

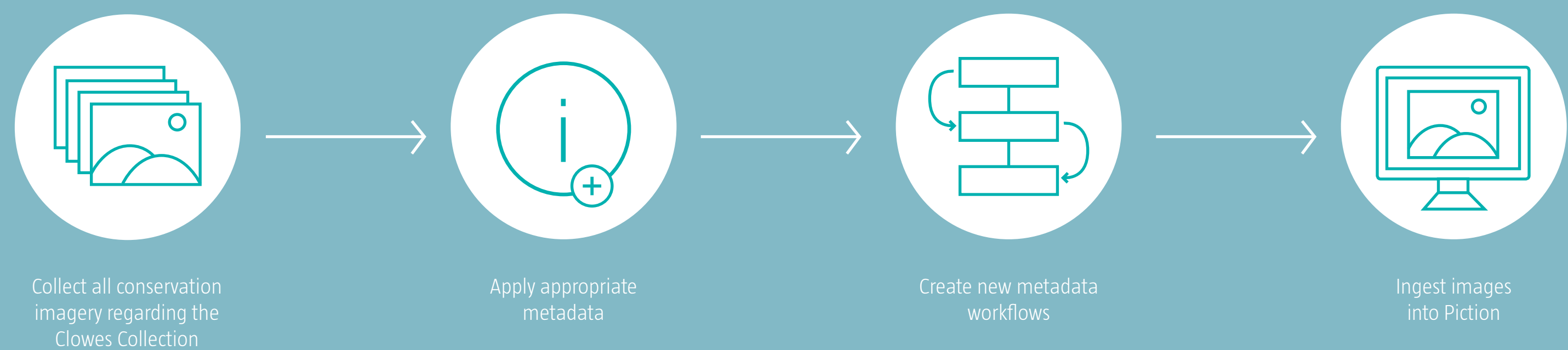
# ABOUT DAMS TIME!

Preserving and Integrating Conservation  
Photography at the Indianapolis Museum of Art.  
Rebecca Pattillo, 2016-2017 VRAF Intern



## INTRODUCTION:

The Clowes Collection of Old Master Paintings housed at the Indianapolis Museum of Art (IMA) includes seventy-eight works by Flemish, Spanish, English, Dutch, and Italian masters, comprising some of the museum’s most important artworks. The IMA has recently embarked on an interdepartmental project to create a new digital catalog that will highlight the history of each piece. What makes this publication unique is an emphasis on the conservation history as documented in thousands of images, including X-ray, infrared, and UV photographs. In order to facilitate this project, it became necessary to bring together all conservation imagery regarding the Clowes collection, apply appropriate metadata, create new metadata workflows for Conservation staff, and ingest the images into Piction, the museum’s newly implemented DAMS.



## GOALS:

- Bring together assets stored in multiple locations
- Determine required metadata fields and create controlled vocabulary for the department
- Ensure new workflows followed standards set forth by American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (The AIC Guide to Digital Photography and Conservation Documentation [2011])
- Embed metadata that was previously stored in filename
- Create updated workflows for embedding metadata that could be understood and utilized by conservation staff
- Train staff on use of Bridge and Lightroom to quickly apply metadata using hierarchical keyword structure
- Map embedded fields to Piction’s metatag function for end-user display
- Ingest Clowes collection imagery into Piction allowing for easier access by IMA staff and sharing capabilities with scholars

## CHALLENGES:

- Lack of knowledge regarding conservation imaging, terminology, equipment, workflows
- Necessary to modify and tailor approach to the equipment and software already being used by Conservation staff
- Conservators hesitant to adapt new workflow for fear it would increase time spent on imaging
- Discussion of Piction in the abstract and without demonstration, made it difficult for Conservators to realize the DAMS functionality and how the metadata would increase access and discovery.
- Clowes conservators continuously creating new imagery – needed to monitor their files in order to determine when new images were created and add them to my workflow [Fixity to monitor drives was initially promising, but after IT switched computers, no longer worked]
- Needed to create documentation and train for both Bridge and Lightroom
- No unique treatment identification numbers created difficulties for DAMS collection setup.

## OUTCOMES:

- Successfully applied metadata to 4,000+ images
- Increased access to years of conservation imagery of some of the museum’s most important collections of artwork
- Creation of new imaging workflows with detailed documentation that will continue to be used by all conservators for future imaging
- Established Conservation imaging collection in the DAMS. Easier to share imagery with outside scholars and opens access of images to all IMA staff.
- Successfully trained all Conservation staff on metadata creation and how to incorporate into their digital imaging workflows quickly and efficiently.
- Ensured long-term preservation of conservation imagery.

## CONCLUSION:

The successful creation of metadata for 4,000+ conservation images, the implementation of updated workflows for future imaging and metadata application, and integration into the museum’s DAM would not have been possible without the generous funding from the Kress Foundation. The impact of the VRAF Internship is far greater than just one capsule project and I am thrilled to know that I had a large part in improving The IMA Conservation department’s digital imaging practices in updating their workflows to follow current best practices. The workflows established will continue to be used by Conservation staff following my departure, improving the efficiency and documentation of conservation to preserve the museum’s most precious and important works of art.

## FILE NAMING CONVENTION: BEFORE

2000.345\_nt\_2016-11-10\_rak\_front-light-left-det-wax-seal\_010.DNG

accession number treatment type digital capture date treatment details sequence file extension

## FILE NAMING CONVENTION: AFTER

CON\_2000-345\_nt\_2016-11-10\_010.DNG

## CONTROLLED KEYWORD VOCABULARY

Keywords for c10047 | Portrait of the Artist



Keywords for 2004.161 | Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist and St. Mary Magdalene



Keywords for c10041 | Portrait of a Lady

