

OSCI User Study

The Getty Foundation thanks Frankly, Green + Webb digital consultancy for granting permission to share this report on the firm's evaluation of the OSCI catalogues produced by SFMOMA and the Walker Art Center. Originally presented at 2016 Museums and the Web conference by Laura Mann.

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Online Scholarly Catalogues: Data and Insights from OSCI

MWXX
April 2016



Frankly, Green + Webb

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Rauschenberg Research Project



Robert Rauschenberg at work in his Lafayette Street studio, New York, 1968. Courtesy the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation; photo: Shunk-Kender; © the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation

The Rauschenberg Research Project provides free worldwide access to a wealth of scholarly research and documentation relating to artworks by Robert Rauschenberg in SFMOMA's permanent collection. The museum's holdings span the artist's career from 1949 to 1998 and include Combines, sculptures, paintings, photographs, and prints and other works on paper. A rich range of materials surrounds the featured works, including newly commissioned essays, numerous images, interview footage, artist's statements, conservation reports, and archival materials, which together provide new insights into the artist's work. These resources may be accessed through the orientation points below. The Rauschenberg Research Project was produced by SFMOMA under the auspices of the Getty Foundation's Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative, with the support of the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.

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Leadership support for the Rauschenberg Research Project is provided by The Getty Foundation.
Generous support is provided by the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.

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About the Project

[What's in This Catalogue?](#)[Why Rauschenberg?](#)[Citations and Downloads](#)[Acknowledgments](#)[More Links and Info](#)

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Works in the Rauschenberg Research Project



COLLECTIONS ▾

Collections Living Collections Catalogue



BROWSE ART & ARTISTS

LIVING COLLECTIONS CATALOGUE

Each volume of the *Living Collections Catalogue* includes media-rich essays on broader themes as well as in-depth investigations of specific works of art. Featured works link to records in the Walker's collections database, where additional information about the artists and artworks is available. Implicit in the concept of a "living catalogue" is the dynamic nature of an online volume about the Walker's collections. Information in the database is updated as new research and presentations occur, while essays are versioned and citable with assurances of a permanent address to the information referenced.

