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Undergrads And Image Searching: What Are They Doing? What Do They Need? Where Do We Fit?

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Image-seeking preferences & behavior of undergraduates:

a study to understand what they want, how
they do it, & how we can help

Laurie Bridges

Tiah Edmunson-Morton

Oregon State University Libraries

What's on the agenda?

- The Millennial Generation: facts, figures, and misconceptions
- History of OSU Archives' Flickr projects
- Visual literacy: why it matters
- Survey discussion
- Our research

Those darn kids



Flickr 2009: humble beginnings, happy users



Flickr Commons: research tool?



The screenshot shows the Flickr Commons homepage. At the top is the Flickr logo and navigation links: Home, The Tour, Sign Up, and Explore. A search bar labeled "Search The Commons" is on the right. Below the navigation is a large photo of a green park bench overlooking a city. The text "The Commons" is overlaid on the photo, with the tagline "Your opportunity to contribute to describing the world's public photo collections." Below the photo is a "Welcome!" section. It contains two paragraphs: "The key goals of The Commons on Flickr are to firstly show you hidden treasures in the world's public photography archives, and secondly to show how your input and knowledge can help make these collections even richer." and "You're invited to help describe the photographs you discover in The Commons on Flickr, either by adding tags or leaving comments.*". To the right of the text is a grid of logos for participating institutions, including the Library of Congress, phm, Smithsonian, Bibliothèque de Toulouse, Eastman, National Media Museum, nmm, National Galleries of Scotland, Florida Memory, and Oregon State University. Below the grid are links for "FAQ" and "Rights Statement". At the bottom is a "A Commons Sampler" section with links "Try a search" and "View by tag". A large orange arrow points from the right towards the "Participating Institutions" grid.

flickr® You aren't signed in [Sign In](#) [Help](#)

[Home](#) [The Tour](#) [Sign Up](#) [Explore](#) [Search](#)

Photo by George

The Commons

Your opportunity to contribute to describing the world's public photo collections.

Welcome!

The key goals of The Commons on Flickr are to firstly show you hidden treasures in the world's public photography archives, and secondly to show how your input and knowledge can help make these collections even richer.

You're invited to help describe the photographs you discover in The Commons on Flickr, either by adding tags or leaving comments.*

Participating Institutions so far...

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS phm Smithsonian Bibliothèque de Toulouse EASTMAN NATIONAL MEDIA MUSEUM nmm NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND Florida Memory OSU Oregon State University

[FAQ](#) | [Rights Statement](#)

A Commons Sampler [Try a search](#) | [View by tag](#)

Laurie and Tiah learn about visual literacy



The Visual Literacy White Paper:
Commissioned by Adobe Systems in
Australia, Dr. Anne Bamford, Director of
Visual Arts

Visual literacy is what is seen with the eye and what is “seen” with the mind. A visually literate person should be able to read and write visual language. This includes the ability to successfully decode and interpret visual messages and to encode and compose meaningful visual communications.

Noteworthy studies

- Head & Eisenberg's Project Information Literacy studies
- Henry Pisciotto's 2005 "Penn State's Visual Image User Study"
- Silipigni, Connaway, Dickey report in February 2010 for OCLC, RIN, & JISC
- Krystyna Matusiak's 2006 study
- Kathleen Fear's 2010 study
- Malkmus (2008) & Krause (2008)

Reviewing the literature:

“...very little research on the use of digital image collections, particularly on user behavior or the process of seeking images” (Matusiak, 2006).

Undergraduates and Class Research

- Head and Eisenberg
 - Students use methods that brought luck in the past.
 - Students use course readings, library resources, and public internet sites: Google and Wikipedia.
 - Might consult library resources, but if not immediately successful turn to an online search engine.

