

# Authentic Materials

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In my second column on the topic of Authentic Materials for language learning, I will focus solely on one of the most classical forms of media associated with the web: the image. It was the ability to integrate images and text in digital form that initially gave life to the World Wide Web.

In this column I propose a typology for understanding how digital imagery is distributed, organized, found on the Internet, and ultimately used in the language classroom. Though the location and nature of these sites are sure to change in the future, this typology is likely to remain more stable and will assist in future link collections. I will freely admit that there may be excellent resources left out of my research. For language technologists and faculty alike, the focus on pedagogical applications and the relevant typology, however, will be ultimately more important than the reference to one singular site.

## Governmental and Institutional Digital Image Projects

This segment is probably the most prolific and quickly developing area in the realm of authentic, high quality, and-in the case of some larger collections, searchable digital image sources for language learning and teaching.

With the widespread use of standardized digital media distribution software such as ContentDM ([www.contentdm.com](http://www.contentdm.com)), government agencies and a variety of institutions are slowly but methodically digitizing their library and archival collections.

Some link lists provide general access to these collections like, see, for example: <http://www.davidrumsey.com/collections/> (Institutional Archives) or <http://www.umich.edu/~hartspc/histart/mother/images.htm> (Links are listed in geographical order).

Government collections are typical for countries with large centralized archives or museum based collections. France offers a number of high quality archives that are useful for teachers and learners of French. A collection of images from the

national museums can be found at: <http://www.rmnphoto.com/cf/htm/home.aspx> . A Meta collection of other government digitization projects is available at <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/bdd/index.html> Similarly, Quebec offers a regional collection: <http://www.ccdmd.qc.ca/quebec/>.

The German government has been funding digitization projects for many libraries across the country. Perhaps the most famous is the index of art and architecture from Marburg housing over 1.5 million images: <http://www.bildindex.de>. A directory of the numerous German digitization projects is housed at <http://www.bsb-muenchen.de/mdz/proj2.htm>.

The Russian government offers a look at its extensive library and museum collection online via [http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/html\\_En/index.html](http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/html_En/index.html) <http://images.library.uiuc.edu:8081/RussianPublics/index.htm> is another good address to gain access to a variety of digital Russian archives.

Institutional image collections are typically electronic digital archives of existing collections. The University of Washington Libraries make their collections digitally accessible at <http://content.lib.washington.edu/>. The archives include resources on the architecture and Geography of Near Eastern and Asian cultures: <http://content.lib.washington.edu/neareastweb/index.html>. Other collections for Asian studies are available at <http://www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/holland/masc/xasia.html> and <http://images.anu.edu.au/china.html>.

Individual libraries also house large collections. The New York Public Library recently launched their digitization collection: <http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/index.cfm> Their collection of graphics related to the Russian revolution will be invaluable to Russianists. Private interest groups also are offering their collections. The online community dedicated to architecture and urban planning Archnet offers their digital images with a focus on the Islamic world. <http://www.archnet.org/library/>

In addition to these well funded institutional projects, small scale projects often partially funded and driven by individual educators are gaining prominence through automated image database functions in a variety of software packages. Take a look at <http://schiller.dartmouth.edu/chinese/images.html> and <http://www.smith.edu/vistas/> .

Using an image search engine to probe a specific institution for graphics also helps find more pedagogically oriented image collections. On <http://images.google.com> and <http://altavista.com/image> searches can be limited by using the "site:edu" function to limit searches to educational institutions.

## **Commercial Collections**

Commercial sources involve a subscription based service or a fee for licensing. Despite commercial sources often citing 'license free imagery' these sites charge a fee for the search engine and the release of the license free imagery. These sources are less useful for language learning purposes, but could be employed for authentic images to augment departmental or institutional web sites. The two largest sources of stock photography are Corbis and Getty at <http://www.corbis.com/> and <http://creative.gettyimages.com/>.

Another variety of the commercial option is the travel photography site that can require a subscription for image use. <http://www.travel-images.com/>  
<http://www.picturesofplaces.com/Europe/italy.html>  
<http://www.webshots.com>

Two notable exceptions to the commercial stock photography sources are the French and German press agencies Globus ( <http://db.globus.pictures.de/> ) and Agence France Press (<http://www.afp.com/english/home/>).