MORE ▾



QUESTIONS

1. Reach
2. Use
3. Impact of digital
4. Audience perception
5. Drivers and barriers to success

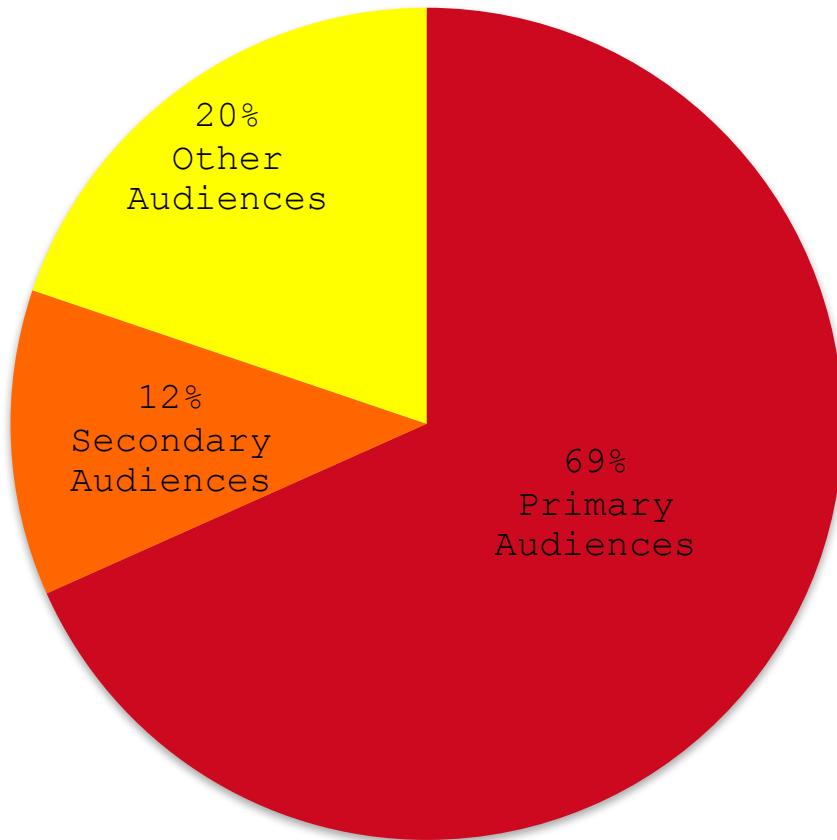
What We Did

1. Online survey
2. Interviews with users and stakeholders
3. Usability testing
4. Google Analytics

Good News

1. Reaching the scholarly audience
2. Used for research and teaching
3. A trusted source
4. A new form

Reaching the target audience of scholars



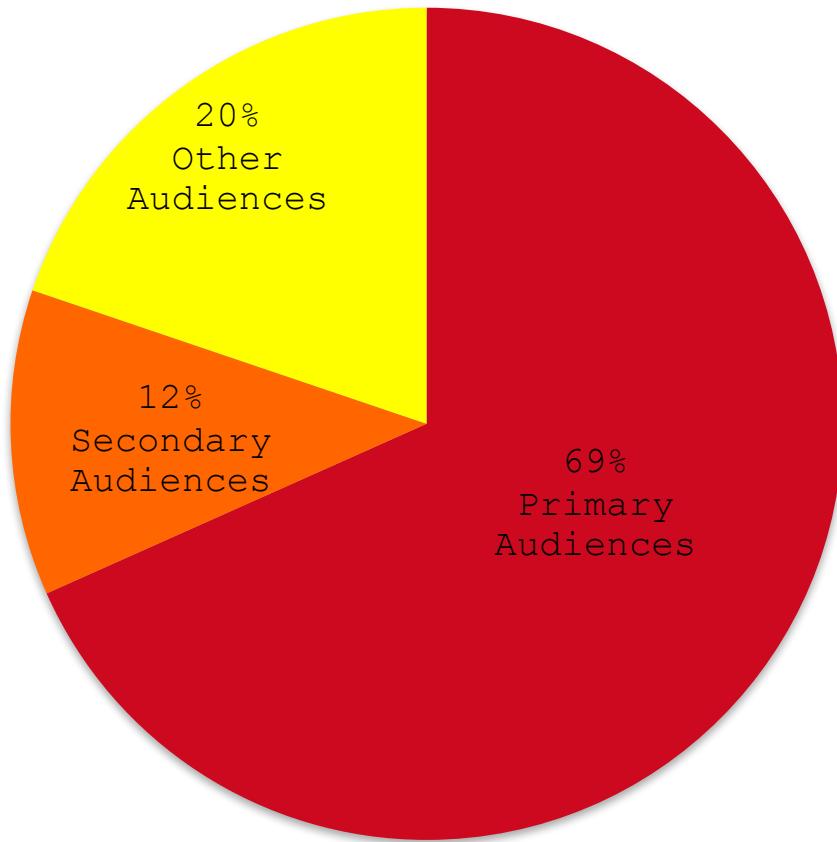
69% Primary Audiences

- 25% Graduate students
- 18% Professors
- 16% Curators
- 6% Indep scholars
- 4% Librarians

RRP - Q: What best describes you?

N=51

It's also reaching secondary and wider audiences



69% Primary Audiences

- 25% Graduate students
- 18% Professors
- 16% Curators
- 6% Indep scholars
- 4% Librarians

12% Secondary Audiences

- 10% Museum educators
- 2% Undergraduates

20% Other Audiences

- 10% Other
- 8% Personal interest
- 2% Digital Media/e-publishing

Q: What best describes you?

Frankly, Green + Webb

N=51

@lhmann @franklygw

Greater and more diverse reach than
a comparable print catalogue

9,000 – 25,000

Unique visitors in first 6 months

Greater and more diverse reach than
a comparable print catalogue

500

Museum, university and
library network domains
from around the world

Greater and more diverse reach than
a comparable print catalogue

55%

of traffic to Walker's *On
Performativity* catalogue
is from outside the US

How are users finding the online catalogues?

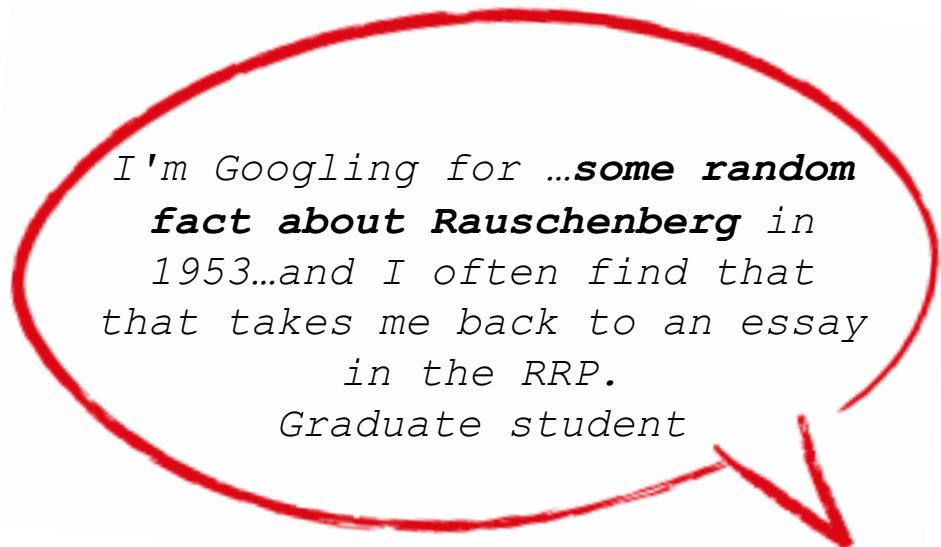
Google is the key to
discoverability

45%

Traffic referred by
Google

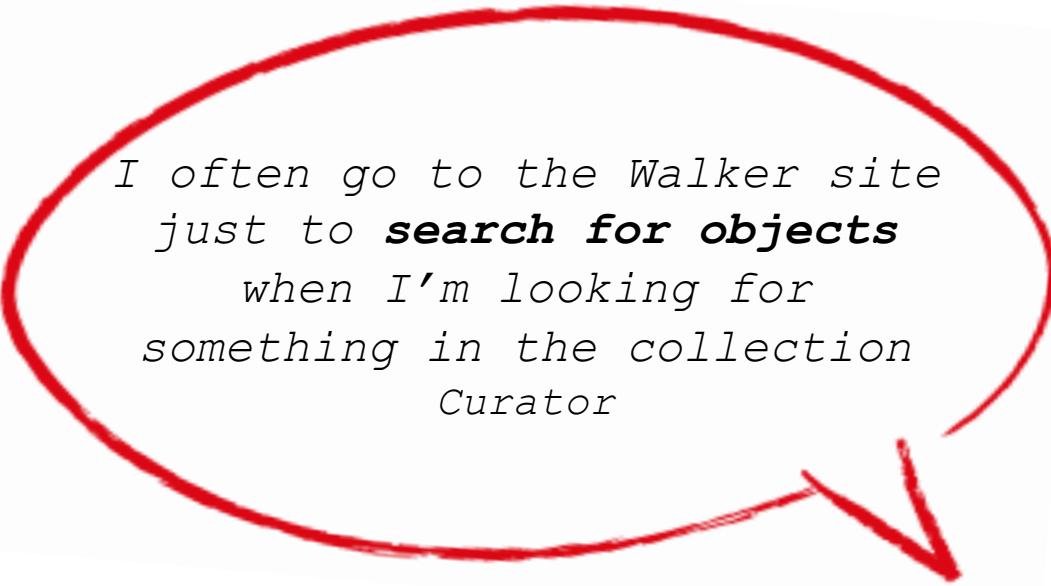
Google is the key to the discoverability of the catalogues

1. General research
2. Narrow searches



*I'm Googling for ...**some random fact about Rauschenberg** in 1953...and I often find that that takes me back to an essay in the RRP.
Graduate student*

