

**“What’s Out There?”**  
**A Baseline Review of Online Resources for the Conservation Community**

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*Charting the Digital Landscape of the Conservation Profession*

A project of the  
The Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation  
of Historic and Artistic Works (FAIC)

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FAIC welcomes comments on this report, as well as input into the yearlong project of which it is a part. See the project website at: [www.conservation-us.org/digital\\_landscape](http://www.conservation-us.org/digital_landscape) for further information or contact [epourchot@conservation-us.org](mailto:epourchot@conservation-us.org).

In 2014, The Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC) received funding<sup>1</sup> to explore the digital landscape of the conservation profession. FAIC is investigating this landscape to better understand its breadth and complexity, and to identify areas critical to the conservation community both now and into the future. Throughout 2014 and early 2015, FAIC will be conducting background research and interviews, implementing a community survey, and holding forums and focused discussions to gather data and insights about digital integration in the field.

This report details the findings of one of the information-gathering efforts of this project: an examination of the types of online resources currently used in the profession. Conservators have been creating and using online resources for years, but collective knowledge about the extent and breadth of these resources has been speculative. What types of resources are in this space? To explore this digital landscape, a baseline is needed of the information space that conservators currently navigate. This baseline will help lay the groundwork for building or rebuilding that space in ways that better serve and support the profession.

## **Goals and Methodology**

Investigations of digital resources can quickly become unwieldy. A review of one resource often leads to dozens more, drawing one into a circuitous path that can be hard to disentangle. Moreover, any attempt at a comprehensive review, while a noble idea, is itself a futile endeavor. The plethora of resources, the inability to predict what may or may not be a useful resource for the profession, and the changing nature of the online environment make such an effort untenable.

The goal of this study was to get a *reasonable* idea of the breadth and range of online resources relevant to the profession. The challenge was to do so in a way that yielded viable results in a *realistic* timeframe. To this end, we pursued a strategy of reviewing as many online conservation-related resources as possible within a limited timeframe (July through September 2014). The review process involved subjectively assessing each resource's content and format, and then grouping resources into broad categories. As more resources were reviewed, categories were refined and revised in an iterative manner until the resources encountered consistently fit into a set configuration of categories. We recognize that this strategy was not scientific, nor did it follow organizational principles used by the library and information science professions. However, it did allow us to quickly assess a large number of resources and identify the broad areas that these resources address.

### *The Resources*

Approximately 500 online resources were reviewed in a 12-week period. Resources were identified

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from the following sources:

- AIC/FAIC's key online resources (CoOL, ConsDistList)<sup>2</sup>
- Bookmark lists obtained from conservators
- Project survey<sup>3</sup>
- Social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Serendipitous discovery

The resources vary in scope from large encyclopedic sites like CoOL to highly specialized, stand-alone documents (e.g., "*Soot Particles: A Procedural Guide for Containing and Removing Wildfire-Caused Soot in Buildings.*"<sup>4</sup>). They span multiple formats (e.g., text, audio, video, images, databases) and are found on widely variable platforms (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, JSTOR, Wikipedia). Their primary audiences include conservators and professionals allied with the field (e.g., chemists, forensic scientists, trade/craftsmen) as well as institutional staff from museums, libraries, and heritage groups. A large number of resources, especially those developed by vendors, independent conservators, and preservationists, serve conservators *and* the general public.

The creators of these resources are as diverse as the audiences they serve. The commercial sector is as likely as the nonprofit sector to offer relevant online content to the conservation community. Individual artists, conservators, scientists, archaeologists, and software developers create resources that are highly valued by those in the profession. The manufacturing and services sector, with its trade literature and information, offers key resources for the field. Museum conservation departments and university departments/laboratories provide valuable research and treatment information online. And government offices, NGOs, funders, and granting agencies generate a large number of materials critical to the profession, often in the guise of training resources and guidelines, emergency response measures, and funding opportunities.

