The indivisibility of art librarianship

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As the range and sophistication of visual resources, and the size of collections available to the art historian and student have increased over the last century, so has the need for an appropriately qualified body of professionals to organise and develop them. This paper explains how and why those involved with visual resources have tended to have a background and training other than in librarianship, and how as a consequence, the two branches of the profession of art librarianship (textual and visual) have grown apart, with visual resources professionals allying themselves to art historical organisations. The author makes a case for the merging of the two professions, united in serving the same subject orientated clientele.

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In his opening address at the International Seminar on Information Problems in Art History, Oxford, March 20 22, 1982, Trevor Fawcett reminded the delegates that at the first international gathering of art historians in 1873, the standard vehicles of written communication in which the practitioners of the new discipline communicated were already firmly in place. They included the historical treatise, the monograph, the oeuvre catalog, exhibition and auction catalogs and, of course, periodical and other serial publications. He observed that the following century had brought about a vast proliferation of these media and an ever increasing, ever more sophisticated apparatus of indexing and abstracting services for their bibliographical control (of which there had already been impressive beginnings in the 1870s), but nothing radically new. So, an art scholar of the eighteen seventies, were he to step out of the past to visit our centers of research today, would certainly notice that the field of art history has enormously expanded its boundaries, since it came into being as an independent academic discipline during the second half of the nineteenth century, but he would feel quite comfortable, when he discovered that even if some of the basic tenets have also changed, the types of publications that support research and their form, i.e. the printed 'tools of the
churches and secular buildings throughout the entire world, he must be able to see them, at least in reproductions. To this end the practitioners of the field began vigorously to build up visual archives of photographs and slides, always pushing for larger and larger collections in the institutions with which they were professionally affiliated, creating thereby 'museums without walls' within the walls of university art history departments or of general research libraries and extending out and extending the scope of small and even large museums, whose collections, no matter how rich, offer only fragments of the world's vast artistic heritage.

When the passion for collecting photographic reproductions had reached the point at which it had generated such quantities of images that the institutions which owned them found it harder and harder to keep track of what they had, they proceeded quite logically to organise them. The ensuing collections inevitably reflected the nature and organisational structure of the parent bodies. Thus reproduction archives in museums were invariably arranged according to criteria which corresponded very closely to the museums' registrars' files. Art history departments in colleges and universities often organised photograph and slide collections according to didactic principles and the frequency of use, reflecting the curriculum on the one hand and the research interests of the local faculty on the other hand. Only a few of the largest art research institutions, having realised that the value of their pictorial collections lay as much in their size as in the way in which they were made accessible, were willing to budget considerable sums of money to have them organised and run by professionally trained staff. The large encyclopedic public research libraries used a different approach. They tended not to recognise the history of art as the 'history of creating and thinking in forms'; they saw it rather as a branch of universal history. Consequently the so-called picture files that grew out of the ubiquitous portrait collections and which included all kinds of art reproductions from prints and engravings to lithographs and photographs, were maintained to serve as illustrations to history. These collections were rarely integrated with the printed books in the same subject divisions of the classification scheme, even in libraries that were organised according to the divisional plan. Most often, even in larger institutions which had created sizeable, quite autonomous, art divisions, image collections containing reproductions of works of art were kept submerged in the general picture files that were often housed in remote parts of the building, usually a basement area. Obviously, this had little to do with the service philosophy of these fine arts divisions or collections, but much with the problems of shelving and servicing collections of such disparate and odd materials as are printed books (many in abnorm-
ally large formats) and periodicals on the one hand, and photographs, all kinds of prints and even lantern slides on the other hand.

