

VIUS Reports 8.6

Survey of History of Landscape Architecture Students – Spring

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On April 23, 2003, VIUS and library personnel handed out approximately 500-550 surveys to the Spring 2003 LARCH 060 (History of Landscape Architecture) class. This is roughly the same as the number handed out to the previous Fall 2002 class. Approximately 700 students were enrolled in the class both semesters. 263 people returned the survey. Of those 173 completed the most important Page 2 which is specifically about the VIUS database. 250 people had completed the Extra Credit so presumably 173 (70%) of them filled in the second page.

This compares to the Fall 2002 semester where 199 people returned the survey and of those 80 completed Page 2. About 200 people had completed the Extra Credit that semester and 80 (40%) of them filled in the second page.

Overall we not only had more surveys returned this semester but also a better percentage of people who completed Page 2. This is perhaps due to the fact that the survey was conducted at the beginning of the class rather than at the end as it was for the Fall 2002 semester. The students had more time and were not anxious to leave class.

Changes in the VIUS CONTENTdm™ database between the Fall 2002 and Spring 2003 Surveys

The main change between the first and second survey was the change from the CONTENTdm™ out-of-the-box interface to the VIUS custom interface. The pictures, metadata, and search algorithms remained relatively the same.

Findings Overview

The most significant finding is that generally there were no big shifts in response patterns between the two surveys despite the change in interface. The conclusions from the first survey still hold true and the reader is referred to the Fall 2002 report for more details. Instead, this report will look at the few differences that did exist. In summary, all the significant differences represented a slight downward trend; however, all but one were in areas where the database itself remained relatively unchanged. Consequently, it is difficult to determine a cause for these changes between the surveys.

Statistically Significant Findings

There were five statistically significant differences between the responses from the Fall 2002 to the Spring 2003 semesters. All of these significant differences represented worse scores for the Spring 2003 survey. These differences were all in the first section of the survey which compared the VIUS CONTENTdm™ database to four other image sources in terms of ease of use, quality of images, and metadata. The average decline in score among the significant differences was 13.2%. No significant differences were found in the section relating to obstacles in using the database.

Four of the five differences were in the areas of image quality and metadata. This makes interpretation difficult since these factors should not have changed much between the two surveys. It is notable that three of the four metadata comparisons were significantly lower on the second survey and that these tended to be the larger negative changes found anywhere on the survey. The one significant change that could directly relate to the change in interface was the comparison between the “ease of use” of the VIUS database to their personal collection; this was a negative change of 12.3%. However, since the three other “ease of use” comparisons were essentially no different than last semester this specific one is probably meaningless.

Written Responses

115 subjects wrote written responses to the open ended questions regarding what they liked about the system while 83 wrote responses to what could be improved. These responses were then divided in the same general categories as for the previous survey. As with most of the rest of the survey, the response patterns were nearly identical to the previous survey. The values in parenthesis are from the previous survey.

What did you like: Ease of use 47.0% (31.6%), number of pictures 20.9% (17.5%), high quality images 11.3% (21.1%), search features 7.0% (12.3%), and picture descriptions 6.1% (10.5%)

What could be improved: Search features 27.7% (24.4%), picture descriptions 27.7% (20.0%), display options (including the search results, sizing images to fit on the screen, and categories of images) 10.8% (15.6%).

CONTENTdm™ Grade: Spring 2003 3.26 (B+), Fall 2002 3.28 (B+)

Conclusions: The results of the two surveys appear nearly identical. Subjects generally did not report any serious obstacles to using the database. Further, they had a slightly favorable perception of the database compared to four other image sources particularly in the areas of “ease of use” and “image quality.” The metadata in the database struck them as being “about the same” as other sources. The average grade assigned to the database was 3.28 in Fall 2002 and 3.26 in Spring 2003.

The one area that seems to show a real change between the two surveys is the area of metadata. Not only was this fairly consistent with a significant decline showing in three

of the four metadata comparisons between VIUS and other image sources but they were also consistently among the largest changes. The average decline in the metadata comparisons was 15 percent among the three significant differences or 11 percent if the single non-significant metadata change is included. It is hard to determine why the users were less satisfied with the metadata during the Spring 2003 semester than in the previous semester since the metadata itself was relatively the same throughout this time period. One possible hypothesis is that after the VIUS custom interface was installed any issues related to the problematic out-of-the-box interface were taken care of. The perceived brevity of the metadata may have become the next thing that their attention centered on by default while taking the survey. Unfortunately, we do not have any questions directly relating to the interface since measuring the effects of changing the interface was not the original purpose of the survey. However, the user protocol study does support the idea that the out-of-the-box interface caused many difficulties in searching for and finding pictures which were solved by the VIUS custom interface.

