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<tr>
<td><strong>Author(s)</strong></td>
<td>Ku, KM; Chan, SY; Wan, YC</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Citation</strong></td>
<td>The 2014 Pacific Rim Digital Library Alliance Meeting, Macau, China, 2-4 December 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issued Date</strong></td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URL</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10722/206988">http://hdl.handle.net/10722/206988</a></td>
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Worth a Thousand Words:

Hong Kong Images project at the University of Hong Kong Libraries

K.M. Ku, Eunice S.Y. Chan & Y.C. Wan
The University of Hong Kong Libraries
PRDLA 2014 Meeting • Macau • 2 December 2014
Hong Kong in Brief
Profile

- Situated at the south-eastern tip of China
- A total area of 1,108 square kilometres, comprising Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsular and the New Territories
Profile

- A population of about 7.1 million, mainly ethnic Chinese
- A Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People’s Republic of China
A Vanishing City

- ‘A barren rock with hardly a house upon it’, some 170 years ago
- Ruled by the British for more than 150 years
A Vanishing City

- From a place of no particular importance to a financial, trading and business centre
- A city with many histories, each written for its age, with different audiences in mind and from different points of view
Perhaps, there is nothing better than images to tell the stories of this city.
However, our rich collection of images are scattered and work needs to be done to improve access
Some Examples

Dated 1816, probably one of Hong Kong’s first images

Abel, Clarke, Narrative of a journey in the interior of China ... London: Orme and Brown, 1818, insert between p.60 & 61
Some Examples

Dated 1816, probably one of Hong Kong’s first images.

Abel, Clarke, Narrative of a journey in the interior of China ... London: Orme and Brown, 1818, insert between p.60 & 61

Photo of Waterfall Bay taken on September 20, 2014

Credits and thanks to Kevin Dharmawan
www.kevindharmawan.com
Harbour of Hong Kong. Illustrated London News, 1843, v.2 page 245
Photographs

Kowloon City, 1986
Previous Efforts

- Awarded funding by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charity Trust to build a “Hong Kong Places” database
- Provided staffing to organize the Libraries’ collection of Hong Kong images
Previous Efforts

- Selected and annotated some 3,000 images from the collection
Previous Efforts

- Mostly building photographs, street views and aerial images, taken since the mid-nineteenth century
Digitization

Original source → Change of file formats → Digital object repository system → Metadata input, records and media files upload, record publishing → Browse and search on web
Hong Kong Places

Diversity in a Changing City

Through full-color images and historical illustrations, take a relaxing virtual journey from present-day Hong Kong back to more than a century ago. The Hong Kong Places Collection shows you not only the geographical and social changes but also how this metropolis grew from an undeveloped place.

The Collection comprises some 3,000 pictures of Hong Kong places, mostly building photographs, street view and aerial images, taken since the mid-nineteenth century. It has a strong emphasis on Hong Kong as a geographical entity and aims at providing glimpses of Hong Kong in the bygone days and its transformation into a world city as it is today.

These pictures are from the Hong Kong Collection (Hung On-To Memorial Library) of the University of Hong Kong Libraries, which has been actively collecting and organizing Hong Kong contents since the early 1970s. Staff members of the Library have contributed to the creation of the Collection by identifying and selecting pictures from the library collections, annotating the pictures, creating the indexes and deciding on the user interface of the database.
Hong Kong Images Database

To build an image database that covers places, people and events, using the new Fedora Commons platform which is able to assert semantic relationships among images.
Fedora Commons

Digital object repository system

Search Engine

Discovery interface

www.fedora-commons.org/

lucene.apache.org/solr/

projectblacklight.org/
Fedora Commons

- Store all types of content and its metadata
- Scale to millions of objects
- Full-Text search, faceted search and browse capabilities
- Optimized for high volume web traffic
- Near real-time indexing
- Provide RDF search
- Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>BUILDING</th>
<th>TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central District</td>
<td>Jardine House</td>
<td>c.1950s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central District</td>
<td>Connaught Centre</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central District</td>
<td>Jardine House</td>
<td>1988</td>
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City Hall and Cenotaph, Central District

Centre of Hong Kong’s civil activities in the early years and once a landmark on Central District’s waterfront, the City Hall is the first civic centre in Hong Kong. It houses a recital hall, an exhibition gallery, libraries and a marriage registry in its high block and a fine concert hall, a theatre...  show more
Semantic relationships

- Place
- Object
- People
- Event
Ng, Bar-ling, 1905-1976

Journalist

Hong Kong Year Book 1950

were created by

the editor of

the editor of

the author of

was a

《華僑日報》
Hua qiao ri bao

吳灞陵

Journalist
View of Victoria (Central District) and the Victoria Harbour looking west from Murray’s Battery along Queen’s Road, 29th November 1846

This picture was drawn from higher up Battery Path. The old Hong Kong Club in Wyndham Street, with its arched porte-cochere and rectangular upper window, is visible further down Queen’s Road. Behind the first projecting point on the left is today’s Ice House Street. The house on the hill (with the flagstaff) was the old Harbour Office; from here Captain Pedder ruled the harbour. The projecting Pedder’s Wharf, visible on the right of the picture, is now somewhere under the foundations of the Gloucester Tower.
View of Victoria (Central District) and the Victoria Harbour looking west from Murray's Battery along Queen's Road, 29th November 1846

This picture was drawn from higher up Battery Path. The old Hong Kong Club in Wyndham Street, with its arched porte-cochere and rectangular upper window, is visible further down Queen's Road. Behind the first projecting point on the left is today's Ice House Street. The house on the hill (with the flagstaff) was the old Harbour Office; from here Captain Pedder ruled the harbour. The projecting Pedder's Wharf, visible on the right of the picture, is now somewhere under the foundations of the Gloucester Tower.
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