The contents of picture files were at best given some relative indexing and were normally administered by the libraries' public service staffs, often as a sideline. Photograph and slide collections attached to academic departments of art history were typically entrusted to the care of a department secretary who, perhaps with some sporadic advice from a faculty member, kept them up with the aid of untold generations of student workers, each working only for a few hours a week. Only in the rare full-blown image research libraries that developed in a few museums, in a few universities and in a few independently founded institutions devoted to art research, where such activities were specifically endowed, were art reproductions catalogued individually according to clearly defined art historical criteria; i.e., usually by medium (art form), provenance, location or site, and sometimes also iconographic subject content. It was necessary for the people working in these advanced image libraries to possess an extensive background in art history, since they had to be able to make correct identifications and attributions and to catalog these strange library materials that come without benefit of title pages, colophons or indexes, and for which no national bibliographies existed. Thus the nature of their work moved them into the professional sphere of museum registrars and manuscript librarians and loosened such ties as may have existed between them and their counterparts in the art book library field. Although they did, of course, benefit from advanced subject training in art history in their work as bibliographers and reference resource people, librarians staffing traditional art libraries consisting mainly of books and periodicals, did not have to have an in-depth knowledge of connoisseurship in order to become proficient in the cataloguing and classification of art books. But since the product of their cataloguing had to be compatible with local, national, and soon international standards of bibliographical description and control — no such standards exist to this day for visual records! — they sought to establish close links with the mainstream library profession, the library schools out of which came the new library science discipline, and with the emerging professional associations of librarians that, unfortunately, emphasised the technical aspects of the occupation and understated its intellectual core. This widened the gulf separating the art book librarians from the image librarians, who no longer understood the professional jargon of their brethren. And so it came about that two separate strands of art librarianship developed. We have seen why it happened and how, and we understand this development, but we find it deplorable, nevertheless, because it is clearly not in the best interest of the

art library user, whose needs it does not recognise.

After art departments were organised within the divisional framework of general libraries for the more efficient administration of the unusual forms and formats in which art information is packaged, the librarians of these specialised departments began to form various groups and sections within existing library organisations. Visual resources curators, on the other hand, preferred to join scholarly societies or associations of museum professionals.

The lingering grouping in separate organisations of art librarians, who work with the traditional printed library media (books and periodicals) and of visual collections specialists, who work with 'non-print materials', which I see as one of the gravest problems of the art librarian's profession, has had understandable historical practical causes, but it reflects a philosophy of library organisation by form that today is shockingly out of touch with what has occurred in other fields of library specialisation, notably in medical librarianship and in the librarianship of science and technology. For in the practical workaday world of art libraries, users are primarily concerned with finding complete answers to their subject specific reference questions, and with getting quick help with their study and research needs. Little does it matter to them whether the answer is found in a periodical, in a book, in an auction or exhibition catalog, or whether it is in the non-verbal information that is contained in a photograph or other reproduction of a work of art. As art librarians, we know well enough that the reason for which the public comes to our libraries is the content of library materials and that their format is relevant to the information seeker only in the rare circumstance in which the form itself embodies content, as for instance in an 'artist's book', as distinct from merely containing it. It is that commitment to providing access and to interpreting the content of the subject matter of art and art history, which is at the core of all art librarianship, and which makes the art librarian a professional in his field of specialisation. It is definitely not the mastery of certain management skills that are required to deal with one of the many forms in which the subject content comes packaged. It follows, then, that as far as professional formation and orientation of picture and book librarians is concerned, they should subscribe to one and the same philosophy. They should have had the same education and training and also belong to the same professional organisations.

The unfortunate split in the ranks of the art library profession was noticed, but boldly ignored by our colleagues, who founded the first independent organisations of art librarians in 1969 and in 1972 in the United Kingdom and in North America respectively. They were determined to
make a professional home for art librarians from all ‘walks of life’, regardless of their institutional affiliations, type of activity or media specialisations. The IFLA Art Libraries Round Table, which was organised at the 43rd IFLA Conference in Brussels (1976), immediately and without the slightest hesitation adopted the same self-understanding of art librarianship. For the founders of the three organisations it was an article of faith, strictly adhered to by those who succeeded them in office, that our profession would not be complete and not viable, if it did not include visual resources professionals as well as the so-called ‘book’ librarians (unfortunately this terrible pleonasm is a necessary distinction because the English language does not have the equivalent of the French phototèque or the Italian fototeca from which a professional title for the keeper of such a collection can be derived). Thus from the outset ARLIS/UK, ARLIS/NA and the IFLA Art Section professed their belief in a unified art library profession, which embraces traditional printed word librarianship and visual collection management, maintaining that the two are but branches of the same tree, equal components of the same vocation. Although the ‘librarians of the verbal tradition’ and the ‘librarians of the received image’ are working with different media both strands of art librarianship are pragmatic (mission oriented), both share the same substance, method and philosophy of service and the same goals. Consequently, the structure of the newly created professional societies was so designed as to provide ample scope for visual resources art librarians to further their interests, ARLIS/NA was the first to do so formally by creating a Visual Resources Special Interest Group with its own officers, its own column in the ARLIS/NA Newsletter and a large block of time at the annual conferences dedicated to visual resources programs. The VR-SIG is the strongest special interest group in ARLIS/NA, to which about 50 percent of the North American members belong. ARLIS/UK organised a Visual Resources Committee somewhat belatedly in 1979, but whoever takes the trouble to go through the back issues of the ARLIS Newsletter and its successor, the Art Libraries Journal, will see how prominent visual resources and iconography issues have been in the minds of British art librarians since 1969. The IFLA Section of Art Libraries has still to determine in what form it wishes to incorporate the visual resources librarians. We hope that its meetings in Montreal this year will leave us with a clearer idea of how our colleagues and international art librarianship can best be served. That theirs is a library profession, that is, a profession that collects, organises and disseminates information and by doing so furthers scholarship and creates knowledge, there can be no doubt. The difference which lies in the medium — words versus images — is merely a
techanical one. It is not without problems, but it should not be a stumbling block on the road to professional unity.

