



Fall 11-20-2000

## IWU Art Students and Alumni Connect on the Internet

Kate Weber  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news>

---

### Recommended Citation

Weber, Kate, "IWU Art Students and Alumni Connect on the Internet" (2000). *News and Events*. 920.

<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/920>

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@iwu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@iwu.edu).

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Nov. 20, 2000

**Contact:** Kate Weber, 309/556-3181

## **IWU Art Students and Alumni Connect on the Internet**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. --Artiwu, a casual forum for discussing issues related to art and design, continues to connect Illinois Wesleyan University art students and alumni for the third year.

Each Tuesday artiwu members receive an e-mail from [talk@artiwu.org](mailto:talk@artiwu.org) that includes all member e-mail messages from the previous week in a digest format. Topics include, but are not limited to: networking for jobs; future art events featuring alumni or students; questions and suggestions for surviving in the real world; book reviews; creative and technical advice; art ideas, thoughts and theories and funny art stories.

In addition to the e-mail discussion group, a website has been established at <http://www.artiwu.org>. The website archives all e-mail discussions and also includes updated news about students and alumni on the individual's profile page. An art bookstore with members' book reviews, networking for jobs, career advice, art news, an updated list of exhibits featuring works by artiwu members, links to members' homepages and a critique room can also be found on the website.

"When I was a student I thought it was really sad when alumni lost touch with each other, and sure enough I lost touch with people too when I graduated. But artiwu helps alumni keep in touch with each other. The weekly e-mails keep people updated on what's happening with everyone, and the website also provides contact information and news on what people are doing," said Matt Maldre, a 1997 graduate of IWU and founder of artiwu. Maldre is now a designer for Tribune Media Services, a provider of information and entertainment products to newspapers and electronic media.

"Artiwu is a great way to keep in touch with art students who have graduated," said Rachelle Street, a senior art major at IWU. "Next year I plan to go to New York and hope that through artiwu I will be able to be a contact for other IWU art students interested in moving to the East coast. Everyone knows that being an artist isn't the easiest thing. Artiwu is a way to help people out."

"It's not just connecting students and alumni, it's also connecting students with students and alumni with alumni," Maldre said. Artiwu has 100 members receiving the digest weekly, of which 53 are alumni and 47 are IWU students and faculty. The group includes alumni from the graduating class of 1964 to students beginning their first year at IWU. Maldre has plans to reach out to even more students and alumni in the near future.

According to Maldre there are many advantages for students and alumni to connect with one another: students get experience and advice from alumni, have the opportunity to network for jobs and internships and can get their artwork critiqued by experienced alumni. Alumni have the opportunity to reach a new audience, and they too can network for jobs and get their artwork critiqued by the fresh minds of students.

"As I start thinking about internships for next fall, I think artiwu will be a valuable resource," junior art major Kami Carter said.

The original concept for artiwu began in 1996 intending to provide a forum for discussion online among IWU art students about various matters of art. Due to its uneasy accessibility, students did not frequently visit the site.

"People generally won't visit a website on their own on a regular basis, but people do check their e-mail regularly. So, it makes sense to have the discussion group be based in the medium of e-mail," Maldre said.

The basic structure of the artiwu website began in the spring of 1998 and the heart of artiwu was added that fall when the e-mail discussion group started.

"I think artiwu is a great asset to the art community at IWU," junior art major Mike Mayo said. "It provides insight to art techniques, notice of showings at art galleries and other information to which we don't always have immediate access. It keeps the lines of communication open in our field of interest."

Maldre hopes to facilitate more discussion via the website and digests.

"I wish I could get people to talk more. I've found a group like this needs a leader to start discussions, to moderate and provide the structure for dialogue," Maldre said. "So I'm providing as many different ways that people can contribute: by asking questions and suggesting topics, by starting a bulletin board, posting forms and survey on the website, encouraging members to supply regular content through columns and maybe even eventually sending the artiwu digest out to members without e-mail or internet capabilities via the postal service too."

By setting up a student focus of the month and an alumni focus of the month, Maldre hopes to give artiwu members the opportunity to learn more about each other.

"Each month, a student will have an in-depth interview to provide a chance for the members to get to know each other more than what the regular profiles provide," Maldre said.

Other future plans include archiving the e-mail postings to the digest on a database for easier browsing. Then each posting will be easily accessible by topic keywords. Maldre also hopes to add more pictures to the history pages, post members' artwork, set up an artiwu group on eBay.com where students and alumni can sell their artwork and list more book reviews from members.

Maldre looks for feedback from artiwu members and in the future would like to set up a group of artiwu consultants.

"Members would review new sections to artiwu and give me feedback before I make it public to all of artiwu. They would get experience consulting and I would get more feedback on artiwu, and artiwu can improve," Maldre said.

Maldre hopes to get as many IWU students, faculty and alumni involved with artiwu as possible. He has promoted artiwu on the IWU campus with e-mails and flyers and plans to send out a mass mailing to all art alumni. Maldre expects many people will learn of artiwu through word of mouth. To encourage current artiwu members to spread the word, Maldre has established a referral section on the website to provide a sample copy of what people can use to inform others about artiwu. This page may be found at: <<http://www.artiwu.org/refer>>.

To join the discussion group online, IWU alumni and students may go to <<http://www.artiwu.org/join>>. Questions concerning artiwu may be e-mailed to Maldre at [webmaster@artiwu.org](mailto:webmaster@artiwu.org).

"I'm hoping that artiwu will provide a model for IWU on how other alumni groups can be organized by specific focus groups," Maldre said. "If anybody needs help founding an alumni group, such as a theatre alumni group or a biology alumni group, I would be more than happy to help them with ideas and share with them how to build a group like artiwu."