

The Art Museum Image Consortium (AMICO)

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Mission

The Art Museum Image Consortium (AMICO) is a non-profit corporation formed by North American Art Museums to provide educational access to and delivery of cultural heritage information by creating, maintaining and licensing a collective digital library of images and documentation of works in their collections.

AMICO enables its members to do a number of things that they cannot do on their own, including:

- Creating a collective library of art from North American museums for educational uses
- Reaching the educational community in a coordinated and cost effective way, building an audience for museum information
- Enabling its members to leverage influence with vendors to reduce costs of capturing this data
- Providing its members access to collective funding to pursue their educational missions
- Assisting members to improve their information infrastructures and documentation practices
- Negotiating digital rights with artists and artists estates and with museums in other countries
- Providing members access to each others holdings for their own educational uses

Collaborating in AMICO can also help individual museums by:

- Reducing risks through collective decision-making
- Adopting common standards and guidelines, and participating in their development, nationally and internationally
- Sharing expertise

AMICO balances the needs of small and large museums, the well prepared and the novice, by providing for different levels of membership participation from observer through full contributor.

Services which it is envisioned that AMICO will deliver to its members include:

1. **Technology Information Services**, including "best practice" guidelines, "frequently asked questions", standards for data capture, advice on hardware and software, application guidelines, training and research and liaison with developing standards
2. **Data Enhancement Services**, including data value standardization, the addition of unique identifiers and watermarking of images, subject indexing, metadata augmentation, thesaural explosion of terms in controlled vocabularies, markup of text to SGML, and mapping institutional data to export standards.
3. **Catalog Management Services**, including creating an integrated, publicly accessible directory with many access points and different interfaces for different users which enables educators to identify works which they have licensed and may use through AMICO and allows the public to seek further rights including commercial use rights from the individual museum members.
4. **Rights Management Services**, including defining the minimum rights management data requirements, creating searchable rights metadata systems, negotiating rights with individual rights holders and their collectives, writing model licensing agreements, providing a forum for and developing terms of licenses for schools and school districts, museum education departments, and public libraries, and developing and disseminating end-user responsibility training materials.
5. **Customer Services**, including monitoring and analyzing uses and users, conducting focus groups to identify users needs, and promoting innovative educational uses of museum digital content.
6. **Collaborative Partnering**, including with technology firms, funding sources, standards organizations, telecommunication providers, and others.

The Art Museum Image Consortium

**University Testbed Project
Call for Participation**

Over twenty of the largest art museums in North America have joined together to form the Art Museum Image Consortium <<http://www.amn.org/AMICO/>>. Together, they will assemble a rich intellectual resource Ð the multimedia documentation of over twenty collections Ð not previously available to the university community as a whole. The AMICO library will be distributed under license for educational use.

Both information providers and users in this sector acknowledge that new economic and social models are required in order to support the desired uses of digital information in learning, teaching and research. Particularly where images and multimedia data are involved, mechanisms for processing requests for rights and reproductions are inefficient and cumbersome. AMICO has developed a license for the use of their collective digital library that supports traditional academic uses and expands the scope of traditional uses take advantage of the potential new technology. The AMICO university license addresses desires voiced by academic users to enable, for example, Òelectronic reservesÓ, remote access, faculty assemblage of specific materials for student review, and the incorporation of licensed materials into student projects.

Prior to announcing the full availability of its digital library, AMICO is launching a year-long testbed project. We wish to validate the proposed framework for the collective licensing of museum digital collections, and to evaluate a means of delivering this content to the higher educational community. The university testbed project will also increase understanding of the ways that universities are adopting digital teaching and reference tools and enable the AMICO member museums to offer a Library that meets the needs of its users.

The members of AMICO invite universities to apply for participation in this testbed project. During the academic 1998/99, selected universities will have the opportunity to use the contents of the AMICO Library for educational purposes and assist AMICO and its distributor in assessing the best ways of distributing and providing access to the Library for academic use. A full call for participation, including detailed goals and objectives of the study, is available from the AMICO Web Site <<http://www.amn.org/AMICO/>>. The deadline for submission of proposals is December 15, 1997. Participants will be announced by January 31, 1998.

AMICO Museum members are committed to providing multi-media documentation of over 20,000 works in their respective collections as the content of the testbed. The AMICO Library will be made available to university testbed participants at a reduced license fee for the testbed year. Selected universities will administer AMICO-designed user studies, including gathering information using specified data collection instruments and participating in focus groups.

The AMICO Library will continue to grow with time. AMICO member museums are committed to increasing the size of the Library by a minimum of 10,000 works per year (500 per member institution). In recognition of their contribution to the development of the AMICO distribution system, testbed universities will receive a reduction in future license fees.

AMICO looks forward to ongoing liaison with university academic users, and recognizes that continued collaboration is essential to the creation of a rich research resource of lasting educational utility.