare.	Creation
Wimbledon College of Art	Jocelyn Herbert Collection	The extensive and important archives of the British 20th century theatre designer Jocelyn Herbert.	Creation
Glasgow University	NICE Paintings (National Inventory of Continental European Paintings Project) - phase 2	This project will add 650 paintings from the V&A collection and 225 newly researched paintings at the Royal Academy and Apsley House in London, to the National Inventory of Continental European Paintings.	Creation
Glasgow University	NICE Paintings	The NICE Paintings Project was launched in Nov 2007. VADS is adding images to existing records, as and when supplied.	Ongoing staged deposit
Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design	Stage Costume Collection	Stage costume collection at Central Saint Martins.	Creation

JISC Collections	Digital Images for Education Project	Thousands of arts images from various university, museum and commercial collections e.g. the Design Archives at University of Brighton, Imperial War Museum, Fitzwilliam Museum.	Creation
University College Falmouth	Cornwall Artists and Designers Collection	Slide collection of contemporary Cornwall artists such as Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Edward Burra etc	Creation
Stedman Blower Architects	Stedman Blower Archive Library of Building Images Michael Blower Sketchbooks	Founded in 1895, Stedman Blower has been responsible for hundreds of architectural projects in Farnham and Surrey. The archives include thousands of drawings, models, designs and photographs. The firm also holds a collection of photographs of buildings, with a particular emphasis on those in Surrey by named architects.	Creation
Arts University College Bournemouth	Museum of Design in Plastics	The holdings range from early examples including Bakelite and Bandalasta, Melaware, and Tupperware, to many contemporary examples. The current JISC digitisation project will produce 4500 images of 1500 objects.	Creation
Bodleian Library, University of Oxford	John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera	The library is currently creating more name authorities and iconographic indexing for existing records available on VADS.	Creation (metadata only)
Goldsmiths College, University of London	Constance Howard Resource and Research Centre in Textiles (2nd deposit)	A 2nd deposit is expected from the material and slide collections. These collections are based around the personal textiles donated by Constance Howard, and examples of work from textile students who studied at Goldsmiths.	Creation (when time permits)
School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London	Treasures of SOAS	The collection includes a broad range of objects from across Asia and Africa that are at present known only to a few specialists.	Considering deposit
Public Catalogue Foundation	Public Catalogue Foundation	The PCF was set up to photograph and record all oil, acrylic and tempera paintings in publicly owned collections in the UK. This includes works in museums, as well as paintings in council buildings, universities, hospitals, police stations and	Considering deposit

		fire stations. It is estimated that there are some 200,000 such paintings in the UK.	
Camberwell College of Arts	Camberwell College Art Collection		Considering creation
London College of Communication	Artists Books Collection	A substantial collection of artists' books including a number created by alumni of the University.	Considering creation
University of Kent	British Cartoon Archive	This JISC-funded project digitised material from the Carl Giles collection, an archive of British newspaper cartoons, and a key resource for British political and social history.	Considering deposit
Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery	Pre-Raphaelite Resource	This JISC-funded project provided online access to Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery's collection of Pre-Raphaelite art. This includes some 2000 fine and decorative art works.	Considering deposit
University of Southampton University for the Creative Arts University of the Arts London University of Brighton Arts University College Bournemouth University College Falmouth	Look Here! Project	This JISC-funded project, led by VADS, will investigate the complete digitisation life-cycle and the development of a sustainable business model to support this work across the visual arts sector. One of the main outcomes of the project will be the part digitisation of six institutional collections.	Project running Sept 2009 - 2011

Appendix B: Dissemination Activities

Presentations

- Conference paper at ARLIS North America Conference, Boston (April 2010)
- Exhibition stand at JISC RSC South East Region E-learning Fair, Wokingham (Oct 2009)
- Re-run of VADS workshop on 'Digital Imagery: creation and importance in the visual arts', funded by the Art, Design and Media Higher Education Academy (Dec 2009)
- JISC-funded workshop organised by VADS on 'Digital Imagery: creation and importance in the visual arts', London (Sept 2009)
- Presentation at ARLIS workshop 'Picture this! the art of cataloguing images in the digital age', London (Sept 2009)
- Presentations at Digital Resources for the Humanities and the Arts Conference and JISC Final Programme Meeting, Belfast (Sept 2009)
- Workshop and Poster Session at ARLIS Conference, Cambridge (July 2009)
- Workshop at Art, Design and Media Learning and Teaching Creative Practice Conference, Southampton (July 2009)
- UCA Staff Induction Event (May 2009) and Library Collections Group (Jan 2009)

News items

UCA Staff E-zine (Nov 2008; July 2009; Sept 2009); Farnham Herald (Nov 2008); Archives Hub - Collection of the Month (Nov 2008); Museums Journal (Jan 2009); UCA E-learning Now! Newsletter (Jan 2009); CILIP Library and Information Update (March 2009); Netherlands Embassy website news (Apr 2009); A'N'D Newsletter published by the National Society for Education in Art and Design (Aug 2009); ARLIS Newsletter (May/June 2009; Sept/Oct 2009); Design Week (Oct 2009); Creative Review (Oct 2009); Excellence Gateway (Oct 2009); Culture24 (Oct 2009); JISC Inform (Nov 2009); Council for Subject Associations - Primary Subjects publication (forthcoming).

News circulated regularly to registered VADS users; arts-based jiscmail lists; VADS' blog, jiscmail list and Twitter page; as well as UCA Press releases and news submitted to relevant websites (such as ADM-HEA, Intute, JISC Digital Media, JISC Digitisation, the JISC RSCs, NSEAD).

Representation on professional bodies and projects

- Representation on the ARLIS Visual Resources Committee and ACADI.
- Partner in the Kultur and KeepIt repository projects and the Creative Campus Initiative; consultant to the Open Educational Resources Art, Design and Media (ADM-OER) Project; VADS is leading the Look-here! Project (starting Oct 2009).

Promotional activities by the art education community

- At least 77 institutions will be promoting VADS this year in inductions, freshers fairs, database training etc and copies of VADS publicity material has been circulated at relevant conferences and other events.
- The VADS image collection will be the subject of a forthcoming exhibition at the world's smallest art gallery in Settle, North Yorkshire, a community project led by Professor Roger Taylor and curated by the village's residents.