

VIUS Reports 8.5

Survey of History of Landscape Architecture Students – Fall

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This is a closer look at the 79 LARCH 060 (History of Landscape Architecture) respondents who answered the VIUS portion of the survey. 199 had responded to the survey but only 79 of those used the VIUS database. A copy of the survey instrument is appended to this report.

Generally speaking it seems as though they were fairly happy with the service although it wasn't something that blew them away either.

Comparisons between Contentdm™ and other image sources

The respondents tended to rank Contentdm™ as being better than textbooks and other books but closer to the internet as can be seen in the averages. I noticed this while looking through the actual surveys that they generally placed Contentdm™ better than books but closer/same as the internet. This gets lost a bit in the averages (since they're all fairly close) but it was a definite tendency.

Surprisingly, the associated information of Contentdm™ compared to the Internet was the lowest ranked item. It managed a 3.38 which still isn't bad as that means "nearly the same" but it was the lowest average. Interestingly, Contentdm™ fared better with its associated information as compared to textbooks (3.60).

Significant Obstacles

Again, Contentdm™ did fairly well overall. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is essentially "no problem" and 5 is a "huge problem" the highest average was only a 2.26 or falling in the "Not Usually Significant" category. Two items fell into that category--the documentation and searching methods items. The rest fell into the "Not Significant" category.

The relatively worse averages for documentation here falls in line with the comparisons section above. Documentation seemed to be a perceived weakness--but not a big one.

What did you like/What could be improved

These were written responses and you'll find all of those on the last two pages of this attached document. We had 57 responses to "What did you like" and 45 responses to "What could be improved." These responses can be placed into a number of basic categories. The distribution of responses between these categories is the basis of the discussion below. Of course, the way each written response is interpreted could change the numbers in each category somewhat. For instance, "ease of use" may well imply that the responded liked the "search features" as well but I counted them separately based strictly on what was written.

What did you like: The most frequently mentioned items by far were ease of use with 18 mentions followed by high quality images (12), and high number of images (10). Interestingly, compliments of the search features had 7 mentions and the picture descriptions had 6 mentions but these were also the leading criticisms of other respondents as discussed below.

What could be improved: The written responses further reinforced the concerns mentioned in the earlier sections. For instance, searching problems was a higher ranked obstacle and it was the most mentioned criticism with 11 people commenting on it (out of 45 complaints). The second most mentioned improvement was related to the need for greater descriptions of the images with 9 mentions. Item description had also ranked relatively higher in the obstacle section as well as worse in the comparison section. The third most frequently mentioned criticism was not discussed specifically in earlier sections of this survey--that of improving the display options (including particularly the search results, getting larger images to fit on the screen, and categories of images). Seven people mentioned display (web design not image quality) related problems.

Contentdm grade: 3.28 (B+)

Conclusions

The overall response seemed positive. There were criticisms and suggestions for improvement but they did not seem to have a strong adverse effect on the users' experience. The key items identified for improvement are searching methods, picture description, and the display of search results.

8) If you used the VIUS database, how did the database and its images compare in terms of **ease of use, image quality, and the descriptive information associated with the images** to other sources you have used for this project or any other previous projects in which you were required to search for images? Please use the following scale: **NA** Cannot make a comparison, **1** Much less favorably, **2** Somewhat less favorably, **3** About the same, **4** Somewhat favorably, **5** Very favorably

	Ease of Use	Image Quality	Assoc. Info
VIUS database compared to the Internet	3.70	3.89	3.38
VIUS database compared to textbook	3.98	4.05	3.60
VIUS database compared to other book	3.87	3.98	3.62
VIUS database compared to personal image collection	3.91	3.80	3.94
VIUS database compared to other _____			

9) If you used the VIUS database, please indicate the significance of any obstacles you encountered. "Significance" in this context indicates that this obstacle hampered your ability to use the system or to find and use the images you required.

<i>Check the appropriate box</i>	(5) Very Significant	(4) Significant	(3) Somewhat Significant	(2) Not Usually Significant	(1) Not Significant
The right hardware was unavailable.					1.56
The software was too hard to use.					1.65
Other technical problems besides those listed in the 2 items above. Please check box & write in margin.					1.62
Poor quality images.					1.65
The images are insufficiently documented (identified, dated, etc.)				2.13	
My way of searching did not match the ways the pictures are organized and identified which made finding them difficult.				2.26	
The content of the system was not suitable					1.60
Other—please explain below.					