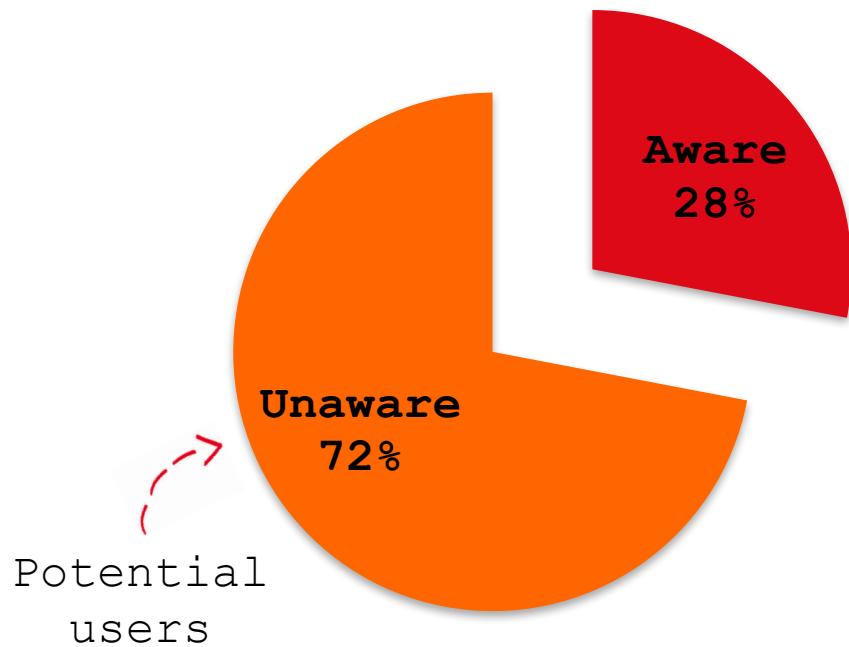
But the museum website is also key
to discoverability



*I often go to the Walker site
just to **search for objects**
when I'm looking for
something in the collection
Curator*

Potential for expanding reach

Awareness of Living Collections Catalogue



Where do scholars expect to find
online catalogues?

Where do scholars expect to find
online catalogues?

...in academic databases?



Where do scholars expect to find
the catalogues?

...at the library

...it's **parallel to a**
huge book...I might expect to
see it listed instead **in**
the actual [university]
library where they're
cataloguing books...
Graduate student

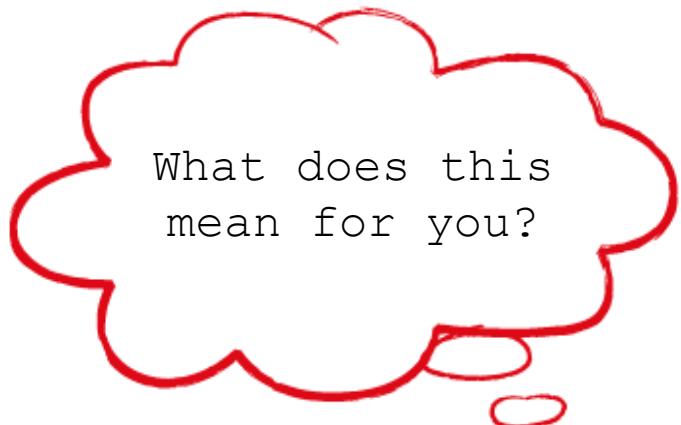


But...there's **no**
standardized
process for
adding digital
publications to
library
catalogues

A need for an ongoing communications program

*...I would like an email from [the museum] **every time a new module is loaded** or a new volume published*