Please see the average responses for each item and the change values on the next page and the precise written response to the open-ended questions on the pages following .

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

(Parenthesis represent change from previous survey. Positive values are an improvement. **Red**=Significant)

	Ease of Use	Image Quality	Assoc. Info
VIUS database compared to the Internet	3.54 (-0.16)	3.68 (-0.21)	3.33 (-0.05)
VIUS database compared to textbook	3.94 (-0.04)	3.70 (-0.35)	3.03 (-0.57)
VIUS database compared to other book	3.89 (0.02)	3.68 (-0.30)	3.17 (-0.45)
VIUS database compared to personal image collection	3.43 (-0.48)	3.51 (-0.29)	3.28 (-0.66)
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.

(Values in parenthesis represent change from previous survey. Negative values are an improvement. No significant differences in this section.)

	5	4	3	2	1
<i>Check the appropriate box</i>	Very Significant	Significant	Somewhat Significant	Not Usually Significant	Not Significant
The right hardware was unavailable.					1.51(-0.05)
The software was too hard to use.					1.55(-0.10)
Other technical problems besides those listed in the 2 items above. Please check box & write in margin.					1.50(-0.12)
Poor quality images.					1.78 (0.13)
The images are insufficiently documented (identified, dated, etc.)					1.98(-0.15)
My way of searching did not match the ways the pictures are organized and identified which made finding them difficult.				2.18 (-0.08)	
The content of the system was not suitable					1.63 (0.03)
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): 3.26 (-0.02)

11) What did you like?

Clear picture well categorized
Descriptions were nice right there
Under the Image
Easiness of use
Easy to locate images
Easy to search
Easy to use
Easy to use

Easy to use
Easy to use
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Easy to use
Easy to use

12) What could be improved?

Access to site
Access to site
All of them
All perfect
All perfect
Better documentation and more images
Better image quality
Better quality pictures and better names for images
Better search engine
Better search engine
Better search engine
Better search engine
Better search engine
Better search qualities
Categorize by course and lecture
Clarification of search procedure; if website for this class or other classes too
Did not know what to type in to find images as the teacher was not very specific
Easier navigation between pages
Easy of use doesn't give results for LARCH60
Everything
Expand the variety
Have them listed according to class
Image quality
Images documented weirdly sometimes
Improve picture quality
Improve search engine
Instructions for searching
Key words have more scope
Labeling
Lack of publicity
Layout
Less views of a single image
List according to time period and architectural style
Missing info
More defined parameters for search
More description
More description
More description
More image specific links

11) What did you like? (continued)

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Easy to use

Gave all the images

Good image quality

Good image quality

Good image quality

Good image quality

Good image quality

Good information with images

Good information with images

Good quality of pictures

Good quality of pictures

Good quality of pictures and information

Goof search engine

Great images

Has a lot of pictures

High quality images

I could search just the LARCH Pictures

Images labeled clearly

Images loaded quickly

Images loaded quickly

It was fast

Its good

Lot of images and of good quality

Lots of pictures

12) What could be improved? (continued)

More images

More images

More images

More information

More information and better organization

More information with pictures

More information with pictures

More information with pictures

More information with pictures

More information with pictures

More information with pictures

More information with pictures

More keywords for search are needed

More pictures

More pictures

More pictures

More pictures

More specific information

Most images were crisp and good but some were dark ones

Need a better organizations of images

Need more explanation

None

None

None

None

None

None

Organization by class

Organization by class

Pics for each class in a separate folder

Pictures should fall under multiple categories

Put images up by course as well as general search

Quality and information images

Quality and information images

Search engine

Search engine

Search engine

Search engine

Search engine

Search engine is bad could not find what I wanted

Search sometimes hard

11) What did you like? (continued)

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Many images

Nicely set up

Nothing

Nothing

Organization

Pretty colors

Quality of images

Search Engine

Search feature

Search was easy

Showed thumbnails but no links to pictures

Simple

The search

Variety of search results

Various images of the same location

Well labeled and organized

Well organized

12) What could be improved? (continued)

Should be easier to use

Social Context of each image

Topics under which images fall don't

always seem right, was not clear how to

operate it