

# Capstone Presentation

---

Denise A. Wallace

Fall 2009

Master of Library and Information Science Candidate  
Valdosta State University

# Paper Topic



Enhancing end-user access to digital images collections:  
assessing the use of item level description in archival  
digital image projects.

# Item level description

- A detailed explanation based on the context of the image within a collection.
  - What the image is 'of'
  - What the image is 'about'
- A combination of prose and index terms
  - Provides information
  - Provides access

# Image Description Example

## Photo



## Brief Item-level Description

- Photochrom of elderly woman working wooden Irish spinning wheel
  - Ireland
  - ca.1890-ca.1905
  - Spinning Wheel
  - Woman
  - Photochrom
  - Women's work
  - Making thread or yarn

# Why This Topic Selection?

- Currently undertaking a large digital image library project.
- Item level description is preferred for accessing images.
- Item level description is the most time consuming and expensive.
- What are best practices in image description for adequate end-user access to image collections?
- How can best practices be tailored to my project?

# Research Approach: Step 1

- Review of literature from peer reviewed, scholarly journals.
  - articles on image indexing practice
  - articles on image digitization projects
  - articles on user experience studies
  - articles on alternative indexing topics

# Research Approach: Step 2

- Review of current guidelines and standards from professional organizations:
  - Society of American Archivists: *Photographs, Archival Care and Management* by Ritzenthaler, et al., and *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS)
  - Visual Resources Association: Cataloging in VRA Core 4.0 & CCO  
<http://www.vraweb.org/projects/vracore4/OLACpowerpt507.pdf>
  - Library of Congress Photographic Prints division: Graphic Materials, Rules for Describing Original Items and Historical Collections <http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/gm/GraMatWP8.pdf>

# Research Approach: Step 3

- Review of current indexing practice and end-user access from online collections
  - Access ease or difficulty-search functions
  - Browsing features
  - Description level
  - Permissions and image integrity
  - Additional features-zooming, downloads, high resolution requests
  - Software or user interface
  - Thesaurus use

# Digital Image Collections

- Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog-abbreviated item-level description  
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/catalog.html>
- Western History/Genealogy Department Denver Public Library-enriched item-level description  
<http://photoswest.org/presearch.html>
- Bentley Image Bank-item level description  
<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?page=index;c=bhl>
- National Archives and Records Service, Archives Research Catalog-series and item level description  
<http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/index.html>
- Charles W. Cushman Photograph Collection-item level description linked with thesaurus  
<http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/cushman/index.jsp>
- The New York Public Library Digital Gallery-minimal item level description  
<http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/index.cfm>

# Research Question

- What level of description is needed for effective image retrieval?

# What do I hope to discover?

- What are users looking for in digital image collections?
- What standards are in place for digital image collections?
- What is the minimal level of description provided?
- What is the maximum level of description provided?

# The End

---

Contact [dwallace@valdosta.edu](mailto:dwallace@valdosta.edu) for more information.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and  
Photographs Online Catalog

#LLC-DIG-ppmsc-09892

Search for Irish spinning wheel