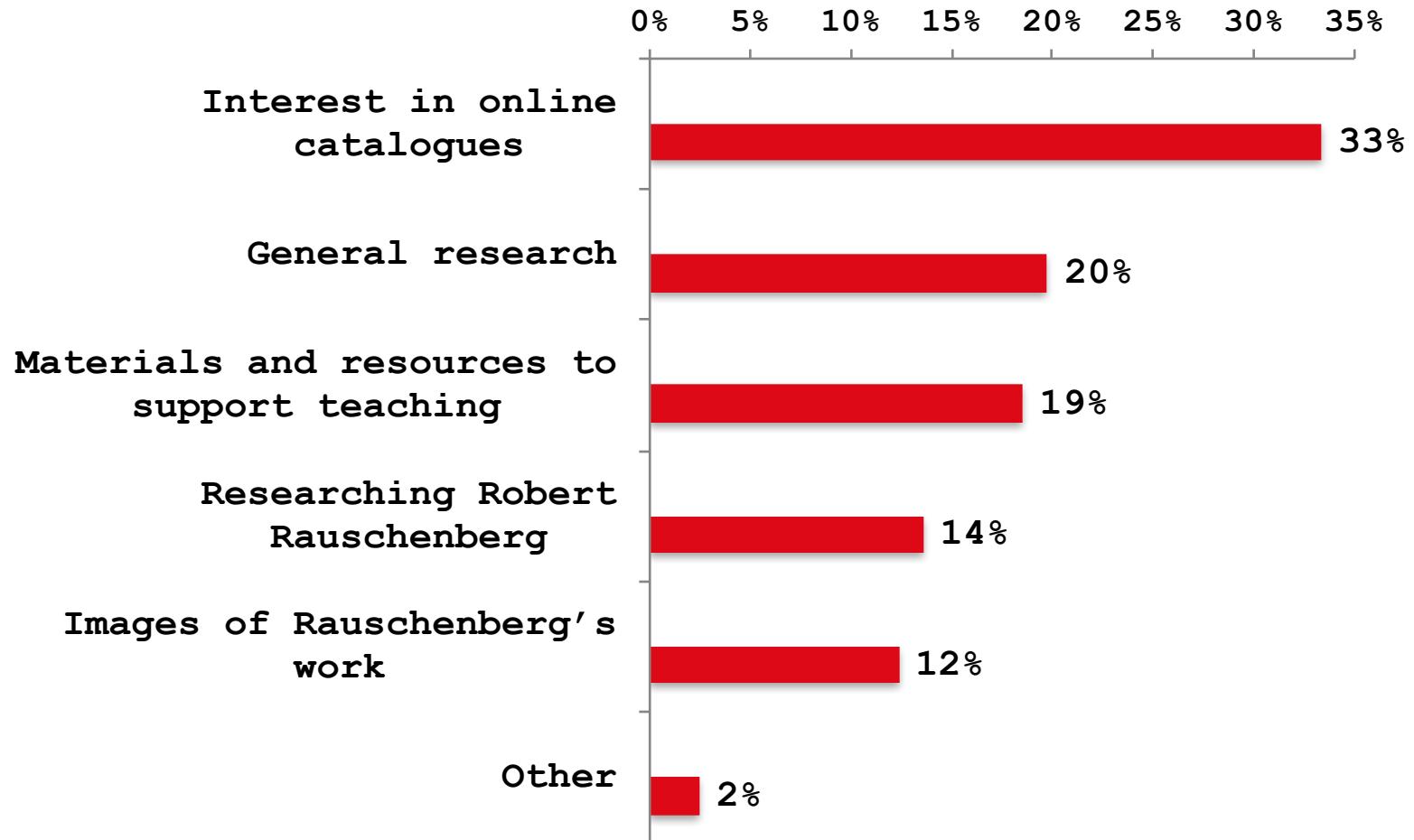
Art
Librarian



- SEO is critical to the findability
- Get an ISBN number
- Art librarians are a target audience
- Generating awareness and traffic requires an ongoing communications program
- Promoting online publications may be a new museum role

How are the catalogues being used?

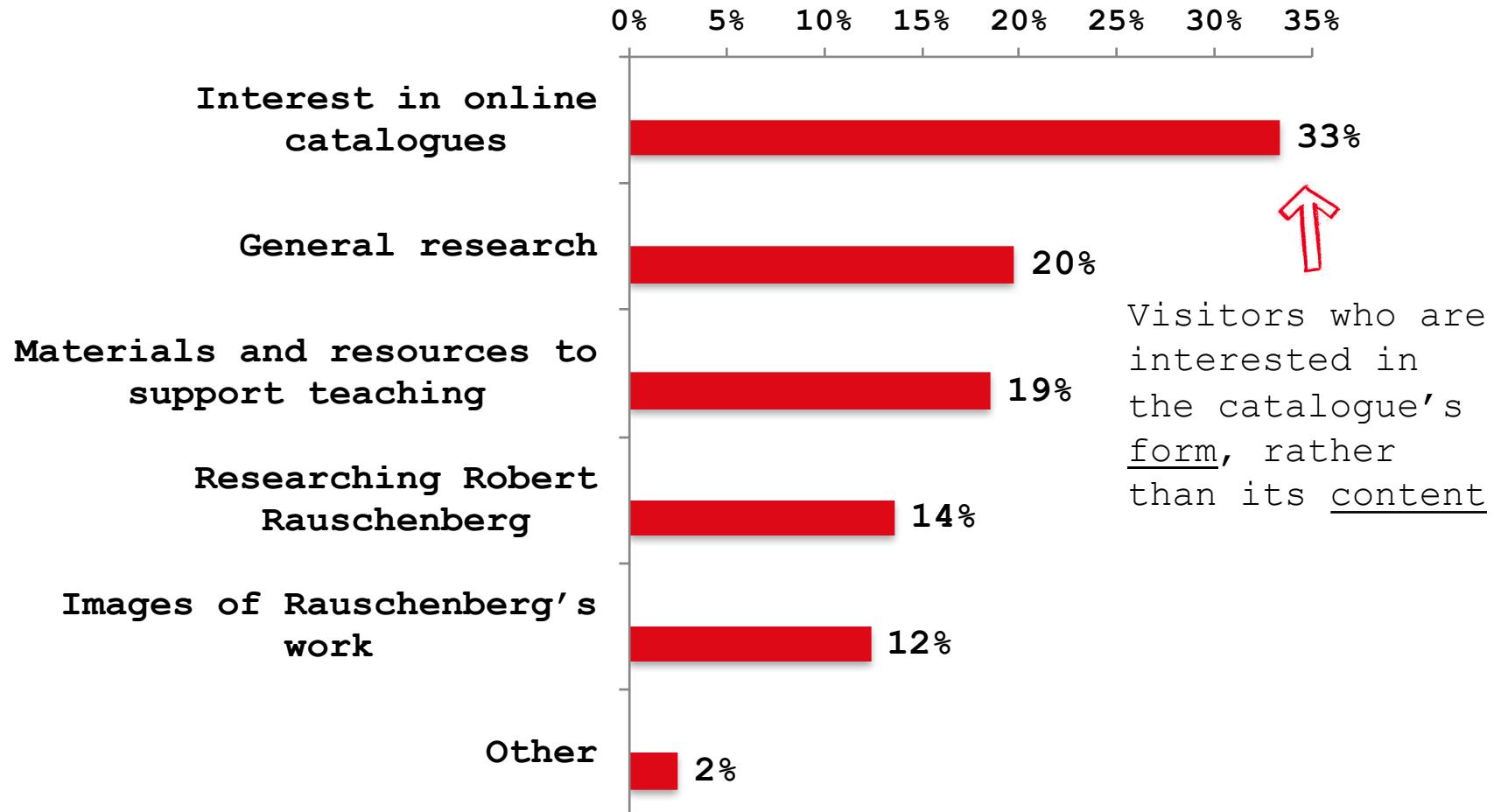
How are the catalogues being used?



Q: What were your reasons for visiting/using the Rauschenberg Research Project online? (Please select all that apply)

