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Museum Partner Observation 1  
LIS 258: Museum Informatics  
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After reading the NMC Horizon Report, one of the most important points I took away from it focused on using technology to create connections with visitors. “Research groups and leading museums are exploring focused methods that use technology to create greater connections with visitors” (Johnson, Adams Becker, Estrada, Freeman, 2015). Considering the great strides made in the development of mobile technology, the vast expanse of the Internet, and the prevalence of social media, it has become almost necessary for Museums to adapt to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and incorporate this technology into their institutions.

### (The Heckscher Museum of Art homepage)

The screenshot shows the homepage of The Heckscher Museum of Art. At the top, there is a blue header with the museum's name, a navigation menu (HOME | LOGIN), a search bar, and social media icons. Below the header is a large banner for "LONG ISLAND'S BEST YOUNG ARTISTS 2017 AT THE HECKSCHER MUSEUM" running from March 11 to April 9. The banner includes a list of sponsors and a note that town residents are admitted free. Below the banner are two columns: "Exhibitions" featuring "Mort Künstler: The New Nation" (December 10, 2016 - April 2, 2017) and "Events" featuring a "Special Event: Unveiling of New Mort Künstler Painting" on April 1, 2017.

My partner institution for this assignment, The Heckscher Museum of Art in Huntington, NY, is a small, American art museum that does a good job of utilizing technology to connect to their patrons. Their website is intuitive and organized, allowing patrons to explore the collection, past/present exhibits, and different educational programs available at the museum. The program guide for current exhibits is available in a virtual, interactive format that allows users to plan their visit ahead of time. The website also features links to different social media platforms like Facebook and Pinterest, which serve to expand the reach of their collection beyond the walls of the physical museum. The Heckscher uses social tagging techniques like hash tags to direct users to their “Long Island’s Best” program for young artists. This strategy links each of the young artists’ works into one location, on each platform (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), so that users

can digitally access this special gallery. This is a fantastic way of using social tagging to promote interaction with the museum, as well as the talented young artists.

### (Utilizing social tagging and user interaction)

#### Vote for your favorite work of art!

Museum visitors will determine who receives the Grumbacher Visitors Choice Award to be presented to one young artist at the Closing Reception on April 9. Vote at the Visitor Services Desk through April 2.

Follow the Museum on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and celebrate [#hmalibest!](#)

In the case of my specific object, George Inness' *Venice, Italy 1873* (which isn't a part of any current exhibitions), the Heckscher website utilizes a function of its Collections Management System "Advanced Revelation" to make its cataloged collection available to the public on the front-end via search. During my visit with the Heckscher, I was given a rundown of the use and limitations of this CMS. Overall, the museum uses this platform for its collection because its basic functions allow them to build and maintain their collection in a fairly simple and inexpensive manner. The downside to this system is that in the 2017, it leaves much to be desired in terms of depth, extras and aesthetics

### (Front-end visual of the Heckscher's search function)

Search the Collection

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**Search**

**Further filter your search by:**

**Artist**

**Classification**

**Date Range** From  To   
(only 4 digit or less year values are allowed)

**Artist and Classification use dropdown lists.** Select an artist or classification from the appropriate list. Entering the first letter of an artist's last name or the first letter of a classification will take you immediately to the first entry starting with that letter.

**Search for keywords in titles, subjects and themes, by word or by phrase.**

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Search = still life | Returns works with <b>phrase</b> "still life" in keywords   |
| Search = still;life | Returns works with <b>individual words</b> "still" or "life" in keywords but not the phrase "still life"  |
| Search = still+life | Returns works with <b>individual words</b> "still" and "life" in keywords but not the phrase "still life" |
| Search = ship*      | Returns works with any keyword <b>starting</b> with "ship"  |

As a comparison, I used the information our class gathered from The Frick Collection in New York City, where we were introduced to their Collection Management software, The Museum System. Compared to Advanced Revelation, The Museum System is superior. The aesthetic of The Museum System is a lot friendlier than Advanced Revelations,

promoting a less clunky interface, as well as easy navigation; it looks more akin to a program created for today's technology. The Museum System is also deeper and more geared toward museums, whereas Advanced Revelation was a tool used in the shipping industry to manage stock. With this being said, I think its important to acknowledge that the needs of the museum play an important role in how collections are presented to visitors. The Frick has a larger collection and therefore needs a more 'complex' CMS to handle its operation, whereas the Heckscher can manage its collection with its current CMS and focus on spending money in other more pertinent areas.

Johnson, L., Adams Becker, S., Estrada, V., and Freeman, A. (2015). NMC Horizon Report: 2015 Museum Edition. Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium.