

Chapter 9

Taking “Use Case” Inventory of Available Open Shared Visuals for Teaching and Learning From Searches in the Federated Creative Commons Search (Old)

ABSTRACT

In instructional design, there are a number of common “use cases” for acquiring open-source shared visuals and images: breaking up gray text, driving attention, sparking the imagination, illustrating concepts, providing examples, explaining phenomena, representing reality, depicting models, and others. The instating of licensure and open-source releases has meant that there are literally hundreds of millions of such visuals available online, with varying levels of releases (with variations on the following dimensions: editability, [non]crediting, [non]commercial usages, [non]required sharing, all the way up to full release into the public domain with no restrictions). The federated Creative Commons Search (old) enables exploration and acquisition across a range of web-based platforms for digital images based on text search. When pursuing actual images for particular usage, the abundance of shared imagery suddenly becomes small-set and limited. This work explores this phenomenon and provides some ideas for mitigation.

INTRODUCTION

In many ways, the open sharing movement online, with users around the world sharing self-generated contents through selective licensure and other legal releases, has meant that there are over a billion digital objects shared online. Much of the contents are conveniently findable. Given such a voluminous set of resources, it would seem that finding image resources for instructional design (ID) may be fairly negligible.

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Taking “Use Case” Inventory of Available Open Shared Visuals for Teaching and Learning

In an instructional design context, visuals are an important part of teaching and learning. Visuals are used to break up gray text, drive attention, spark the imagination, illustrate concepts, provide examples, explain phenomena, represent reality, depict models, and others. That is on the public (course-facing) side. Then, there is also private usages, the need for “reference” images to create illustrations or visual depictions. These images may be used to understand proportions, scale, textures, color, and others.

To create target diagrams, maps, photos, and various imagesets requires a fair amount of work. First, there needs to be underlying expertise about the various related disciplines and domains. There has to be the necessary equipment (digital cameras, flatbed and other scanners, camcorders, memory devices, and others) and software (authoring tools, image editing tools, video editing tools, diagramming tools, mapping tools, and others). Various personnel are required. In more complex contexts, like lab settings, like field settings, more specialized equipment may be needed for the image capture at macro and micro scales and everything in between.

Ideally, if such contents already existed, instructional designers and faculty could bypass the effort and still have their teaching and learning needs met. Pursuing copyright release on contents to use in the teaching and learning context may be effortful.

The need to secure permission prior to any use makes it very expensive, and often impossible, to use other people’s works for further creation and distribution. The process of identifying the owners, determining the legal status of the work and negotiating the terms of use, often involve prohibitively high transaction costs. In some cases, transaction costs related to copyright would constitute a high portion of the total cost of using works... From the perspective of rightsholders, authorizing uses may also be expensive. It may require legal counseling regarding the scope of copyright protection, the legal definition of authorized uses and the legal language used to describe them...They may be reluctant...to incur the high cost of licensing for non-commercial uses. (Elkin-Koren, Feb. 14, 2006, p. 5)

There, too, is the complexity of overlapping rights, especially in videos and multimedia. Overlapping rights may mean a requisite heightened sophistication, additional time, and additional moneys needed to acquire proper rights. The concept here is that the various elements of an object may have different owners of different parts, and the proper owners have to be reached to acquire the rights legally.

If such contents exist and are available for usage, the direct expenses may be costly. The various contractual releases may be for very limited conditions of usage and only for limited time. In many teaching and learning contexts, there are limited to no budgets for such expenditures.

Also, the above assumes that such contents even exist to find and to negotiate for usage. In many cases, the pedagogical contents that would be useful may not exist to the basic quality needed. Some may be so poorly created that they may create legal liability for the users.

In the absence of the Creative Commons regime (or other open licensing approaches), accessing imagery for instructional design may be prohibitively expensive, in direct and indirect expenses. This work explores the availability of social shared imagery for the applied instructional design “use case” by various inventories of available social imagery through the federated Creative Commons search (old). These searches are seeded by real-world terms and real instructional design projects. [This method is the “use case” inventory approach. This involves defining the parameters of a practical “use case” and finding what resources are available in a delimited search. “Use cases” are some of the most applied sorts of contexts because they represent the larger world. These are theoretical; these are thought experiments. These are actual harnesses uses by real people in a context of finitude and limits.]

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