N=81

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N=81

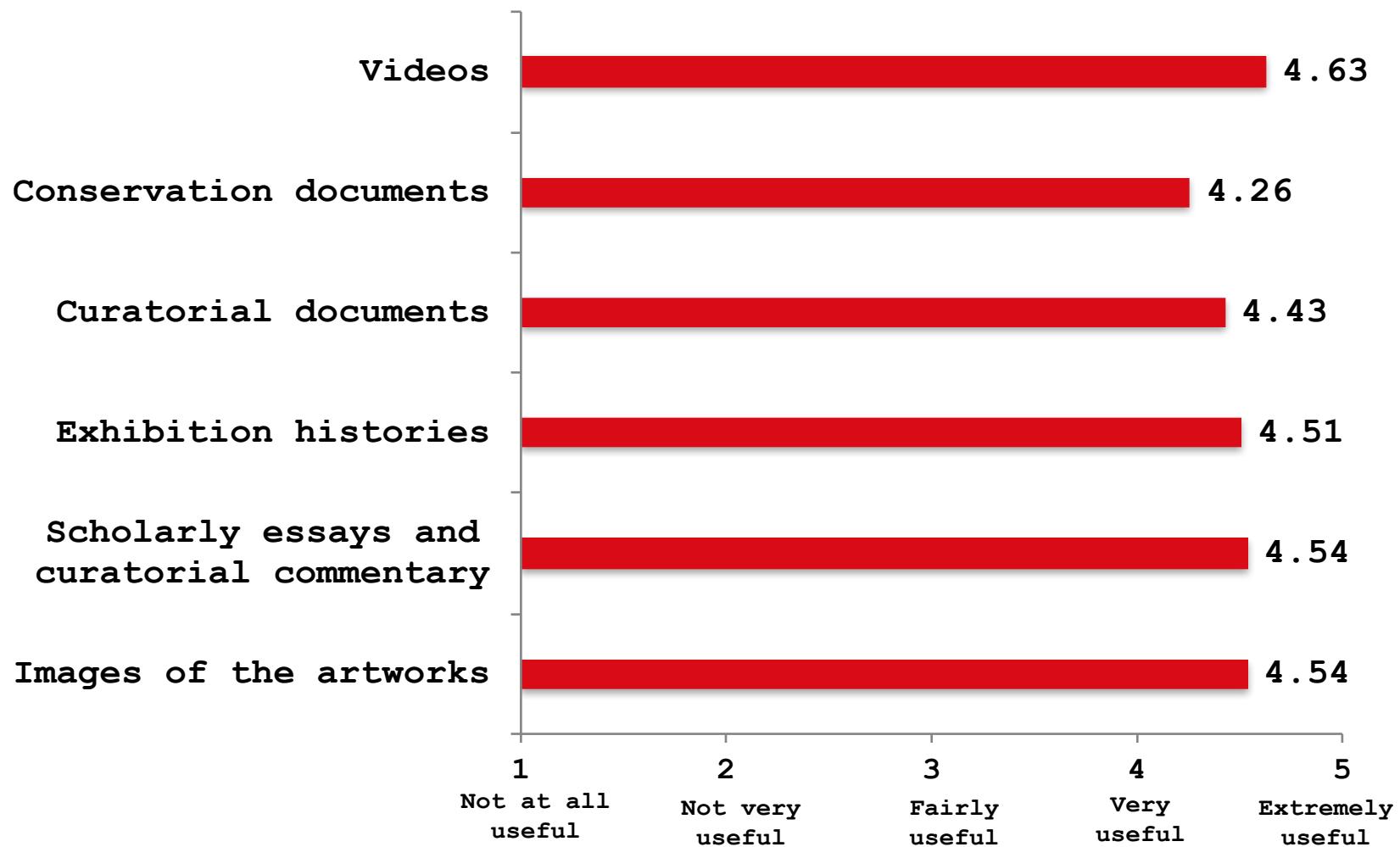
Deep engagement

15%

Of RRP visitors have made
more than

> 9 visits

Scholars rate catalogue content very highly



Q: "How do you rate the content of the Rauschenberg Research Project on a scale of 1-5 where 1 is not at all useful and 5 is extremely useful?"

N=35

Praise for usefulness, quality, depth and breadth of catalogue content

98%

of the primary audience said they were likely to use the RRP for any future research on Rauschenberg

A deeper level of access to museum information

► [Ownership, Exhibition, and Publication Histories](#)

▼ [Marks and Inscriptions](#)

Related to This Artwork

Highlights

Essay
[Untitled \[glossy black painting\]](#)
By Caitlin Haskell

Conservation Document
[Conservation treatment report relating to Robert Rauschenberg's Untitled \[glossy black painting\],...](#)

Research Materials [View all](#)

[Views of This Artwork \(11\)](#)
[Commentary + Interviews \(0\)](#)
[Museum Files \(4\)](#)

Multimedia

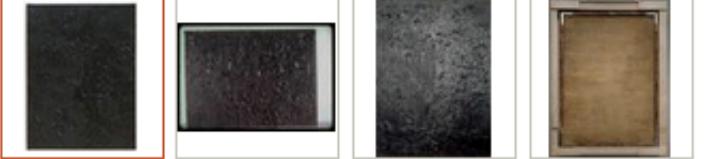
Videos

[Conservation video relating to Robert Rauschenberg's Untitled \[glossy black painting\], 2012](#) [PLAY +](#)

Recto: None

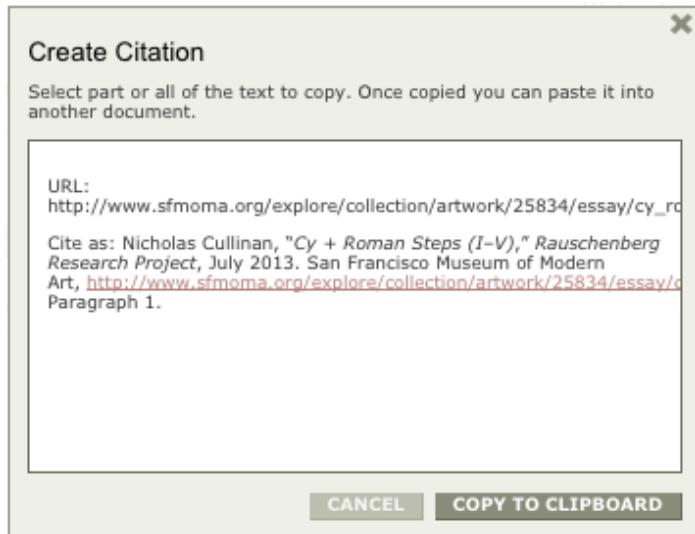
Verso: Upper left corner brace bears multiple measurements, arrows, and markings in pencil; upper right corner brace, inscription in pencil: "RAUSCHENBERG 61 FULTON ST. NYC" (additional pencil inscription: "TOP" with "[up arrow]" crossed out; another inscription in pencil is crossed out and illegible); lower left corner brace, inscription in pencil: "TOP" (inscription upside down); lower right corner brace, inscription in pencil: "RAUSCHENBERG 61 FULTON ST. NYC" (inscription upside down); additional pencil

Views of the Artwork [View all \(11\)](#)



Features for the academic audience

1. Citation tools
2. Downloadability



[Recommended format for citation is] super super important...in terms of **training our students** in research and documentation

Professor

Content + Downloadability = Value

Downloads

-  [Artwork Image](#) (688k JPG)
-  [Artwork Essay](#) (5,090k PDF)
-  [Artwork Information](#) (84k PDF)
-  [All Downloads](#) (5,754k ZIP)

Allowing **scholars** access to all of the "extras" is amazing...curatorial and conservation documents, interviews, multiple views... personal photos, etc. Perhaps the most useful aspect...is ...that users can **download these resources** to their own computers.
Independent scholar

Distinctive vision and voice

There can be a tendency on the web for museums to strike a kind of neutral, **very bland quasi-bureaucratic tone** when they talk about their work. These **texts had a lot of personality to them** more so than you usually see in a museum frame and a kind of **independent scholarly seriousness** that I appreciated.