### *The Categorization Process*

As the online resources were examined, they were grouped into high-level categories<sup>5</sup> initially constructed by a reviewer based on her determination of a resource's audience, content, and use. While the categorization process was subjective, its guiding principle was to identify the *key purpose of the resource* and categorize it accordingly. For example, a resource such as the American Institute

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<sup>2</sup> Conservation OnLine <http://cool.conservation-us.org/>; Conservation DistList <http://cool.conservation-us.org/byform/mailling-lists/cdl/>

<sup>3</sup> Survey participants were asked to identify the online resources they most frequently use. See: The Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works. 2014. *Charting the Digital Landscape of the Conservation Profession, Survey Results*, August 2014. Prepared by AWP Research. 81 pp. <http://www.conservation-us.org/docs/default-source/reports/the-digiital-landscape-of-conservation-survey-report.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.genesisrestorations.com/support-contact/resources/Wildfire\\_Soot\\_Part particulate\\_Removal.pdf](http://www.genesisrestorations.com/support-contact/resources/Wildfire_Soot_Part particulate_Removal.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Each category is independent of all others: i.e., there is no relationship or hierarchy among the categories.

for Conservation (AIC) website can be categorized in myriad ways. The site contains a wealth of diverse content created by AIC and others. It serves a large, varied constituency who use the site for different purposes. Nevertheless the site's *primary purpose* is to serve as the central resource of a professional membership organization, so it is categorized in the category of "National and International Professional Organizations." Similarly, the National Park Service website provides conservation-rich resources for multiple audiences, but it is first and foremost a government agency with legislative oversight of the national parks in the US. As such, it falls in the category of "Government Offices and Regional Centers."

## Results

A total of 24 categories emerged during the course of the resource review.<sup>6</sup> These categories are:

### *Allied Professional Organizations*

Organizations representing professional fields, disciplines, or groups (i.e. registrars, laboratory safety) with whom conservators collaborate and who inform the practice of conservation

### *Articles*

Articles, bibliographies, and reviews from digitized periodicals, popular press, or from miscellaneous conservation and non-conservation sources

### *Blogs and Information Streams*

Blogs, RSS feeds, Twitter streams, Instagram, Tumblr accounts, and other information streams that focus on conservation, preservation, and heritage management

### *Collaborative Research and Project Documentation*

Documentation of conservation projects at archaeological or historic sites, with specific collections or object/structure groups, or within technical areas of expertise

### *Conference Proceedings*

Information on conferences and meetings past and present; includes proceedings, schedules, calls for papers, etc.

### *Digitization and Digital Resource Management*

Digitization guides and related funding opportunities; digital archives management

### *Disaster Management*

Information on emergency planning and preparedness and disaster recovery

### *Education and Training*

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<sup>6</sup> Examples for each category are listed in Appendix A

Graduate training programs, continuing education, workshops, and international training initiatives

*E-publications*

Digital and digitized newsletters, magazines, journals, documents, and books for the general public and specific audiences

*Government Offices and Regional Centers*

Tribal and national government offices concerned with preservation and conservation; government and private regional centers for conservation

*Image and Collections Databases*

Searchable databases of museums; images and object collections

*Institutional Conservation Labs and Departments*

Websites representing conservation labs associated with specific institutions (i.e. museums, universities, etc.)

*Material-specific Resources*

Resources related to unique material specialties within conservation (i.e. books and paper, electronic media, paintings, natural history collections, etc.) as well as conservation science

*National and International Professional Organizations*

Professional conservation organizations within a country and conservation organizations that have an international membership and arena of operations

*Online Communities and Collaborative Resources*

Forums, groups, listservs, social media groups, and virtual communities in conservation and allied fields

*Preventive Conservation*

Resources on preventive conservation, including storage and handling; information about materials used for handling, storage, exhibition, and conservation

*Private Practitioners' Sites*

Websites promoting services and resources provided by conservators in private practice