Laurie & Tiah Hire the Best



[Flickr: stopnlook](#)

Survey Research Center

- OSU Libraries [Lundeen Award](#)
- Hired the OSU Survey Research Center
- Developed survey instrument
- IRB application
- Administered quantitative/qualitative survey to 1,000 randomly chosen freshmen
- Analyzed the results (frequency analysis)

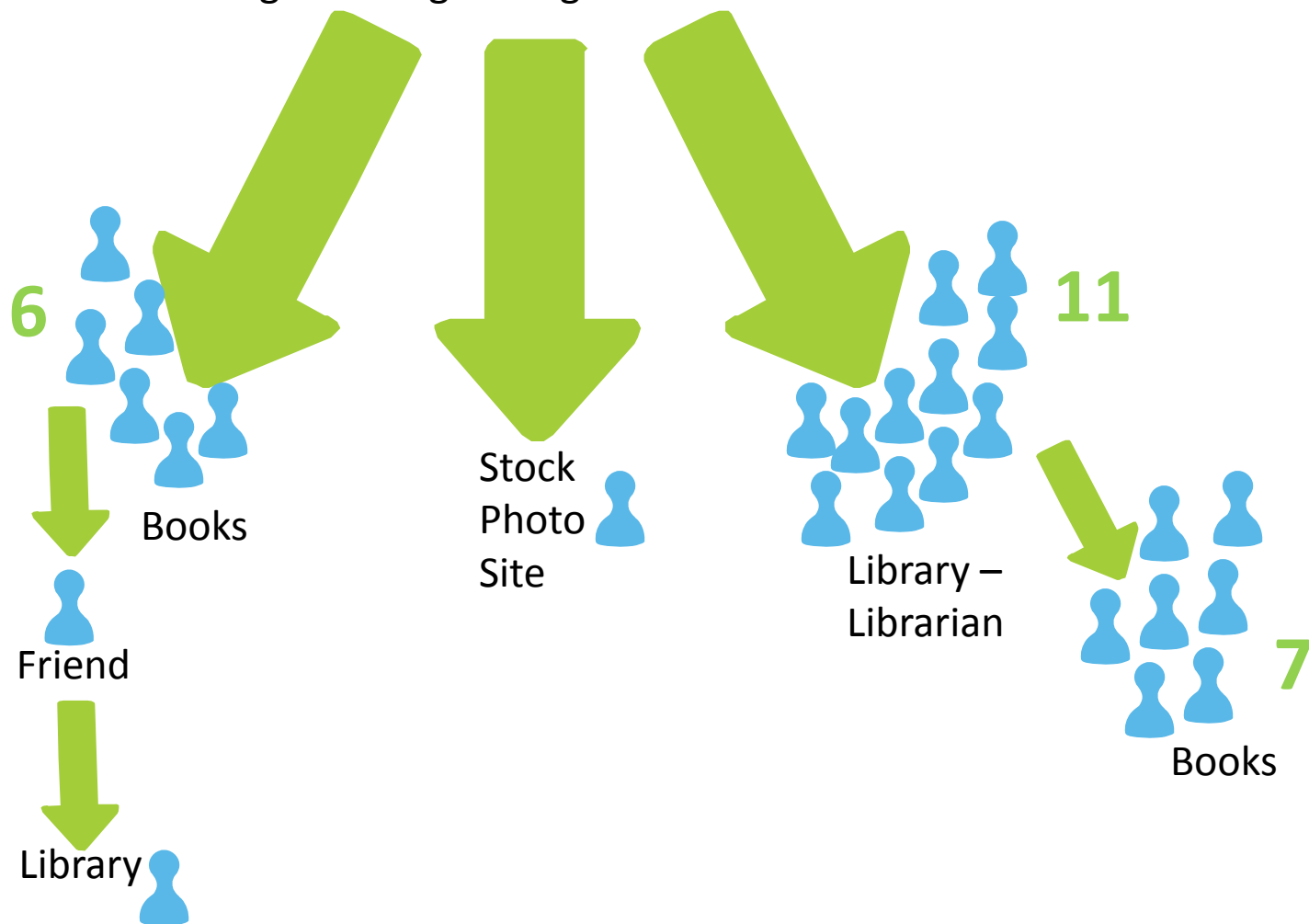
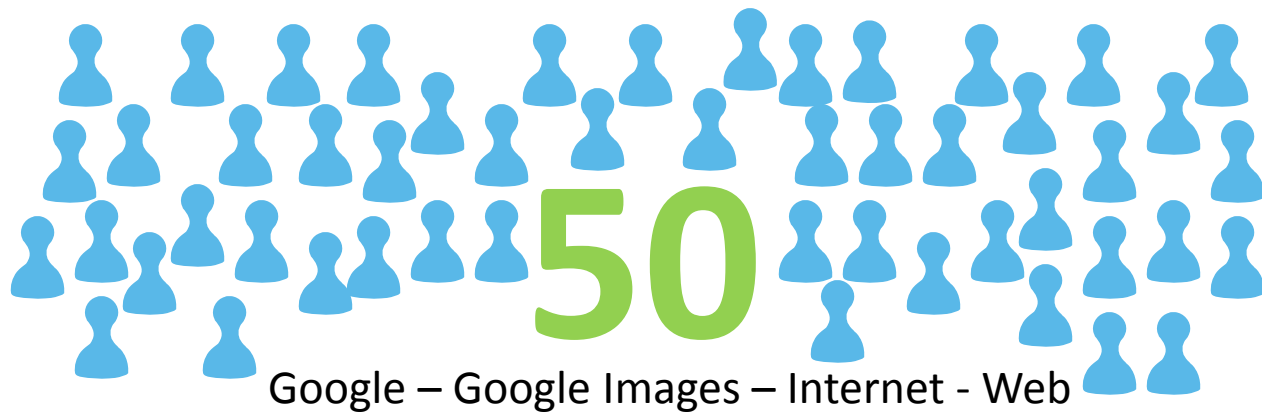
What did we ask them?

