

## **WebDAM and The American College of Rheumatology**

*Providing the medical community with 24/7 availability of the foremost collection of rheumatology images*

<http://www.webdamsolutions.com/casestudies/acr-image-bank.php>

### **BACKGROUND**

Founded in 1934, the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) is the nation's largest organization of rheumatology professionals. Comprised of physicians, researchers, and scientists, the ACR is a critical leader in the medical community, with its members representing the latest in study and treatment for rheumatic diseases.

The ACR maintains the world's foremost collection of rheumatology images, ranging from unique physical findings of auto-inflammatory diseases to images of the latest in rheumatology treatments. This collection, formally known as The ACR Slide Collection on Rheumatic Diseases, features contributions from the international rheumatology community and is critical in aiding countless physicians, researchers, journalists, and other rheumatology professionals.

### **THE PROBLEM**

The ACR Slide Collection on Rheumatic Diseases, in its third edition, was published as a printed binder. Because the process required so many professionals (research, graphic design and layout, printing, shipping), the overall cost of producing a new edition was prohibitive to frequent updates. This forced the ACR to wait years between releasing new editions, creating a major gap between the images in the collection and the latest medical data. A new solution had to be found for quick and cost-effective integration of the newest rheumatic images.

In addition, the ACR recognized the limitations of the printed format. The binder was bulky and heavy, creating storage problems both from the ACR stock room and for the client. The ACR also recognized that modern physicians often did not have time to search through a potentially outdated index to locate necessary images, especially in an age of one-click search engines. From updates to storage to searchability, the ACR concluded that future iterations of their image collection had to be on a digital platform.

### **THE SOLUTION**

After researching various digital conversion possibilities, the ACR selected WebDAM Solutions to host and manage their collection of rheumatology images. WebDAM addressed each of the ACR's key collection needs:

- **Instant updates:** Before digital conversion, collection updates took years. With WebDAM, ACR staff can update the collection in real time, including adding new images, removing outdated images, or updating image properties.
- **Easy accessibility and storage:** The old printed collection came in an immense binder that was expensive to design, print, and ship. When users finally received it, they found it cumbersome and bulky, making it difficult to store, access, and share with multiple people. Using WebDAM, the entire collection is now a web-based centralized database offering 24/7 viewing, sharing, downloading, and distribution. This new system gives rheumatology professionals anywhere/anytime potential while eliminating storage burdens and allowing unlimited simultaneous users.
- **Robust search capabilities:** Previously, the rheumatology community could only locate images by looking in the printed collection's index -- a time-consuming and cumbersome process. WebDAM's immense search capabilities utilize keywords, captions, and taxonomy relevant to the medical community. Real-time tag/caption updates give the database the flexibility to evolve, keeping it up-to-date and comprehensive over time.

## ANALYSIS & RESULTS

The ACR began WebDAM conversion in January 2009 with a target launch date of October 2009. The new system, dubbed the Rheumatology Image Bank, was unveiled at the ACR/ARHP 2009 Annual Meeting and included hands-on demonstrations, followed by distribution of articles and advertising to promote its use within the international rheumatology community. In preparation of the launch, the ACR invited WebDAM Solutions to the Audiovisual Aids Subcommittee Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia for a two-day on-site training and consultation session. The time was spent reviewing the best ways to maximize the new Image Bank's potential, including strategies for keywording/captioning images, formatting metadata and developing a taxonomy.

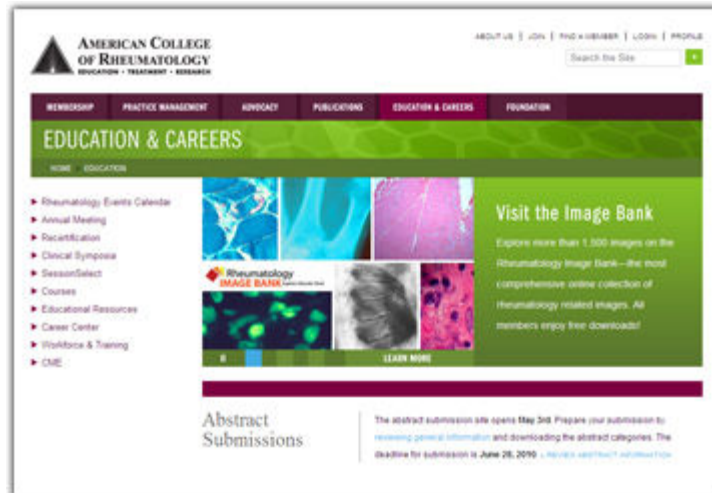
"The onsite training was an invaluable part of the migration process for us because our entire Audiovisual Aids Subcommittee was able to be involved in every aspect of the new database," says Kimberly Haughton, ACR Specialist, Educational Products & Communications. "The committee was very impressed with the new system and the WebDAM representative."

Early feedback demonstrates that the new system will revolutionize the way rheumatology professionals gather data. The ACR already sees the Image Bank as an important self-study tool for Fellows In Training, as well as a key educational resource for re-certification. In other areas, the Image Bank expedites image request fulfillment through its 24/7 web access, granting journalists, teachers, and researchers the ability to instantly retrieve high-resolution imagery without having to deal with the bulky, outdated print collection.

The ACR envisions the Image Bank as a means to strengthen its community and provide a new revenue stream. The organization holds an annual rheumatology photo contest to engage its community and promote awareness of the new database. The general public has free access to search, browse and view the images. Additionally, ACR members are granted free access to download images for educational purposes -- a unique and valuable new perk of ACR membership. For non-members, the Image Bank has an integrated e-commerce system with an annual download subscription fee, creating a new way for the ACR to monetize its assets.

## CONCLUSION

The ACR's Rheumatology Image Bank launch at the annual meeting was met with enthusiasm throughout the medical community. Its fast, user-friendly search capabilities and real-time image updates fulfill a long-standing request for easier access to the latest rheumatology images. Under the powerful WebDAM platform, the ACR's image collection will continue to grow as a key resource for rheumatology professionals worldwide.



The rheumatology community can access the ACR's Rheumatology Image Bank, powered by WebDAM, directly from the ACR's public website - [rheumatology.org](http://rheumatology.org).



The Rheumatology Image Bank provides direct access to thousands of keyworded and annotated rheumatology images for access by the medical community, media outlets and the general public.

<http://images.rheumatology.org>