An Invitation to Contribute to Our LESCANT Photo Database

Dear Students,

Recently we created the LESCANT Photo Database. The idea behind the database is to give students experience in identifying the cultural differences that come up whenever we deal with people for other cultures. The LESCANT model of intercultural communication gives us way to identify and categorize these cultural differences.

When entering the site, users can search the photos by country, city, author, or LESCANT category. There is also a discussion blog for comments on all of the photos.

The site is up and running, and totally functional. However, we need more photos in the database, including additional photos from more regions of the world. We invite you to add pictures that effectively illustrate these cultural issues. As a UT student, it's easy to add a picture:

1. Go to the LESCANT photo database site: [http://www.laits.utexas.edu/lescant/](http://www.laits.utexas.edu/lescant/)
2. Click on “Login” that is located on the gray bar at the top of the page and add your UTEID and password.
3. Slide the mouse on to any of the letters of LESCANT. When you click on a letter, you will be presented with thumbnails of all of the photos in that category. At the bottom of the page you will see “Add a Photo”.
4. When you click on “Add a Photo” you are given a screen where you write background information about your photo.
   a. Choose the LESCANT topic from the dropdown menu (Note: The website gives a description of all of these categories.)
   b. Write the Country.
   c. Write the City.
   d. Zoom in on the map and click to add the location of your photo
   e. Write a brief description about why this photo illustrates one of the cultural features of LESCANT.
   f. Choose a file to select an image.
5. Click on “Submit” at which time your photo will be sent into the queue to be approved for posting.
6. When viewing other photos, notice there is a link “Add new comment” where you can participate in the discussion blog for each picture.

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me directly, and thank you in advance for your participation in our database.
A Brief Introduction to the LESCANT Categories

As you add photos to the database, here is a brief description of the various categories. Keep these ideas in mind when you decide which category to assign to your photo.

**Language:** Anything that ties into attitudes and factors related to deciding which language to use. Consider translations, attitudes about language use, ways that language makes a person part of the group or not. Consider also the use of English in non-English speaking countries.

**Environment:** This includes such things as the physical traits of a location (e.g., the size of an office, lights, carpeting, chairs). Include also the effects of climate, topography, population, and the use of space. Pictures that represent attitudes about the use of technology are also appropriate. Finally, pictures that relate to food and eating can also fall into this category.

**Social Organization:** This category refers to how society is put together. Include pictures related to kinship, families, education, class distinction, religion, occupations, and gender. Pictures that demonstrate the individualism or collectivism of cultures fit into this category too.

**Context:** These pictures show how much people depend on direct communication versus how much they gather additional context and information that is stored. For example, low-context cultures use more direct words, have an emphasis on written communication, follow rules precisely without considering the situation, bluntly answer ‘yes’ and ‘no’, etc. High-context cultures gather and store background information, provide the reasons for rules and regulations, and avoid blunt or direct communication. Issues of face-saving and politeness are often related to high-context behaviors.

**Authority:** Issues shown in these pictures include examples of the use of titles, leadership styles, and how decisions are made. These pictures show how power is defined, shared, and exchanged. This category also includes examples of how subordinates interact with their bosses, how they work together, and how they show respect.

**Non-Verbal:** This category includes a wide range of cultural issues, such as how people dress, gestures, eye contact, shake hands, kiss, and touch. It also includes smells, colors, and numbers. Include anything that gives evidence of a culture different from your own.

**Time:** Pictures in this category illustrate how people organize their time, their schedules, and their calendar. Include also examples of how people undergo multiple tasks at once, or how they combine activities together. Pictures that show how people use the free or leisure time versus how they occupy their work time are also good.