*Professional Development Opportunities*

Employment and funding opportunities for conservators

*Public Outreach and Activism*

Conservation and preservation projects presented for public outreach; organizations that advocate for conservation and cultural heritage preservation

### *Research Databases and Reference Materials*

Searchable databases of abstracts and full-text articles; databases of reference materials and reference images for materials identification, etc.; reference material portals

### *Software and Tools for Collaboration, Image Manipulation and Documentation*

Software used in conservation documentation, tools for online collaboration, and methods for digital manipulation for technical studies and documentation

### *Technical Studies*

Technical studies of specific pieces or groups of objects; presentations of technical information on findings, analysis, methods used, etc.

### *Treatment Documentation*

Visual and textual presentation of treatments on specific objects or groups of objects with technical information on materials and methods used; treatment reports

### *Vendor Information*

For-profit businesses providing services or supplies for conservation practice, treatment, and documentation

## **What's Missing?**

The amount and diversity of online resources useful to the profession are perceived by many to be overwhelming. In the survey conducted for this project, in the forums held to date, and in casual discussion with colleagues, conservators repeatedly voice concern about information access and overload. This review of online resources supports the basis for this belief. The online space for the conservation profession is indeed extensive and intricate, covering a wide range of categories, and offering content created and used by diverse constituencies.

At a project forum held in September 2014,<sup>7</sup> participants introduced to preliminary findings from this study used this information as a platform for discussing two related topics: important resources that are *not* online, and problems with resources that *are* online. They noted that there are key “gaps” in the online space, such as undigitized journals and articles that continue to provide important technical and preventive care information for professionals. Also missing are online archives and repositories for older conservation records (especially critical for conservators in private practice), and public interaction and engagement activities that are used successfully in other professions (e.g., crowdsourcing). Pay walled resources such as scientific journals and databases, while online, are effectively nonexistent for those in the profession who cannot afford the access fees.

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<sup>7</sup> *Charting the Digital Landscape of the Conservation Profession, Forum 2*. Sponsored by the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation and held at the Weismann Preservation Center at Harvard University, September 11-12, 2014.

When addressing current online resources, forum participants turned to issues that make the online space chaotic and difficult to navigate. Records of conservation activity (e.g., treatments, preventive care, imaging, etc.) rarely are integrated with object records, so related information in the online environment remains siloed and segmented. A more systemic issue is that online resources are poorly organized and structured for discoverability and access, and the discipline-specific standards and schema needed to address this problem are nonexistent.

### **What's Next?**

This baseline review of online resources provides FAIC with a snapshot of the online environment for the conservation community in 2014. As FAIC's "*Charting the Digital Landscape*" project continues collecting information from the field, this baseline will be considered in an ever widening context of insights that address how the discipline can create and integrate its digital resources in ways that better serve the profession.

## Appendix A: Categories with Examples

### *Allied Professional Organizations*

Organizations representing professional fields, disciplines, or groups (i.e. registrars, laboratory safety) with whom conservators collaborate and who inform the practice of conservation

Costume Society of America: <http://www.costumesocietyamerica.com/>

Mid-Atlantic Association of Forensic Scientists: <http://www.maafs.org/index.htm>

National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers: <http://www.ncshpo.org/>

Preservation Trades Network: <http://www.ptn.org>

### *Articles*

Articles, bibliographies, and reviews from digitized periodicals, popular press, or from miscellaneous conservation and non-conservation sources

How the National Gallery uses science to spot fakes and masterpieces, Robin McKie, *The Guardian*, January 19, 2010: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/theobserver/2010/jun/20/national-gallery-restoration-science>

Icon Chantry Library Subject Bibliographies:  
[http://www.icon.org.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1675&Itemid=72](http://www.icon.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1675&Itemid=72)

'BOOK REVIEW: Mark Leonard, ed. *Personal Viewpoints, Thoughts about Paintings Conservation*', JAIC Online: [http://cool.conservation-us.org/jaic/articles/jaic44-02-007\\_indx.html](http://cool.conservation-us.org/jaic/articles/jaic44-02-007_indx.html)