10) If you used the VIUS image database please assign it an overall grade for ease of use. (A through F): 3.28

11) What did you like?	12) What could be improved?
Access to lectures photos-great study aid.	Access
Amount of data	Add a letter link in the database like "A" to go to all pictures with title with A
Amount of pictures	An option to print an image to fit on 8.5 X 11" paper.
Availability of pictures	Better organization - textual list hyperlinking locations to pictures would help
Can view images from classes.	Better search options
Clarity of Pictures	Can't print whole image for some pictures and had to go thru a whole alphabet to get to a letter of interest
Clear images	Categories of Images
Clear images and extensive collection	Display of some images was not good
Ease	Ease to find pictures
Ease of use	Easier search engine/directory
Ease of use	Easier search engine/directory
Ease to find images and picture quality	Easier search engine/directory
Ease to find specific images	Elaborated captions
Easy	Have more thumbnails to browse when u search instead of just 4
Easy	Have the photos in the order of the course content. Exam 1 photos, Exam 2 photos, etc.
Easy	Higher quality, more photos
Easy to find pic wanted	Index maybe?
Easy to navigate, good labeling	It was ridiculously slow
Easy to search	make searching a little easier like listing photographs/sections
Easy to search	Maybe more subjects covered
Easy to search	More descriptions
Easy to use	More descriptions for pictures
Easy to use	More info
Easy to use	More info
Easy to use	More info about each image
Easy to use	More info for each picture
Easy to use	more info needed for each picture
Easy to use	Need a better search engine
Easy to use	None
Everything	None
Good descriptions	Nothing
Graphics were great and very interesting	Nothing
Image quality	Pictures a little larger, a little clearer in imaging
It was very good.	Possibly a search button to find images
Just click the pic to get the info	Put them in categories, not in alphabetical order.
Lots of images to view	Scrolling through pictures was time consuming.
Lots of images to view	Search methods
Many images	Search methods

Nice images	Search methods
Number of images is commendable	Search methods
Picture Quality	some of the info was missing
Picture Quality	The pace you can go thru needs to be faster.
Pictures I was looking for found very easily	The searching process
Pictures of great quality	Type in name -- go to that picture.
Pictures were nice	Webpage design
Provided pictures easily for my assignment	
Quality	
Search	
The abundance of pics	
The amount of images and the ease of obtaining them.	
The descriptions	
The search engine ... very easy to use.	
There was good documentation	
Variety of images	
Vast content and info	
Very Easy to Use	
Very good!	

The VIUS/Contentdm™ Users Survey

[This example reproduces the content, but not the formatting of the survey instrument.]

Please fill in the information below.

Course: _____

Date: _____

Major: _____

Year: Freshman _____ Sophomore _____ Junior _____ Senior _____ Graduate Student _____ Other _____

1) For this course, what did you use the images for? (circle all that apply)

Assignments Studying Other (specify) _____

2) How many images have you used for the **assignments** for this course?

3) Please check the sources from which you obtained your image(s)? Please approximate the number of images you acquired from each source.

a) VIUS database _____

b) Internet _____

If so, for these specific images, did you go straight to a known site, use a search engine/directory, or use both methods? (circle appropriate text)

c) Textbook _____

d) Other book _____

e) Already had image in your personal image collection _____

f) Other (please specify) _____

4) Do you personally maintain or oversee the maintenance of a collection of analog or digital images for educational use?

Yes _____ No _____

If so, please estimate the number of images (please use a numeral not a range)? _____

Approximate percent that are in a digital format (ie. Jpeg, tiff, etc files created either by scanning or having been originally taken on a digital camera). _____

5) How strongly do you agree with the following statement?

I am comfortable using computer technology as part of my coursework. (please circle one)

1 Disagree Strongly	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Agree Strongly
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6) If you regularly find images from certain web sites please indicate the key websites.

7) What final grade do you expect for this course? _____

IF YOU HAVE USED THE VIUS/CONTENTdm™ IMAGE DATABASE PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON THE OTHER SIDE.

8) If you used the VIUS database, how did the database and its images compare in terms of **ease of use, image quality, and the descriptive information associated with the images** to other sources you have used for this project or any other previous projects in which you were required to search for images? Please use the following scale: **NA** Cannot make a comparison **1** Much less favorably, **2** Somewhat less favorably, **3** About the same, **4** Somewhat favorably, **5** Very favorably

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<i>Check the appropriate box</i>	Very Significant	Significant	Somewhat Significant	Not Usually Significant	Not Significant
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Poor quality images.					
The images are insufficiently documented (identified, dated, etc.)					
My way of searching did not match the ways the pictures are organized and identified which made finding them difficult.					
The content of the system was not suitable					
Other—please explain below.					

10) If you used the VIUS image database please assign it an overall grade for ease of use (A through F): _____

11) What did you particularly like about the system?

12) What aspects would you like to have improved?

Thank you for completing this survey! It will help us design a more user friendly image database.

Any questions about the Visual Image User Study (VIUS) please contact Jim Frost: jxf17@psu.edu, 865-6697