It is too easily overlooked that most electronic data management and learning devices rest upon the reduction of a living reality to a closed logical system and upon the reduction of the user to a mere link in a closed circuit of ideas. It appears that the book is the only medium of information which does not have the element of coercion which is so characteristic of teaching machines and computers. It requires no apparatus for its use. Information stored in book form is presented to the individual without encroaching upon his freedom; he is invited to partake of it, to react and interact but he is under no obligation to do so. The print medium will always remain of paramount importance as the medium of intellectual liberation.

Thus we see the role of slides in the book-oriented college library as only an ancillary one as long as pictures merely illustrate historical or scientific facts. Art slides have an entirely different function as research tools when reproductions of works of art are studied in lieu of the originals.

In most universities and colleges, the principal use of slide collections has traditionally been and still is by faculty members who need visual images to illustrate lectures. Many of these institutions maintain separate departmental collections of slides in the art department, the geography department, the history department, or science departments.

Recently there has been interest in extending the use of slides to students who must otherwise laboriously hunt for reproductions in books to verify the fleeting impression of a work of art they have seen for only a few moments in class. The primary impact of works of art is visual, which means that the objects must be before the eye of the student for considerable periods of time. But the visual impression can hardly be carried around for any length of time; the visual memory is shorter than the intellectual memory.

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Some of the factors precipitating this interest in making slide collections available to individual students are the reduction of cost and time spent in making slides, technological advances in audiovisual equipment (e.g., carousel projectors), and the increased enrollments in studio and art history departments which necessitate new approaches to student use of audiovisual materials. This trend also stems from a realization that not only is it a waste of students' time to comb books for reproductions but that it actually serves to mutilate materials which become irreplaceable almost the moment they are published.

The type of program developed for student use of slides depends entirely upon the kind of teaching and testing methods employed in the individual institution. If classes are of a period-survey nature in which picture identification examinations are given, a program which repeats slides shown in lectures would seem most appropriate. Slides would probably be assembled around a specific course topic arranged in small cartridges. One classroom, two carousel or tray projectors and a part-time staff would represent minimum space, equipment and manpower requirements to initiate a program of slide study shows throughout the day. The objective would be to have class-observed slides available to students for review purposes for extended periods of time. In this manner, students would have the opportunity to observe and study images seen in lectures without having to draw memory pictures in their notebooks.

A modification of the preceding arrangement would allow at given times during the day, interested students to request to have slides for a particular class rerun for review and study purposes. Thus, all students interested in studying a particular group of slides could request study sessions on a more flexible basis. If examinations are scheduled, the instructors might request that particular slides be projected for review purposes at a specified time. Or, for smaller classes which have less emphasis on memorization of a particular sequence of slides, shows could be set up by the instructor which would cover not only the material shown in class, but also supplementary materials, e.g., works by the same artist or on the same historical events. The latter approach would extend the program as a teaching device and might perhaps serve as ground preparation for later reading in the library.

A valid objection to the preceding setups might be that they would tend to become mere memory sessions in which the student could thoughtlessly memorize images without their having any value to his study of art or art history as an intellectually and aesthetically integrated discipline and not merely as a "study in pictures." Needless
to say, this objection may never be raised if the system is consistent with the teaching methods used. For beginning undergraduates, their initial exposure to a field might very well be served solely by visually orientated study sessions. After all, people should be trained to see visual phenomena before they can be expected to discuss them and to think about them intelligently. In some institutions faculty members have actually experimented in giving slide presentations without verbal accompaniment.

In any library situation, service to the individual should be the supreme consideration and service to groups is only considered here for practical reasons. It is often a graphic image around which a whole cluster of associations can dance. The process of free association which begins to get under way as one looks at pictures often leads to the creative act. This process is unlikely to occur within the group experience. Perhaps, in an ideal system, each student would have direct access to a device operating on the basic principles of a computer. A small computer such as the IBM 1500 can feed up to thirty terminals in a variety of ways for programmed instruction and random display of text or images. With this system, the student can create his own private learning environment. Using an on-line control panel or console he is able to request for individual viewing particular images in connection with lectures he has just seen or material he has just studied. There are in existence other mechanical carrels which can directly store about 1,000 slides that have been prearranged in meaningful sequences, but with an IBM 1500 or one of its successors it is also possible to dial into a larger visual data bank, even one maintained away from campus, perhaps at the headquarters of a regional instructional television system.

