

Art Project (Google Cultural Institute). *Access:* <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/art-project>

Art Project is an initiative to provide thousands of high-quality, high-resolution images from museums across the globe in one place. It includes powerful tools for exploring the collections and is impressive for the depth and breadth of its scope as well as its intuitive interface.

Art Project is part of the Google Cultural Institute, an initiative that partners with cultural heritage organizations to make their resources accessible to a global audience. Art Project launched in 2012 with 17 museums from 9 countries and now includes more than 600 partners. In addition to museum collections, Art Project includes a fascinating collection of street art from around the world, with mobile apps and audio tours.

Searching Art Project is powerful and seamless by keyword, collection, artist, or artwork. Facets make it possible to refine a keyword search in several ways, including place, person, and medium.

When viewing an individual work of art, users can peruse a wealth of information provided by partner museums, such as descriptions, biographical information about the artist, physical dimensions, and provenance. Zooming in to explore detail demonstrates the exceptional quality of the images. Many of the partner museums have one or more artworks captured at ultra-high resolution. These gigapixel images include treasures such as Van Gogh's "The Starry Night," Klimt's "The Kiss," and Chagall's ceiling panels for the Paris Opéra. The ability to zoom in and examine the intricacies of such images is truly breathtaking.

Joni R. Roberts is associate university librarian for public services and collection development at Willamette University, email: jroberts@willamette.edu, and Carol A. Drost is associate university librarian for technical services at Willamette University, email: cdrost@willamette.edu

The Museum View option uses Google's Street View technology to provide virtual tours of museums. Individual artworks are connected to floor plans, so that users can seamlessly transition from viewing an item to seeing it in context in the gallery and vice versa.

Art Project has several additional interactive features. Users can compare two images side by side, save images and create personal galleries, and share with friends on social networks.

What's not to like? Critics express unease with the ever-expanding reach of Google and with its incursion into the cultural heritage sector, as well as concern that such initiatives threaten the existence of physical museums. Amit Sood, Art Project's founder, counters that Google has been careful to address museums' concerns about rights and curation, and that Art Project is contractually noncommercial. Art Project is intended to complement and not replace the experience of viewing art in person. It is a rich and fascinating resource that should enhance art education, as well as provide museum-goers with excellent context for a visit.—*Lori Robare, University of Oregon, lrobare@uoregon.edu*

Radio Free Asia. *Access:* <http://www.rfa.org/english/>

Radio Free Asia (RFA) is a comprehensive website covering domestic news and events from Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, North Korea, Tibet, Uyghur, and Vietnam. RFA obtains its mission from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is a private nonprofit organization funded by a U.S. government grant bestowed to the Broadcasting Board of Governors. The purpose of RFA is to function as a substitute for "indigenous free media" in Asian countries. RFA is a transparent organization, openly citing its mission and strict adherence to a journalistic code of ethics. The RFA organization has won numerous journalistic awards for reporting work found on its website.

The website divides news articles by country, but also allows users to perform keyword searches on a variety of topics. Most articles focus on politics, economics, and human rights issues in this region of the world. Particularly interesting are the subject directories that organize news articles by categories, such as “Women’s Voices,” “Under House Arrest,” and “Parallel Thoughts.”

RFA offers links to local native language radio broadcasts in the region and provides a schedule for each country’s newscasts. These radio broadcasts try to bridge the digital divide and communicate unbiased news and events in Asian countries that don’t provide free media and information to their citizens. The website also provides monthly reports highlighting news in the region.

The RFA website supports a variety of media formats, including RSS, videos, multimedia, and ebooks. The open-access ebook collection covers topics such as cultural identity, political revolutions, human trafficking, and the unique experiences of women who live in authoritarian regimes. RFA ebooks are accessible via a variety of online platforms and contain images, video footage, and artwork.

RFA, in and of itself, is an interesting snapshot into the struggles encountered by journalists and citizens alike under information-oppressive regimes. Overall, RFA is an excellent source for potentially censored news from a global region where journalists struggle to provide free and impartial information and news.—*Molly Susan Mathias, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, mathiasm@uwm.edu*

Scott Polar Research Institute. Access: <http://www.spri.cam.ac.uk/>.

The Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI) affiliated with the University of Cambridge, describes itself as a “world-leading research and information centre for the study of the polar and cold regions.” SPRI defines these regions as the “Arctic and Antarctic and all parts of the world where ice, snow, and permafrost are to be found.”

Indeed, SPRI’s website is something of a goldmine for polar research, although much of

its content may be more appropriate for more advanced researchers. For instance, undergraduate students may not have the patience or the research acumen to pore through the extensive SPRI Polar Directory, which includes contact information for libraries, museums, and relevant organizations for 43 countries, helpfully broken down by type of institution and geographic area. Such a directory could prove invaluable for a researcher looking to establish contacts with international colleagues.

Another resource likely more useful for advanced researchers is the SPRILIB bibliographic database, maintained by the SPRI Library. While the professional indexing and abstracting produces highly relevant content, the interface can be buggy, and is not very user-friendly.

One of the more accessible features of the website is the wonderful online catalog of the SPRI Picture Library, an impressive and comprehensive collection of digitized photographs ranging from early historical expeditions to modern fieldwork. The strength of the Picture Library is the nearly 20,000 images from polar expeditions between 1845 and 1960, with highly descriptive metadata at the collection and image level. These images may be viewed online with watermarks in moderately high resolution, and would be excellent primary resources for those interested in the history of science and exploration in the Polar Regions. The multiple avenues of access may confuse novice searchers, so students would do better to browse via the “Picture library catalogue” rather than search using the tool labeled “Searchable database.” Contact information is provided for those who wish to order prints or license images for commercial use or for use in displays or exhibitions.

Academic librarians should keep SPRI in mind as a resource for students seeking photographs of historical polar expeditions, and as a place to refer researchers with more complex research needs who are willing to undertake the extra legwork of tracking down the publications and grey literature listed on the site.—*Eli Gandour-Rood, University of Puget Sound, egandourrood@pugetsound.edu* 