Professor

And new types of scholarship

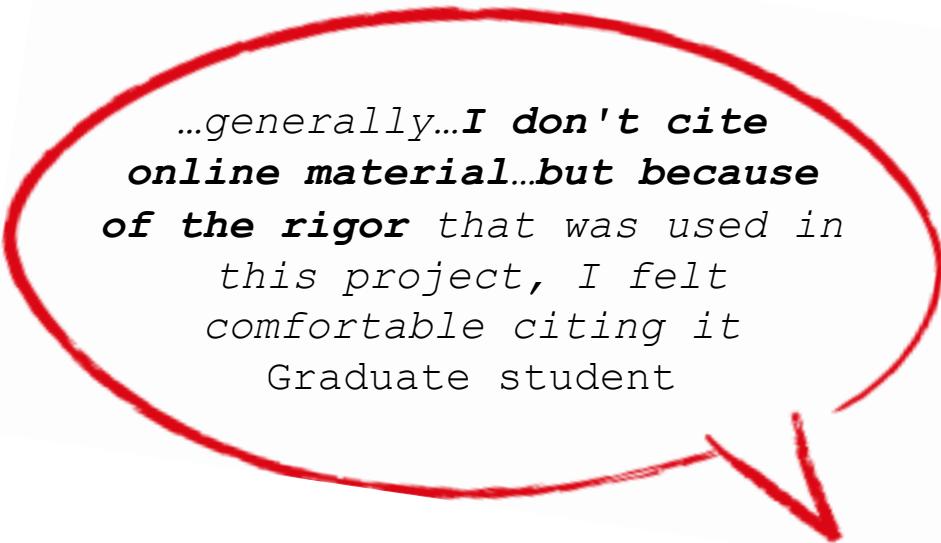
...seems **somewhat unique** in the aggregation
of very high quality images...detailed
object information and particular essays
geared toward those objects...its **a new**
kind of form

Graduate student

The audience trusted the catalogues as scholarly sources

30%

indicated that they were very likely or extremely likely **to cite the LCC** in future research or publications



...generally...**I don't cite online material...but because of the rigor** that was used in this project, I felt comfortable citing it
Graduate student

The audience trusted the catalogues as scholarly sources

85%

of the primary audience that had used the LCC rated it as a very credible or extremely credible place
to have their own work published

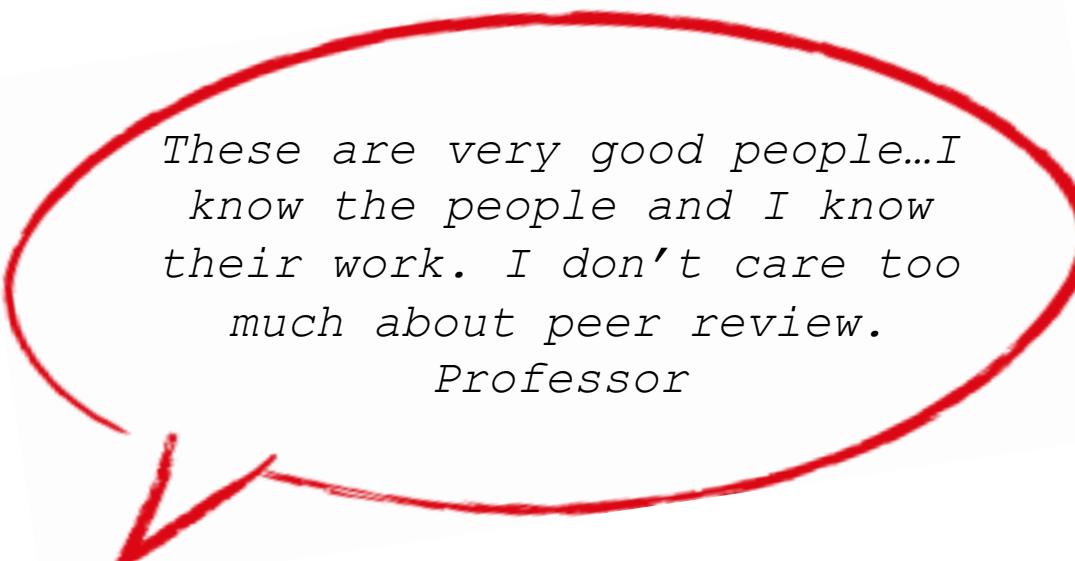
Signifiers of academic authority

1. Institutional brand
2. Well-known contributors
3. Proper academic formatting and citations of scholarly essays

*...presents
itself as something
that makes me **trust**
it to a very high
standard*

Curator

Prestigious contributors matter more than peer review



These are very good people...I know the people and I know their work. I don't care too much about peer review.

