

The Gallery Digital Image Management System

As Implemented by the
Office of Agricultural Communications
Mississippi State University

Summary for NETC 2008

1. Needs or Problems to Be Addressed

- Many digital files being accumulated — needed organized way to store, catalog, safeguard
- Had many useful legacy images on film — being scanned, needed way to store
- Designers and others besides photographers needed online access to images for projects
- Needed centralized system compatible with our Unix operating environment
- Wanted to avoid proprietary formats and systems so we would not be “trapped” if a company went out of business or dropped their software product

2. System Selection

- Looked at Extensis Portfolio, Cumulus
- Purchased server-based version of Portfolio but could not make it communicate with Oracle database on Unix
- Abandoned it, found open-source Menalto Gallery software — free, compatible, had all desired features
- For info see <http://gallery.menalto.com>

3. Implementation

- Obtained software and updates
- Built a server to run it on, added it to Extension's existing server bank
- Installed software, set access parameters, conducted tests
- Set keyword, cataloging, filenaming, and uploading conventions and protocols
- Uploaded test batch of 500 legacy images
- Went live -- now have more than 6,000 images on line, growing every day

4. Operating Procedures and Standards

- Provided access to anyone in the msstate.edu domain, including county Extension offices, but not outsiders
- Included copyright notice and guidelines for appropriate/permitted usage of images
- Gave upload permissions to photographers only
- Gave viewing/download permissions of medium and low-res files to all within the domain
- Users wanting high-res images (for publications, etc.) must contact the photographers
- Developed standard filenaming conventions that capture date, photographer, sequential image number, job ticket number
- Developed routine procedure for uploading images after a shoot
- Developed a "general understanding" about how to pick keywords that provide optimum searchability

5. Results

- System has worked great, few glitches
- Images are backed up along with all other data on Extension servers -- daily, offsite copies
- Searchability is as good as the keywording (think cat, feline, *Felis catus*, kitten, etc.)
- Graphic designers and web staff love being able to browse for images to meet their needs
- County Extension offices can pull down images for their websites, newsletter, PowerPoint presentations
- Added graphic images (logos, etc.) to make them more accessible
- Unanticipated benefit: no longer have to mail or e-mail 4-H photos to county Extension offices