For this question we'd like you to imagine you are doing a project or writing a paper for a class. Your instructor has asked you to include a picture of people logging in Oregon forests in the 1930s or 1940s. Please explain your search process for finding a picture. You might start your explanation with the phrase, "I would begin my search for the picture by..."


Your Survey

- Pair or small group and discuss your responses to the survey for 5 minutes.
 - *Note, this is not the same survey we administered to participants in our study.*

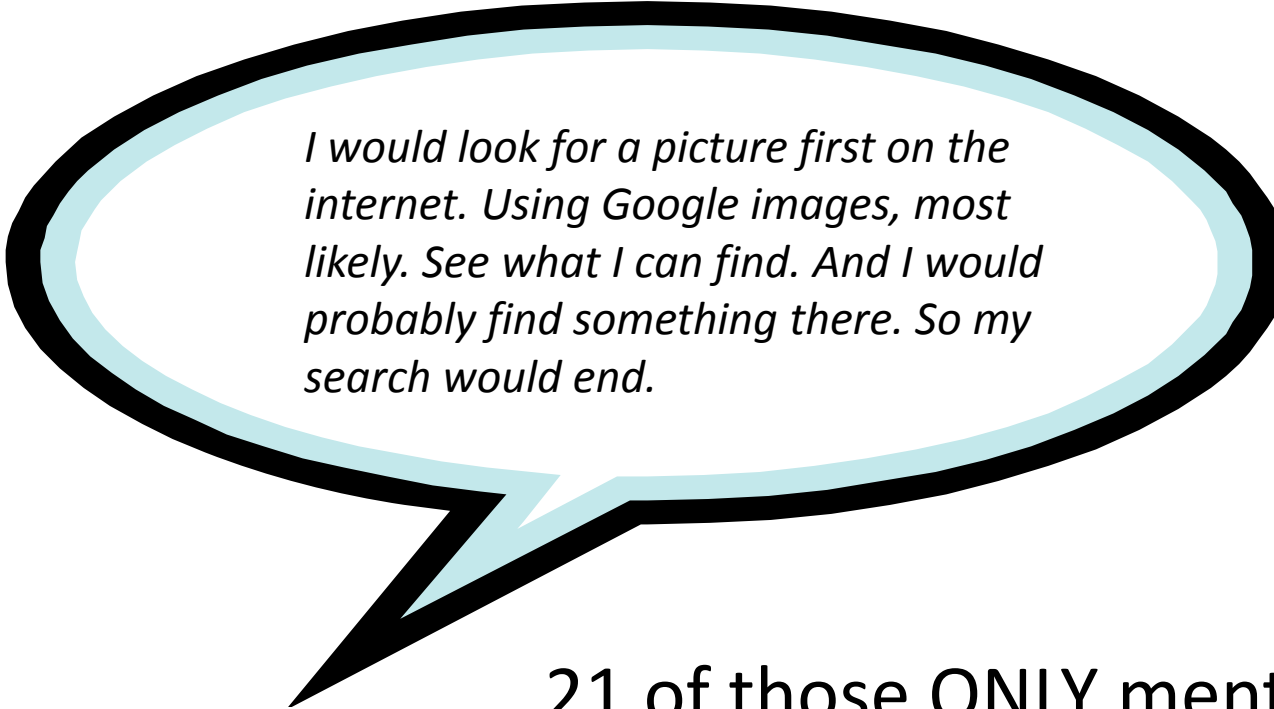
**61 students
replied to this
question**



41 of 61 students mentioned Google.