### *Blogs and Information Streams*

Blogs, RSS feeds, Twitter streams, Instagram, Tumblr accounts and other information streams that focus on conservation, preservation, and heritage management

AIC Conservators Converse: <http://www.conservators-converse.org>

Art Conservation Tumblr feed: <http://art-conservation.tumblr.com/>

Flying Pig Art Conservation LLC Instagram feed: <http://www.flyingpigartconservation.com/#!/instagram-feed/c5qj>

V&A Conservation RSS feed: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/feed>

### *Collaborative Research and Project Documentation*

Documentation of conservation projects at archaeological or historic sites, with specific collections or object/structure groups, or within technical areas of expertise



Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the XXth Century in Urban Management (ATRIUM Project):  
<http://www.atrium-see.eu/>

Homepage of Indoor Air Pollution Working Group: <http://iaq.dk/iap.htm>

Artifact and Site Conservation Reports from Catal Hoyuk:  
[http://www.catalhoyuk.com/archive\\_reports/1999/ar99\\_17.html](http://www.catalhoyuk.com/archive_reports/1999/ar99_17.html)

Restoration of the Ghent Altarpiece, Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, Brussels:  
<http://www.kikirpa.be/EN/249/0/Restoration+of+the+Ghent+Altarpiece.htm>

### *Conference Proceedings*

Information on conferences and meetings past and present; includes proceedings, schedules, calls for papers, etc.

17th Annual Preservation Conference of NARA- *Lessons Learned in Emergencies: Not Your Ordinary Disaster Conference* (2003): <http://www.archives.gov/preservation/emergency-prep/lessons-learned.html>

From Gray to Green Areas: Sustainable Practices in Preservation Environments:  
<https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/kilgarlin/gaga/proceedings.html>

Denver X-Ray Conference: <http://www.dxcicdd.com/>

17th Triennial Conference of ICOM-CC (2014) *Building Strong Culture Through Collaboration*:  
<http://www.icom-cc2014.org/>

### *Digitization and Digital Resource Management*

Digitization guides and related funding opportunities; digital archives management

DCC Curation Lifecycle Model: <http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/curation-lifecycle-model>

Digital Preservation Network: <http://www.dpn.org/>

UKOLN Cultural Heritage – UKOLN Introbytes: <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/cultural-heritage/documents/#metadata>

### *Disaster Management*

Information on emergency planning and preparedness and disaster recovery

Heritage Preservation Alliance for Response: <http://www.heritageemergency.org>

NPS Wet Recovery Guide: <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/pdf/cons/wet-collection-recovery.pdf>

National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Emergency Response:  
[http://craftemergency.org/outreach/advocacy/national\\_coalition](http://craftemergency.org/outreach/advocacy/national_coalition)

### *Education and Training*

Graduate training programs, continuing education, workshops, and international training initiatives

Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies: <http://www.campbellcenter.org>

Buffalo State Art Conservation Program: <http://artconservation.buffalostate.edu/>

Conservation Studies at Hazara University Pakistan: <https://www.facebook.com/ConservationStudies/info>

### *E-publications*

Digital and digitized newsletters, magazines, journals, documents, and books, for the general public and specific audiences

AIC Haiti Deployment Procedures Manual:  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Xlr5bUEIkSwM9UvSgezJp-MTeWE6k\\_yBvPU-3O\\_jyI4/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Xlr5bUEIkSwM9UvSgezJp-MTeWE6k_yBvPU-3O_jyI4/edit)

IIC News In Conservation <https://www.iiconservation.org/publications/nic>

E-Conservation magazine: <http://www.e-conservationonline.com/>

Getty Publications Virtual Library: <http://www.getty.edu/publications/virtuallibrary/>