Professor

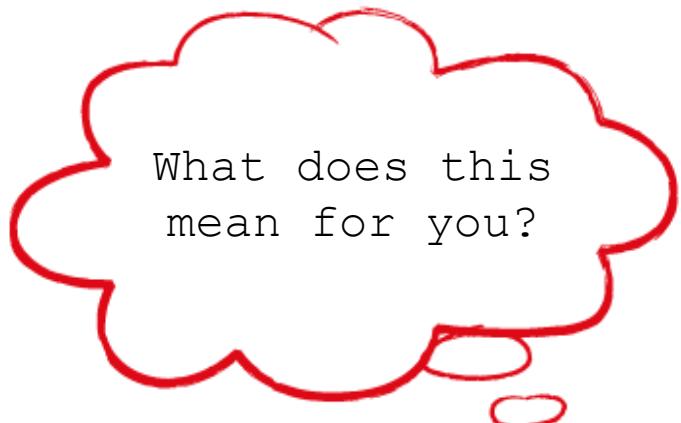
The catalogues are having an impact on scholarship

*The [RRP] **was a huge asset for my [Masters] paper...***

Graduate student

*I am writing my dissertation on the work of Allan Kaprow, and although **I wasn't planning to write about Mushroom**, I will, since the photographs and especially the letters [in On Performativity] enable me to deal with the happening in a nuanced, substantial way.*

Graduate student



- Online catalogues need specialized functionality to meet the needs of a scholarly audience
- The features support working process and signify academic authority
- Online catalogues offer opportunities for innovation in content and form
- Invest your resources in securing well-known contributors

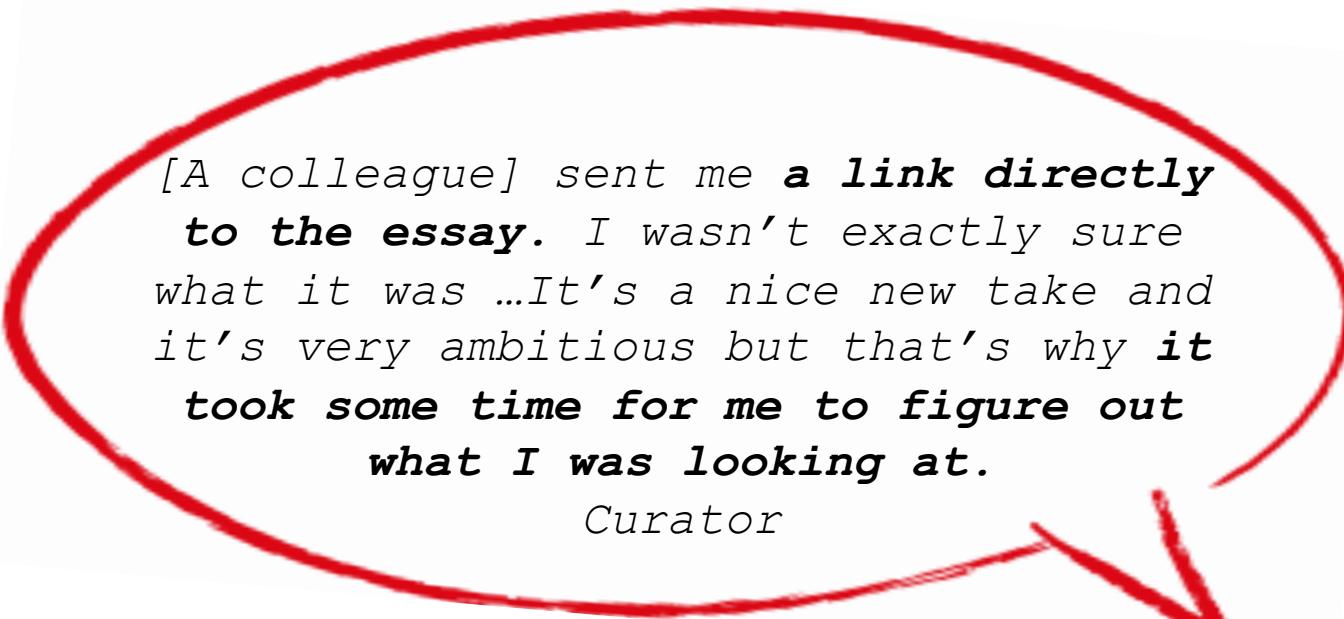
Challenges

1. Usability
2. Structure and boundaries
3. Permanence
4. Status

Usability challenge: Most users don't land on the home page

75%

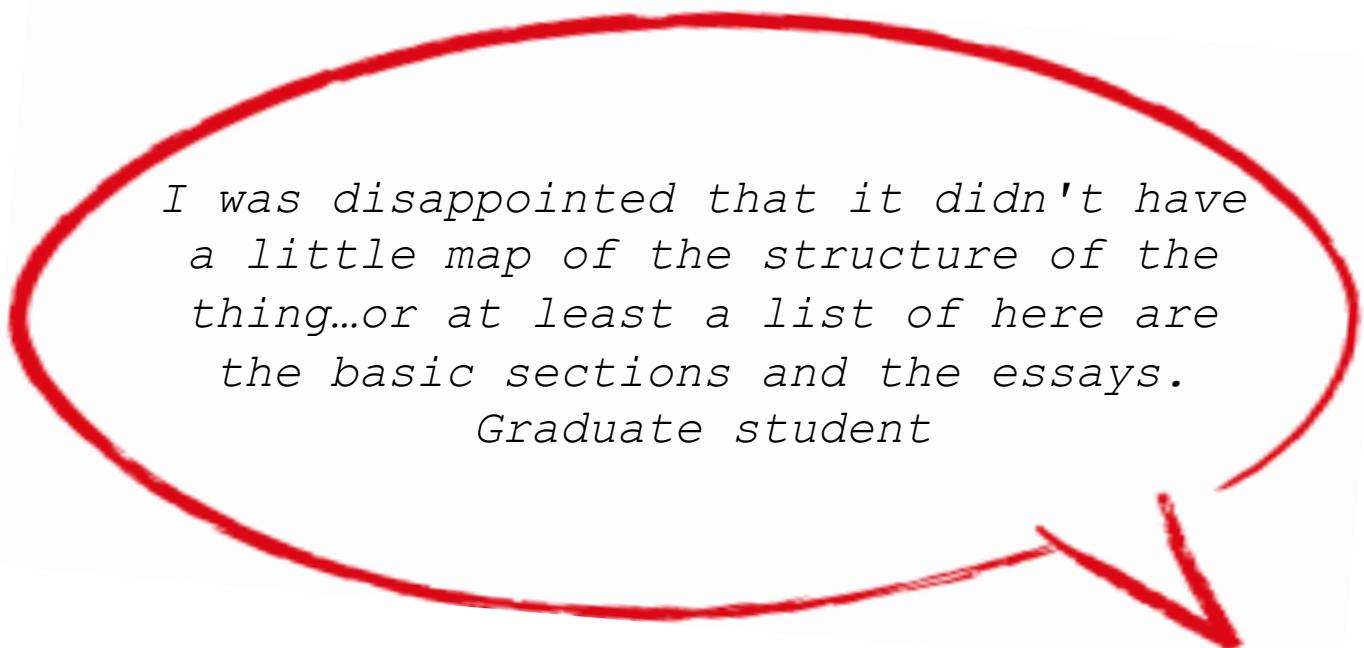
Enter through an essay



[A colleague] sent me **a link directly to the essay**. I wasn't exactly sure what it was ...It's a nice new take and it's very ambitious but that's why **it took some time for me to figure out what I was looking at.**

Curator

Usability challenge: how do we communicate the scale of an online publication?