The direct dial access system is a form of inquiry which is especially relevant if the library uses an encyclopedic system of classification, such as the Universal Slide Classification which has been developed by Wendell Simmons and Luraine Tansey at the University of California at Santa Cruz. In the past, slide classification systems have generally been applied to a single field; art and architecture have received the most attention. But within the context of the university library the Santa Cruz scheme is the first attempt to create a classification which will do justice not only to art but will fit alongside general history, geography, literature, the classics, foreign languages, the sciences, and the social sciences. As a memory bank (catalog) is built up according to the principles of the Universal Slide Classification of which the sections on art and on history have been completed so far, a student could select
any topic that had been in the curriculum and request specific visual information about it. This student would have access not only to the visual images in this system but also to the written data in the catalog, in the form of machine printouts.

In addition to the research completed at Santa Cruz, Robert Diamond of the College of Fredonia (State University of New York) has developed a retrieval system for 35mm slides used in the arts and humanities. Unlike the Santa Cruz scheme, which puts the emphasis on input classification, this system is primarily concerned with the full exploitation of the retrieval potential inherent in a visual image. Diamond has developed a system of identifiers by which the user can retrieve an item by the standard methods, e.g., by artist or by period, and by his scheme which includes the date of the subject in addition to the date of the painting or object, the types of buildings depicted, battle sites illustrated, and other content approaches to the image. The scheme is directed toward both the general and the specialized user so that subject expertise is not a prerequisite for retrieval. Most collections are presently arranged for the subject specialist who can locate a specific item because he knows beforehand the period during which certain types of art were created, the country or origin of the artists working in a particular style, and the artist who executed a given work of art. In Diamond's final report, he shows the application of the system to the art, history, and literature of the seventeenth century. The system has been developed to be used in conjunction with the Santa Cruz classification system.

It is unlikely that many institutions of higher education in the United States will have the staff and equipment necessary for the elaborate programs involving the use of electronic carrels with computer-steered access systems, no matter how theoretically committed to instructional technology their teaching staffs are. We have already mentioned the individually operated carousel slide projector that uses programs of slides assembled in a cartridge and developed around a single subject or artist. Although cheaper than electronic carrels, even that much equipment may not be affordable everywhere. One way of extending the slide library's facilities to individual students would be the production of negatives at the time slides are made. Students could use the negatives to have either contact prints or enlargements made in any size they want. Thus, each student could build his own private photo "archives" based upon the holdings of the institutional slide collection. Contact prints made from slides can be useful in a number of ways. They can be mounted on the catalog cards, which is not only a great

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timesaving device for the user of the catalog, but also prevents unnecessary handling of slides. The “illustrated catalog” will develop soon into a major institutional reference tool as a key for all the pictorial material available in the collections. Filed in the general dictionary catalog the illustrated card will serve as a signal to the reader that the entry he is looking at is not for a book but for an illustration in the collection.

New and imaginative ways of library service mixing books and audiovisual media in close physical proximity have been tried with apparent success in other than typical college library situations, as in the University of Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia, and more recently in the Library and Museum for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, New York City. The Lincoln Center Library has absorbed the music and dance collections of the New York Public Library. It now provides three different levels of service: reading, audio and visual. Reading nooks in the exhibition galleries are equipped with listening stations, slide, filmstrip and loopfilm projectors, all with rear projection screens. In this way a complete “stop, look, listen, and read” education is offered. This kind of total learning environment could also be created in many college libraries, particularly in smaller ones where the problem of proper control and supervision can be more easily solved. The objection that might be made to this setup is that it offers only a limited choice of prepared (canned) programs and that sooner or later it will somehow have to be supplemented by another more general collection of audiovisual materials arranged according to encyclopedic principles.

Faculty and library staff members should, of course, always be greatly encouraged to correlate print and nonprint materials, but the idea of storing slides either in the open stacks in album-type binders or in little cassettes resembling book boxes seems to require a belief in the innate orderliness of the undergraduate mind which, though creditable, most librarians have not been able to preserve in the course of their years of working experience.

References


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