### *Government Offices and Regional Centers*

Tribal and national government offices concerned with preservation and conservation; government and private regional centers for conservation

ICA Art Conservation: <http://www.ica-artconservation.org/>

Makah Tribal Historic Preservation Office: <http://makahmuseum.com/departments/historic-preservation/>

National Park Service (NPS) [Museum Management Program]: <http://www.nps.gov/museum>

### *Image and Collections Databases*

Searchable databases of museums; images and object collections

ArtStor: <http://www.artstor.org/index.shtml>

Google Art Project: <http://www.googleartproject.com>

Museum of Online Museums: <http://www.coudal.com/moom/>

National Gallery London Raphael Research Resource:  
<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/research/studying-raphael>

### *Institutional Conservation Labs and Departments*

Websites representing conservation labs associated with specific institutions (i.e. museums, universities, etc.)

British Library Collections Care: <http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/collectioncare/index.html>

Getty Conservation Institute: <http://www.getty.edu/conservation>

Harvard Library Preservation Services: <http://library.harvard.edu/preservation-services>

Smithsonian Museum Conservation Institute: <http://www.si.edu/mci/>

### *Material-specific Resources*

Resources related to unique material specialties within conservation (i.e. books and paper, electronic media, paintings, natural history collections, etc.) as well as conservation science

The Conservation of Plastics, Plastic Historical Society:  
<http://www.plastiquarian.com/index.php?id=7&subid=127>

The Color of Art Site Map: Pigments, Paints and Formulas: <http://www.artiscreation.com>

The Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections: <http://www.spnhc.org/>

UNESCO Manual for activities directed at underwater cultural heritage:  
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/underwater-cultural-heritage/unesco-manual-for-activities-directed-at-underwater-cultural-heritage/unesco-manual/conservation-management/conservation-programme/>

### *National and International Professional Organizations*

Professional conservation organizations within a country and conservation organizations that have an international membership and arena of operations

American Institute for Conservation: <http://www.conservation-us.org>

Association for Heritage Preservation of the Americas: [http://www.apoyonline.org/index\\_en.html](http://www.apoyonline.org/index_en.html)

Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material (AICCM): <http://www.aiccm.org.au>

### *Online Communities and Collaborative Resources*

Forums, groups, listservs, social media groups, and virtual communities in conservation and allied fields

Conservation Distribution List (DistList): <http://cool.conservation-us.org/byform/mailling-lists/cdl/>

AIC Collaborative Knowledge Base (Wiki): [http://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Main_Page)

Emerging Conservation Professionals' Network Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/419707523031/>

Museum Security Network (Google Group): <http://www.museum-security.org/>

### *Preventive Conservation*

Resources on preventive conservation, including storage and handling; information about materials used for handling, storage, exhibition, and conservation

British Museum Selection of Materials for the Storage or Display of Museum Objects:  
[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/publications/research\\_publications\\_series/2004/selection\\_of\\_materials.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/publications/research_publications_series/2004/selection_of_materials.aspx)

How to Preserve Newspaper Clippings: [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_13081\\_preserve-newspaper-clippings.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_13081_preserve-newspaper-clippings.html)

Storage and Care of Architectural Records, U. of Texas Austin, Architecture and Planning Library:  
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/apl/aaa/storagecare.html>

### *Private Practitioners' Sites*

Websites promoting services and resources provided by conservators in private practice

Antique Restorers: <http://www.antiquerestorers.com/>

Gloria Velandia Art Conservation: <http://www.gvartconservation.com/>

Fine Art Conservation Laboratories: <http://www.fineartconservationlab.com/>

### *Professional Development Opportunities*

Employment and funding opportunities for conservators

FAIC Professional Development Grants and Scholarships: <http://www.conservation-us.org/grants-scholarships/professional-development#.VA6i1mSSx2k>