I was disappointed that it didn't have a little map of the structure of the thing...or at least a list of here are the basic sections and the essays.

Graduate student

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We've temporarily moved...everywhere.

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SEARCH

Overview | Our Collection | Multimedia | SFMOMA's Open Space | Social Media

About the Artist | Works by the Artist | Rauschenberg Research Project

RAUSCHENBERG RESEARCH PROJECT



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Robert Rauschenberg at work in his Lafayette Street studio, New York, 1968. Courtesy the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation; photo: Shunk-Kender; © The Roy Lichtenstein Foundation

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The Getty Foundation

Rauschenberg Research Project

SFMOMA
on the go

We've temporarily moved...everywhere.

VISIT | EXHIBITIONS + EVENTS | EXPLORE MODERN ART | ABOUT US | GET INVOLVED | OUR EXPANSION | SHOP

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Overview | Our Collection | Multimedia | SFMOMA's Open Space | For Educators

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About the Artwork | About the Artist | Works by the Artist | Rauschenberg Research Project Home

Overview | Essay | Research Materials

Robert Rauschenberg
American (Port Arthur, Texas, 1925 – 2008, Captiva, Florida)

Collection
1954/1955
Painting | oil, paper, fabric, wood, and metal on canvas

Now on view in the exhibition Pop Artists from the Anderson Collection at SFMOMA at Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University



 View detail |  Download

Robert Rauschenberg, *Collection*, 1954/1955; oil, paper, fabric, wood, and metal on canvas, 80 in. x 96 in. x 3 1/2 in. (203.2 cm x 243.84 cm x 8.89 cm); Collection SFMOMA, Gift of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson; © Robert Rauschenberg Foundation / Licensed by

Related to This Artwork

Highlights

 [Essay Collection](#)
By Sarah Roberts

 [Interview](#)
Robert Rauschenberg discusses Collection at SFMOMA, May 6, 1999

 [Archival Image](#)
Installation view of Robert Rauschenberg's Collection, Charles Egan Gallery, New York, 1954–1955

Research Materials [View all](#)

- [Views of This Artwork \(16\)](#)
- [Commentary + Interviews \(7\)](#)
- [Museum Files \(8\)](#)

Multimedia

Videos

- [Robert Rauschenberg discusses Collection at SFMOMA, May 6, 1999](#) 
- [Robert Rauschenberg discusses his work](#) 
- [Video documenting SFMOMA Conservation treatment of Robert Rauschenberg's Collection, 2012](#) 

Audio

- [Conserving Rauschenberg](#) 

Related to This Artist

Selected Artworks [View all](#)

Boundaries and structure: where does an online publication begin and end?

***Where is the container
that makes this into a separate
publication? Does it bleed out into
the rest of the website?...where
does the publication begin and where
does it end? And how do you tell
when you're in it or not in it?***

Graduate student



COLLECTIONS ▾

Collections Living Collections Catalogue



BROWSE ART & ARTISTS

LIVING COLLECTIONS CATALOGUE

Each volume of the *Living Collections Catalogue* includes media-rich essays on broader themes as well as in-depth investigations of specific works of art. Featured works link to records in the Walker's collections database, where additional information about the artists and artworks is available. Implicit in the concept of a "living catalogue" is the dynamic nature of an online volume about the Walker's collections. Information in the database is updated as new research and presentations occur, while essays are versioned and citable with assurances of a permanent address to the information referenced.

MORE ▾



Permanence: will this be here
in 20 years?

Permanence: will this be here in 20 years?

*20 years from now,
will we be able to read this
data? ...If it's in a library
catalogue...will that URL be
stable?*

Graduate student

*if you cite something
there's **the possibility**
that it would disappear.
There's a lot of scholarly
nervousness about that*

Graduate student

Status: what is the value of
an online scholarly catalogue?

Status: what is the value of an online scholarly catalogue?



*It doesn't feel as prestigious [as a printed catalogue] but I think that's changing...I wouldn't hesitate **to sign on to a project that was digital***

Curator

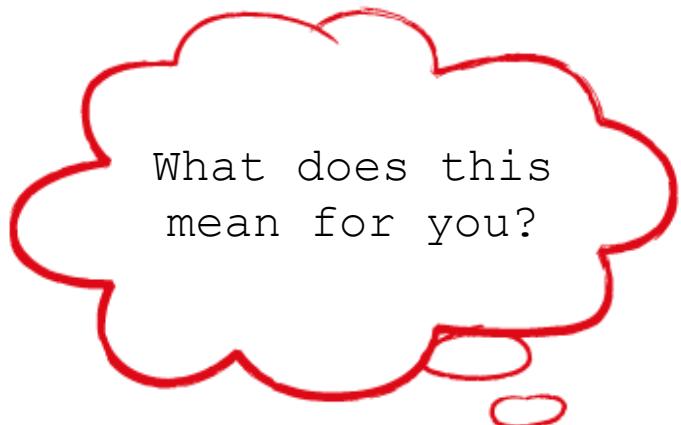
Status: what is the value of an online scholarly catalogue?

I have published in museum publications before. And... what I've been told is that **they don't count towards tenure review**...they...aren't considered tenure-worthy.

But...**the RRP that's some new territory I think...**
Graduate student

Status: what is the value of an online scholarly catalogue?

*It changed my opinion...
it served for me as **an**
**example of what's
possible.***
Graduate student



- Clear boundaries need to be balanced with findability
- Online catalogues need to be permanent, updatable and archival
- Perceptions of online catalogues are shaped by larger issues of status and publication record in the academic community

I



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Public Archives

<http://www.flickr.com/commons>

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