...I only ever use Google.



I would look for a picture first on the internet. Using Google images, most likely. See what I can find. And I would probably find something there. So my search would end.

21 of those ONLY mentioned Google.


16 students indicated they would look in books.



*I would begin my search for the picture
by looking on the internet. If I didn't
find it there I might try and find a
picture from a book.*

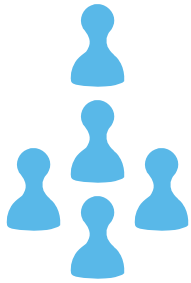
Usually the last step of a multi-step process.

19 students mention the library, librarians, or archives in their search process.

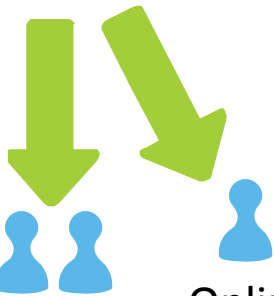


I would begin my search for the picture by looking for images online. Failing this I would look in books pertinent to the subject. If that didn't work I would ask friends for help or ask library staff.

Again, usually the last step of a multi-step process, but...



Library – Librarian – Archives



Books

Online
Oasis
Archives



Photographer



Grandfather
(Logger)



My own
photos



Google/
Web



Books



Archives



Online



Peavy



Internet

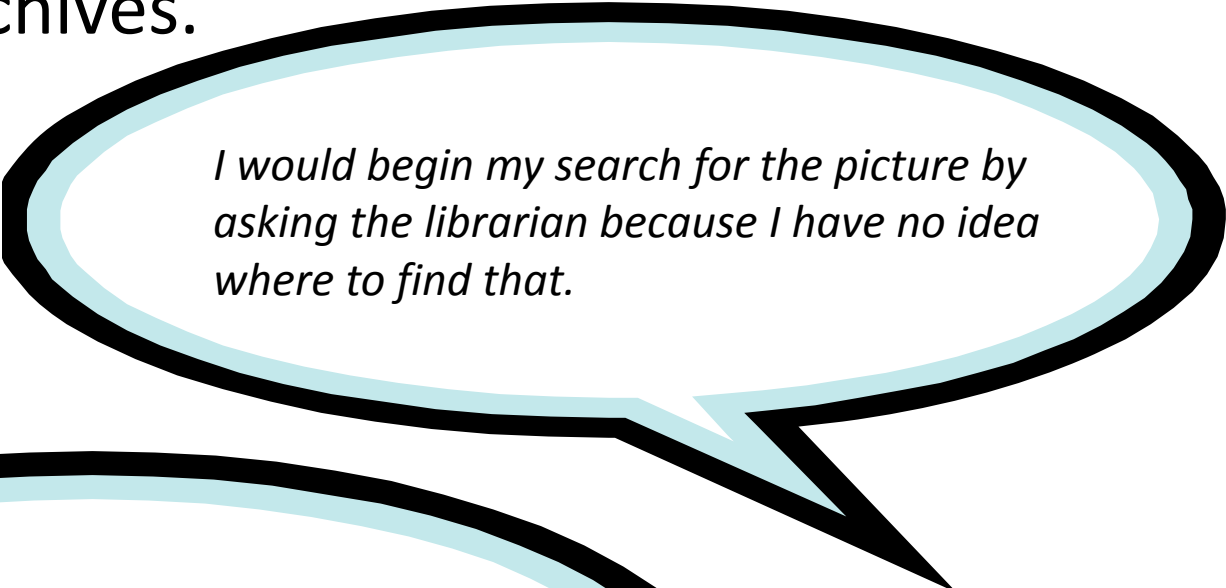


Library

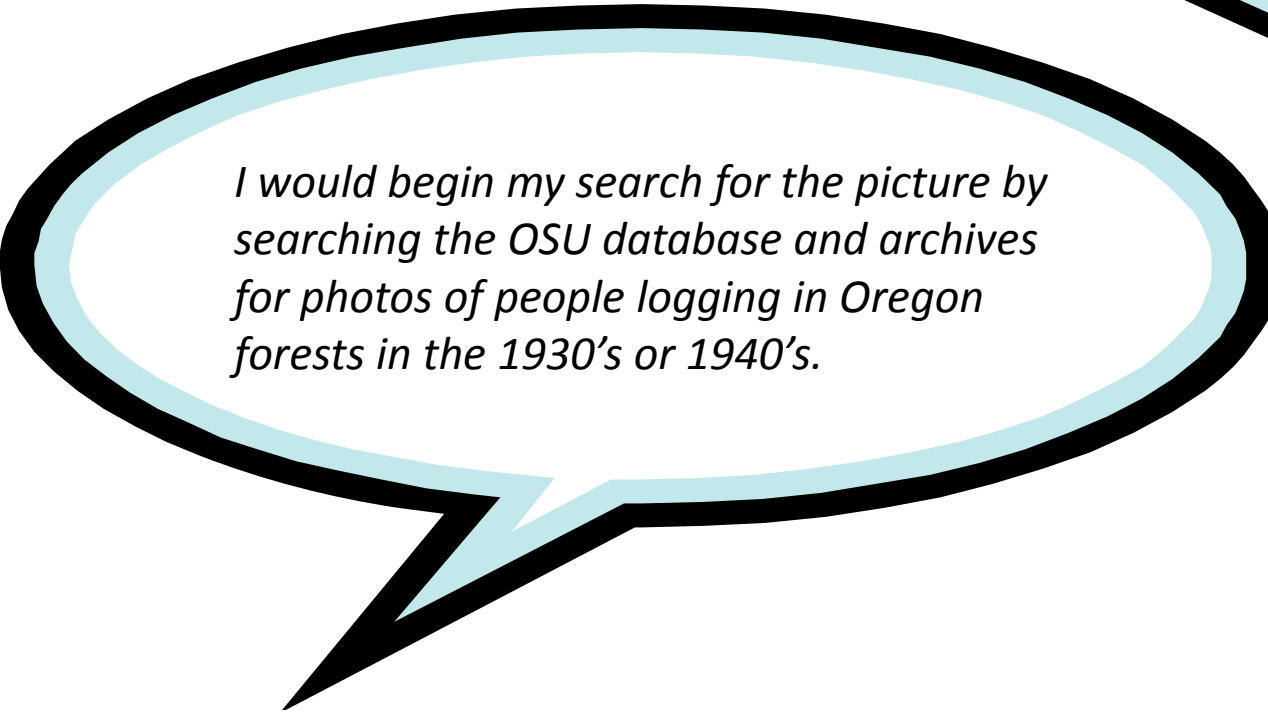


No idea

5 students started their search with the library, librarian, or archives.

A speech bubble with a black outline and a light blue inner border. It has a tail pointing towards the top right.

I would begin my search for the picture by asking the librarian because I have no idea where to find that.

A speech bubble with a black outline and a light blue inner border. It has a tail pointing towards the bottom left.

I would begin my search for the picture by searching the OSU database and archives for photos of people logging in Oregon forests in the 1930's or 1940's.

What did we learn?

- Google
- Copyright?
- Evaluating images?
- What about Wikipedia?

Conclusion

- Librarians should consider adding visual literacy instruction to standard information literacy. This could include finding images, citing images, copyright, etc.
- Computer programmers and analysts should work to raise the rankings of library collection images in Google and Google Images.

Writings & presentations



- Article “Image-searching preferences” to be published in Evidence Based Library and Information Practice in March 2011.
- Presenting at Online Northwest (presently, of course)
- Using archives-specific content and expanding study to experienced researchers for an archives-specific journal

What do we want to know next?

- How often do students use images in assignments (across all disciplines)?
- How often do faculty members ask students to include images in assignments (across all disciplines)?
- Who is teaching students about copyright, if anyone?
- How many librarians teach visual literacy skills?