In Antonio Panizzi we recognize the greatest administrator among modern librarians and in Melvil Dewey we see the greatest innovator. We go to the P.S.R. Ranganathan as to a guru for spiritual advice about our profession. Take his Five Laws of Library Science

Books are for use.
Every reader his book.
Every book its reader.
Save the time of the reader.
A library is a growing organism.

Substitute the term ‘image’ for ‘book’ and you will see that these laws apply equally to visual resources work and to ‘book’ librarianship.

I cannot remind you often enough that art librarianship is still a very young profession today. It may be sixty or at most eighty years old, and it did not really find its identity until very recently. Only in the last two decades of its history have we witnessed the beginnings of a formation of a professional identity of art image librarians. As invariably happens in all areas of human endeavor, this was brought about by a few strong leaders, who appeared at the right historical moment, and who through the powers of their intellect, organisational skill and devotion galvanised an existing trend. Without wanting to belittle the contributions of earlier pioneers and contemporaries who have also helped, I venture to say that Nancy DeLaurier and Betty-Jo Irvine have been the leading catalysts. As author of Slides libraries: a guide for academic institutions and museums(44), Irvine wrote the book on visual resources librarianship, providing not only an invaluable manual for the practice of the profession, but also the first clear statement of its philosophy. The feature of her work that is particularly apropos in the context of our discussion is that she very clearly distinguishes art slide and photograph librarianship from other types of audio-visual or media librarianship, which are not in the service of art and art history. Nancy DeLaurier, the dynamic organiser of the Visual Resources Committee of the College Art Association of America (C.A.A.), has also for many years guided and inspired the work of a Visual Resources Curators group of the Mid-America College Art Association (an independent regional society, not a branch of the national C.A.A.). From this group’s headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, in the heartland of America has radiated an enormous influence that has made it an international force in visual resources librarianship. The many publications which it has inaugurated (and it does not matter much whether they are
through the Art Libraries Round Table and the Art Section of IFLA. This involvement dates from the 40th IFLA Conference in Washington D.C. in 1974. At the two most recent independently convened international conferences devoted to a broad discussion of information problems in the visual arts (Pisa, 1978 and Oxford, 1982) the presence of visual documentalists and of visual resources managers was especially significant because the visual resources people outnumbered the people who work with verbal records.

I am depressed by the thought that in spite of their energetic and overall successful efforts to be heard in the councils of their peers, and in view of the recognition they have earned as purveyors, organisers and disseminators of visual arts information, so many visual resources curators should still feel that their work has so little in common with that of the other half of the art library world that they think of themselves as members of an entirely separate profession. But it remains an indisputable fact that an appreciable segment of the visual resources people are not happy with the scope for their specific activities that has been available to them in the organisations which they have joined in the past; they feel it has been too limited. The list of these organisations could, in addition to those already mentioned, be extended to include the Picture Division and the Museums, Arts and Humanities Division of the Special Libraries Association, the Image Access Society, the American Association of Picture Professionals and also some of the audiovisual media groups in educational associations. There may yet be others abroad. Given this feeling that none of the above groups ‘does right’ by the image librarians working in the field of art, architecture and archaeology, it is not surprising that in the March 1981 issue of the International Bulletin a discussion was launched, regarding the possibility of forming an independent Visual Resources organisation, first on the national level in the United States, but with the declared goal of becoming an international organisation as soon as possible. Subsequently a committee was formed that prepared a questionnaire for an opinion survey that was designed to determine whether a majority of American visual resources curators would be in favour of founding an entirely separate organisation. The questionnaire was mailed to 915 people whose names were culled from the membership lists of MACA, C.A.A. and ARULIS/NA, including all subscribers to the International Bulletin.

