

ARCS Conference 2023 - Session Review

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On the first day of the 2023 ARCS Conference, I was privileged to attend the afternoon session titled: *Leveraging AI Image Recognition for Art Museum Collections*. Hruba Miloslava of the Mead Art Museum presented on the challenges of implementing AI image recognition in collections management processes.

Miloslava delivered a detailed overview of the Mead Art Museum's efforts to catalog its vast and varied collection of art. With considerations to time, resources and staff hours Miloslava decided to implement Google's Vision API into the cataloging process in order to streamline and simplify the collection of metadata. Her team discovered that the AI struggled to identify and categorize abstract artistic works (such as paintings) but thrived when analyzing realistic imagery (such as photography). Miloslava also provided helpful examples of instances where the AI was more or less successful depending on the medium.

As a collections specialist dealing primarily with photographic materials, the benefits to using AI image recognition are immediately obvious. Cataloging projects can often be tedious and time consuming, especially in the beginning stages when objects have little to no associated metadata. This sort of technology could help interns better identify images without needing an expert knowledge of the subject matter. It could also help to fill gaps in metadata for previously processed collections that lack sufficient information. The use of AI and machine learning in museum collections seems inevitable as technology becomes an increasingly important part of modern museum work. I am excited to see how AI image recognition will change the way that we catalog museum collections at the National Building Museum and at other institutions across the museum world.