These agencies offer informational graphics based on current statistical and demographic information. These graphics provide charts and cultural information that is authentic, up to date, and presented in a visually appealing manner. Often these agencies have special rates for educational institution subscriptions.

## **Everyday Realia**

Everyday Realia is terminology I use to distinguish some of the more artistic renditions of Realia like the digital art or library collections from the digital forms of "paper" Realia that one encounters in everyday life. This group primarily consists of maps, tickets, schedules, and plans of all sorts. Most countries will offer some sort of up to date, authentic imagery related to this topics. Some of the more interesting examples from various countries include the Paris and Tokyo metro system sites with interactive maps. <http://www.ratp.fr/> and <http://www.tokyo-metro.jp/e/> .

The Munich metro system site includes detailed timing between stations, including an interesting cultural insight into the German mind with estimated walking distances for transfers that differ between stations and times of day at <http://www.mvv-muenchen.de/>.

Also of interest are sites that provide different versions of multimedia mapping like the pages at <http://photos.pagesjaunes.fr/>

which access to pictures of streets in major cities in France and Spain. A variety of software companies offer programs to create custom maps for many countries. Some also allow for advanced GIS application integrating satellite imagery. Find out more about these packages at <http://onlineshop.buhl.de/buhl?art=29>.

The sites mentioned above are good examples of digital forms of traditional print images and Realia. For lists of other sites including train networks and other means of travel, use a search engine to look by name and country or visit any of the following link collections:

<http://www.subwaynavigator.com/>  
<http://www.reed.edu/~reyn/transport.html>  
<http://www.travelnotes.org/Travel/byrail.htm>

### **Pedagogically Based Image Projects**

I consider this section the most important section for this column. Even the best quality digital images will not enhance learning without proper pedagogical application/implementation. The following sites were designed by language teachers for language teachers.

The most comprehensive and representative of multiple languages is the Realia Project. (<http://www.realiaproject.org/>) This repository provides suggestions for the use of images in the foreign language classroom. The detailed descriptions of the pictures, including historical and cultural information, allow for multiple pre-didacticized applications per picture. Submissions are requested from language instructors and the site has a promising future if their model for collaboration takes off

A more concise application is the Culturally Authentic Pictorial Lexicon at <http://www.washjeff.edu/capl/>, which includes a glossary entry for each of the almost 2,000 German images it provides.

Similarly, <http://www.langpix.com/> provides individual photos and a discussion forum for the use of images in the classroom.

The National Capital Language Resource Center frequently adds links and articles related to the use of authentic materials, with specific reference to image sites. See, for example, <http://www.nclrc.org/cultureclub0409.html#computer> and <http://www.nclrc.org/caidl81.htm#ll>.

A number of sites include discussions of pedagogical tips and discussions regarding images in foreign language instruction. Since this column deals with 'authentic images', one caveat is necessary. The sites mentioned below do not always provide authentic images, but rather use drawings and clip art. The advantage to this approach is that it provides hard-to-find image material to use with less commonly taught languages, the professed focus of some sites. The ideas and pedagogical tips provided at these addresses are worthwhile and can be applied to pure authentic images:

<http://images.library.pitt.edu/v/visuals/>  
<http://web.uvic.ca/hcmc/clipart/>  
<http://www.carla.umn.edu/lctl/vpa/>

One the very practical end, a primer for using images in education is given by UCLA at <http://www.lmp.ucla.edu/UsingImages.aspx?menu=011.02>

As more digital images collections come online and as more language instructors categorize these images by their pedagogical applications, the logical next step is to study both how these images are used in the foreign language classroom and to subsequently investigate the effectiveness of their use. Thus, pedagogy will take the primary role in regards to digital images in foreign language instruction. It is clear that the use of authentic images presents certain opportunities in language learning and the existence of low cost or royalty free authentic image collections is becoming more widespread. The questions that remain will be answered by the instructors and students who use and learn from these sources. In subsequent columns I will investigate other forms of authentic materials in the digital age and will eventually take a critical look at the scholarship related to (digital) authentic material use in language instruction. ♦