An editorial by Nancy DeLaurier in the September 1981 issue of the Bulletin reads like a recital of the frustrations which visual resources curators experienced when they tried to work within the structure of the various parent organisations in which visual resources sub-groups exist. Ms. DeLaurier also referred to specific instances of perceived lack of sup-
port from the bureaucracies of these organisations, whenever the visual resources sub-groups have tried to get projects authorised on which they (but not necessarily the parent organisations) put a high priority. The article went on to state that MACAA had, by and large, been the most hospitable organisation with which visual resources curators had worked, but that its regional character imposed severe limitations on important work that needed to be done in the future on a grander scale. Ms. DeLaurier then argued passionately in favour of the independent organisation that would in due course become a Visual Resources Curators International. She held out hopes that such an organisation could become affiliated with the Comité International d'Histoire de l'Art and hold meetings with that body every four years.

The result of the poll showed (admittedly to the satisfaction of those among us who have laboured so hard to get ARLIS started as an organisation of a unified art librarians' profession) that the majority of those polled was not in favour of a separate society for visual resources curators at this time. Indeed, most of the respondents opined that of all existing professional societies ARLIS was the one that, despite its shortcomings, has served the interests of visual resources professionals best. But to set the record straight I will mention that most of the respondents also thought that as far as the quality of professional meetings and professional journals was concerned, attendance for them at C.A.A. conferences was slightly more important than attendance at ARLIS conferences. This is presumably because of the contacts with art historians and museum people that the former facilitate and because of the opportunity they afford to listen to research papers on topics that have distinct implications for visual resources work. There was unanimous agreement that of all the professional journals visual resources people read, the International Bulletin is the most practically useful.

Let there be no euphoria about this! Even as a charter member and former chairman of ARLIS/NA, I saw no reason to gloat over the result of the poll. Understandably, I was worried that if the visual resources curators separated from the art librarians and started an entirely independent organisation, this move would not only destroy the unity of what I consider to be one and the same profession, but would also drain its resources, intellectual as well as financial, and greatly weaken its clout in both the world of art and the world of librarianship. I see in the fact that of the 142 visual resources curators who returned a valid ballot, 87 were in favour of remaining with ARLIS/NA, not an overwhelming endorsement but just the merest nod of approval. But this encouraging sign is an indication that we may be on the right track after all, when we lay claim to the allegiance of those of our kin who work with visual resources instead of with books and periodicals. Of course in interpreting the outcome of this survey, one should also keep in mind that it may have been influenced by practical as well as ideological considerations. Many of those who took the trouble to fill out and return the questionnaire must have been concerned about their and their colleagues' ability to pay dues to yet another professional society, attendance at yet another set of conferences and meetings, more committee work, and other burdens on finances and time which would surely ensue.

Still, I am immensely grateful for this slim vote of confidence and would urge my colleagues guiding the destinies of our art libraries to pay heed and to make sure that it is well earned.

Now, before I go on, I would like to remind readers of a few developments which have occurred in the library world and of discernible trends, which add up to a strong argument in favour of a decision by visual resources curators to stay with the art librarians' organisations as they now exist.

When ARLIS/UK and ARLIS/NA broke away from the big amorphous library associations, they were at the beginning of a trend. Other specialist library groups soon emulated their example. There arose a great hue and cry over the alleged fragmentation of the library profession that this exodus would cause. Whose profession did those who protested have in mind? Certainly not ours. Only those for whom librarianship is nothing but a hodge-podge of assorted applied social science disciplines, only those who believe that it is a profession rooted in a knowledge of budgeting systems, personnel administration, scientific management and the technical aspects of acquisitions and bibliographical control, had cause to be alarmed; not those of us who have never acknowledged the primacy of method over content and who, like this writer, are convinced that there can never be librarianship as such, only a librarianship for. To me librarianship is nothing but an umbrella term for a number of related service professions which combine to serve a subject discipline, a population group, or an educational objective. Librarianship at its best is a federated profession. Herbert S. White, in a recent article in Library Journal, which came to my attention only when this paper was half completed, writes that he is not afraid of fragmentation either. He observes that "people who have common interests like to organise themselves into units of the smallest common denominator for which organisation is possible, progress predictable, and survival reasonably assured." And he approves of this. I believe the question of what should be the smallest common denominator for art librarians' organisations has been expounded.
at some length in the preceding paragraphs. The question of survival chances is, of course, a very important one. I honestly don't believe that the independent organisation of visual resources curators that has been advocated would be viable in the long run. For this reason too, and not only because of the intellectual parochialism it might engender, it would not be in the best interest of the visual resources curators if such an organisation were founded. I look at the phenomenon, which the so-called 'generalists' have called the fragmentation of the library profession as something that is natural and wholesome, something that had to happen sooner or later because clearly the technical elements of library work that were supposed to act as ties that bind the library profession have proved to be all too weak.