GCI Senior Project Specialist position: [https://jobs-getty.icims.com/jobs/2206/senior-project-specialist-\(built-20th-century-heritage\)/job?mobile=false&width=550&height=500&bga=true&needsRedirect=false](https://jobs-getty.icims.com/jobs/2206/senior-project-specialist-(built-20th-century-heritage)/job?mobile=false&width=550&height=500&bga=true&needsRedirect=false)

Museum Conservation Institute, Smithsonian Institution, Fellowships and Internships:  
[http://www.si.edu/mci/english/professional\\_development/fellowships\\_internships.html](http://www.si.edu/mci/english/professional_development/fellowships_internships.html)

### *Public Outreach and Activism*

Conservation and preservation projects presented for public outreach; organizations that advocate for conservation and cultural heritage preservation

Conservation Reel: <http://dev-sdma.bpoc.org/content/conservation-reel>

Historic Buildings in the World Trade Center Vicinity: <http://www.preserve.org/wtc/>

Haiti Cultural Recovery Project: <http://haiti.si.edu/index.html>

Restoration Works International: <http://www.restorationworksinternational.org/>

### *Research Databases and Reference Materials*

Searchable databases of abstracts and full-text articles; databases of reference materials and reference images for materials identification, etc.; reference material portals

AATA Online: <http://aata.getty.edu/home>

Conservation OnLine (CoOL): <http://www.cool.conservation-us.org>

Conservation and Arts Material Encyclopedia Online (CAMEO): [cameo.mfa.org](http://cameo.mfa.org)

UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/natlaws/>

### *Software and Tools for Collaboration, Image Manipulation and Documentation*

Software used in conservation documentation, tools for online collaboration, and methods for digital manipulation for technical studies and documentation

Arches Heritage Inventory and Management System: <http://archesproject.org/>

ConservationSpace: <http://www.conservation-space.org/Home.html>

Cultural Heritage Imaging, Computational Photography:  
<http://culturalheritageimaging.org/Technologies/Overview/>

Wikispaces: <http://www.wikispaces.com>

### *Technical Studies*

Technical studies of specific pieces or groups of objects; presentations of technical information on findings, analysis, methods used, etc.

Paper Through Time: Nondestructive Analysis of 14th through 19th-Century Papers:  
<http://paper.lib.uiowa.edu/>

Vermeer's Painting Technique, A Five Part Study:  
[http://www.essentialvermeer.com/technique/technique\\_overview.html](http://www.essentialvermeer.com/technique/technique_overview.html)

Technical Analysis of Three Paintings Attributed to Jackson Pollock  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSLO3IRCXbs>

#### *Treatment Documentation*

Visual and textual presentation of treatments on specific objects or groups of objects with technical information on materials and methods used; treatment reports

Archaeological Preservation Research Laboratory Reports, Texas A&M Center for Maritime Archaeology and Conservation: <http://nautarch.tamu.edu/aprl/reports.shtml>

The Faith and Hope Stained Glass Window: <http://www.metmuseum.org/research/conservation-and-scientific-research/objects-conservation/sharp-windows>

Plastics in Art, David McDiarmid, Part 3. Sydney Curtain, National Gallery of Victoria:  
[http://blog.ngv.vic.gov.au/2014/08/21/conservation-plastics-in-art-part-3-sydney-curtain/#.U\\_3Gwry1aVt](http://blog.ngv.vic.gov.au/2014/08/21/conservation-plastics-in-art-part-3-sydney-curtain/#.U_3Gwry1aVt)

#### *Vendor Information*

For-profit businesses providing services or supplies for conservation practice, treatment, and documentation

Archetype Publications: <http://www.archetype.co.uk/>

Bruker Art Conservation and XRF Technology: <http://www.bruker.com/products/x-ray-diffraction-and-elemental-analysis/handheld-xrf/art-conservation.html?qclid=CKrc8aCp3cACFURwwAod3nkAOq>

MicroDAQ.com: <http://www.microdaq.com/data-logger/humidity/1.php>

University Products: <http://www.universityproducts.com/>