We built it, will they come? Tracking the use of digital image collections through an analysis of the literature of history

Valerie Harris & Peter Hepburn, University of Illinois at Chicago Library

HYPOTHESIS
The proliferation of online images during the last decade has resulted in increased use of images in the scholarly literature of history and increased reliance on social-networked, non-traditional sources of illustrations.

RESULTS
10-year Trend in Use of Images in Articles

CONCLUSION & TAKE-AWAYS
In spite of technologies making the discovery of, access to, and publication of images easier than ever, the results of the study show that there has been no significant increase in the inclusion of images in scholarly publications in the discipline of history. Additionally, when historians use images in publications, they overwhelmingly acquire them from traditional sources, such as print, or library and museum collections.

Archivists and Special Collections librarians should
• More effectively market and promote image collections to connect historians with the rich sources of unplumbed historical documents now readily available to them.
• Collaborate with historians to shape digitization efforts to ensure that documents most important to historians are given priority.
• Study how historians conduct research. This will lead to more successful attempts at connecting scholars with library resources, including image collections.
• Make it easier and cheaper for historians to request images to use in publications.
• Work with history faculty to develop methods to teach visual literacy.

METHODOLOGY

For many years archives and special collections have offered reproduction services to users, with historians being the core audience. More recently, archives and special collections have developed digitization programs to make primary sources widely and easily available through the Internet. The presenters tracked image use over a 10-year period in high-impact and open-access journals from the discipline of history to discover whether use of images in the literature of history has increased with the growing availability of authenticated digital images through libraries, or from social media sites such as Flickr and Picasa. The results indicate that historians are not availing themselves of the growing number of images available online from either libraries or social media sites.

The authors
• selected 5 high-impact journals
  • American Historical Review, Comparative Studies in Society and History, Ethnohistory, European History Quarterly, History Workshop Journal
• selected 7 open-access journals
• analyzed 1361 articles using the following method:
  • record journal title
  • enumerate number of articles with and without images
  • when images are present, copy citation and assign a type
    • institutional print source (e.g. from the print holdings of a library)
    • non-institutional print source (e.g. from private collections)
    • institutional electronic (e.g. from an library’s digital collection)
    • non-institutional electronic (e.g. Flickr personal account)
    • no collection cited or photographer’s name only
  • count number of images & citations in each category for each article, then aggregate numbers for each volume and year
• note the total numbers for each category for the entire journal for the period under examination

We built it, will they come? Tracking the use of digital image collections through an analysis of the literature of history

Valerie Harris & Peter Hepburn, University of Illinois at Chicago Library

HYPOTHESIS
The proliferation of online images during the last decade has resulted in increased use of images in the scholarly literature of history and increased reliance on social-networked, non-traditional sources of illustrations.

RESULTS
10-year Trend in Use of Images in Articles

CONCLUSION & TAKE-AWAYS
In spite of technologies making the discovery of, access to, and publication of images easier than ever, the results of the study show that there has been no significant increase in the inclusion of images in scholarly publications in the discipline of history. Additionally, when historians use images in publications, they overwhelmingly acquire them from traditional sources, such as print, or library and museum collections.

Archivists and Special Collections librarians should
• More effectively market and promote image collections to connect historians with the rich sources of unplumbed historical documents now readily available to them.
• Collaborate with historians to shape digitization efforts to ensure that documents most important to historians are given priority.
• Study how historians conduct research. This will lead to more successful attempts at connecting scholars with library resources, including image collections.
• Make it easier and cheaper for historians to request images to use in publications.
• Work with history faculty to develop methods to teach visual literacy.

METHODOLOGY

The authors
• selected 5 high-impact journals
  • American Historical Review, Comparative Studies in Society and History, Ethnohistory, European History Quarterly, History Workshop Journal
• selected 7 open-access journals
• analyzed 1361 articles using the following method:
  • record journal title
  • enumerate number of articles with and without images
  • when images are present, copy citation and assign a type
    • institutional print source (e.g. from the print holdings of a library)
    • non-institutional print source (e.g. from private collections)
    • institutional electronic (e.g. from an library’s digital collection)
    • non-institutional electronic (e.g. Flickr personal account)
    • no collection cited or photographer’s name only
  • count number of images & citations in each category for each article, then aggregate numbers for each volume and year
• note the total numbers for each category for the entire journal for the period under examination

We built it, will they come? Tracking the use of digital image collections through an analysis of the literature of history

Valerie Harris & Peter Hepburn, University of Illinois at Chicago Library

HYPOTHESIS
The proliferation of online images during the last decade has resulted in increased use of images in the scholarly literature of history and increased reliance on social-networked, non-traditional sources of illustrations.

RESULTS
10-year Trend in Use of Images in Articles

CONCLUSION & TAKE-AWAYS
In spite of technologies making the discovery of, access to, and publication of images easier than ever, the results of the study show that there has been no significant increase in the inclusion of images in scholarly publications in the discipline of history. Additionally, when historians use images in publications, they overwhelmingly acquire them from traditional sources, such as print, or library and museum collections.

Archivists and Special Collections librarians should
• More effectively market and promote image collections to connect historians with the rich sources of unplumbed historical documents now readily available to them.
• Collaborate with historians to shape digitization efforts to ensure that documents most important to historians are given priority.
• Study how historians conduct research. This will lead to more successful attempts at connecting scholars with library resources, including image collections.
• Make it easier and cheaper for historians to request images to use in publications.
• Work with history faculty to develop methods to teach visual literacy.

METHODOLOGY

The authors
• selected 5 high-impact journals
  • American Historical Review, Comparative Studies in Society and History, Ethnohistory, European History Quarterly, History Workshop Journal
• selected 7 open-access journals
• analyzed 1361 articles using the following method:
  • record journal title
  • enumerate number of articles with and without images
  • when images are present, copy citation and assign a type
    • institutional print source (e.g. from the print holdings of a library)
    • non-institutional print source (e.g. from private collections)
    • institutional electronic (e.g. from an library’s digital collection)
    • non-institutional electronic (e.g. Flickr personal account)
    • no collection cited or photographer’s name only
  • count number of images & citations in each category for each article, then aggregate numbers for each volume and year
• note the total numbers for each category for the entire journal for the period under examination