While I believe that fragmentation along subject lines is beneficial, I nevertheless look askance at the possible development of a taste for particularism within an organisation of librarians founded on the principles of service to a subject discipline and to a subject-oriented clientele. This is quite a different thing and is dangerous. Although I have argued the indivisible nature of art librarianship here with regard to the just concerns of visual resources curators, I would have you note that this is not a sermon contra this one group, and that I am just as concerned over the potential dynamite which could blow our art librarians' societies to pieces if other groups, such as art school and architectural school librarians seceded, if only temporarily, to form splinter organisations serving only part of our constituency.

As for the alternative of working with subject-oriented learned societies, the experiences the visual resources sub-groups have had (with the exception of MACAA) have not been very encouraging. To wit: since 1971 the C.A.A. has allowed the Visual Resources Curators Group the somewhat nebulous status of a 'section' within an organisation which does not officially have such subdivisions. This, incidentally, was the same status it also initially granted the other art librarians, who however quickly realised that it did not give them an adequate working platform. What this status meant was that visual resources librarians were given some blocks of time to organise programs during the annual C.A.A. meetings and occasionally a corner in the C.A.A. Newsletter, less frequently also space for a column in Art Journal, but never in the more prestigious Art Bulletin. Repeated attempts to get a visual resources representative elected to the C.A.A. Board of Directors failed. The greatest disillusionment came when the C.A.A. Board treated the visual resources curators (a group which after all makes up a considerable percentage of the total membership of their organisation with pronounced condescension as documented in the letter of 4 May 1981, in which it refused to endorse the Standards for staffing fine arts slide collections, which the Visual Curators section had prepared, and over which it had laboured long and hard. It must be noted that at that time ARLIS/NA had already approved the Standards, and that it had also participated in formulating them through the joint C.A.A./VR and ARLIS/NA VR SIG working party.

The art librarians societies have occasionally been accused by members of the visual resources profession of having a 'bookish' attitude or of being 'library chauvinists'. This is definitely not the case. This impression may have been created, however, because most of the people who were prominent in the early stages of our organisational history did indeed come from traditional 'book library' backgrounds. This was at a time when visual collections librarians had barely begun to grapple with the question of a proper professional identity. The art libraries societies have also been accused of putting undue value on the possession of library school degrees. This is also not true. But this illusion may have been created by certain standards documents, which reflect the convictions of art librarians who are in positions to hire professional staff than the artificial requirements of certain employment codes which regulate eligibility for jobs in publicly financed institutions.

At the risk of being accused of reveling in personal reminiscences, I will tell you that when I joined the Harvard University Library in 1951, only 70 out of approximately 280 professional employees had MLS degrees. Back in 1937 there had been only seven! At my university the library school degree has never been the most important feature in a potential library officer's background. It is still not an absolute condition for employment. In my own library, professional staff working in the Visual Collections enjoy, if they possess academic masters degrees in art history or related fields, the same status and ranks of Librarian I, II, or III that holders of library science degrees have.

I realise that many other academic library systems do not have the flexible standards of the Harvard Library. But there are indications that in other institutions, too, the value of the MLS is depreciating rapidly. It seems that after three decades of MLS idolatry we are experiencing, at least in the major academic libraries, a return to the staffing patterns of the early 1950s. This is because even the most generalist-minded among the administrators of our big scholarly libraries realise that the modern research library has become such a complex organism that it requires a greater variety of staff skills. Libraries therefore have had to turn to people with no library school backgrounds because the library schools are unable to provide enough formal specialist training. Of the specialists currently
employed in American academic and research libraries, thirty-four percent do not have the MLS degree. This group includes such diverse ‘trades’ as archivists, rare book bibliographers, systems analysts, preservationists and conservators, learning resources specialists, and – yes – also art slide and photograph curators. Most of those people have masters degrees or equivalent qualifications in fields other than librarianship.

Since most library schools find it impossible because of staffing problems, scheduling, and anticipated low enrolment figures in such specialised courses, and for related economic reasons, to provide enough specialist training in the many different skills that are needed in today’s research libraries, many of the libraries have been forced to revive the on-the-job training programs, that served them well enough in the days before a degree from an accredited library school (which earlier had primarily been a qualifying degree for service in public libraries) became also an accepted qualification for professional employment in academic and research libraries. We art librarians have never interpreted professionalism so narrowly that only library school degrees were considered acceptable educational credentials for art library work, but it is reassuring that increasing numbers of general library administrators are coming to share our point of view. In noting this trend, there is no need for visual resources curators to worry about the ‘color of the union card.’ To borrow an analogy from the world of retailing, one could say that we accept both kinds of ‘master-cards’, those with an MLS and those with an A.M. in art history imprinted on them. But I believe that the members of the art libraries societies through their elected officers (including of course the IFLA Art Section) should make some significant changes in the constitutions and bylaws of their organisations, changes that would give visual resources curators satisfactory assurances, recognise their importance, and acknowledge the fact that they constitute one-half of the members of the profession. It has been suggested that this could be done, in the case of ARLIS/NA by changing the status of the VR-SIG to that of a Division and by giving that Division a charge like the one that is so well put in the document which announced the Standing Committee on Visual Resources of ARLIS/UK: “To promote the provision, exploitation and conservation in art libraries and art contexts, of visual resources, other than books and journals, to liaise with other interested bodies...” In this connection it must be noted that ARLIS/NA has already changed the name of the ARLIS/NA Newsletter to Art Documentation, thereby giving a clear signal to the art and art library communities that its interests are not narrowly focused on books and periodicals, and that it ascribes equal importance to photographs, slides and many other forms and conduits of art information. It can be mentioned in parenthesis that when that title change was made, there was a strong sentiment in favour of changing the name of the society at the same time to a phrase without the word ‘library’ in it. Again, this change was suggested to signal the catholic nature of the profession of art librarianship. The decision not to go ahead with the name change was made for entirely practical reasons. A new acronym would have made our liaisons with the other art libraries societies and the work with the IFLA Section awkward.

But this is not the place for a philosophical discussion about the proper meaning of the terms library, librarian and librarianship. There is no end to it. So, I say, let’s stop splitting hairs and get on with the work. A lot needs to be done. In order to fulfil the many tasks that lie ahead, we cannot abide factions or fractions. We need a true union. Book and visual resources librarians must support each other and work together on such projects as the international Art and Architecture Thesaurus, an indexing system that is to be applicable to the subject control of both the literature and the visual documents of art. We need the visual resources librarians’ and the bibliographers’ input into the Iconclass system. An enterprise of such international importance as the Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, with its parallel text and plate volumes, is a prime example of the dual nature of art documentation. This list could be continued.

The greatest challenges with which the profession will have to cope during the next decades will arise in the visual collections field.

The limitations of verbal language in describing visual, esthetic phenomena have always been painfully felt by the art critic, the art historian, and the art librarian. The decoding process of the visual language of images has received a sharp impetus through the application of the methodology of semiotics. There is much new activity in the related fields of iconography and iconology too. The prospect of a new technology, of completely new machines that transmit written records and pictorial documents simultaneously, machines which by their nature require the working together of the individuals who collect, process, retrieve and disseminate art information, will lead to a greater interdependence of the two branches of art librarianship than has ever existed before. It is my firm belief that even if individual hardliners should succeed in retarding this development for a little while longer, the new technology and the natural interests of librarians and visual resources librarians in attaining complete control over all the data of art, will eventually force the two branches of the profession to meld into one. It appears that, even though some of us may be suspicious of assistance from such quarters, the indivisibility of art librarianship will be greatly advanced by electronic
technology. As humanists we are sceptical of the claims of technocrats, who promise us the golden age. I do not suggest that we give up our healthy scepticism and turn into uncritical believers in electronic wizardry. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good!" (1 Thessalonians, 5:21) The Apostle says. It sounds like excellent advice. I, for my part, am prepared to accept the support our technological age can give to bring about the more perfect union of our profession.

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References
(5) The reader of this editorial is puzzled by the still tentative language in which the reference to an international organisation of visual resources professionals is couched. According to the author's "Bologna Report" and a detailed "Report of Visual Resources Meetings" at Bologna penned jointly by Cynthia Clark (Princeton) and Ian Charlton (Oxford) in the Winter 1979 issue of the *MACA Slides and Photographs Newsletter*, vol.6, no.4, Dec. 1979, pp.7–10, the international organisation was actually formed during the 24th Congress of the CHIA and received official recognition by the CHIA President Jacques Thuillier, who referred to it in his report of "Enterprises which Concern CHIA" as an association.