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Museum Observation #3

"Museums are tasked with keeping pace with changes in legislation affecting data usage…"[1] Compared to museums' data security, Planting Fields Arboretum has somewhat different policies that involve the collections, but they still go through the proper channels to protect patrons and members. Because the plants in the collection are in the public domain, there is no need to protect them from copyright infringement. People are allowed to take as many pictures of the plants as they want and post them online without an issue; although, there are some stipulations regarding the archives and professional photos. As for the patrons themselves, they can expect to feel safe when using the arboretum website because the proper security has been put into place for transactions to be done without danger of hacking. Planting Fields Arboretum takes data security seriously, and the staff puts the proper tools in place to protect both the collection and the patrons.

Protecting the Collections

Concerning the collections, Planting Fields Arboretum doesn't have to worry about many of the exhibits. The plants are not copyrighted, so people have the ability to post any pictures they want, but, when the pictures are professional, such as for a wedding, there are permits that must be filled out in order to use the grounds. The permit is not filled out on the website, so the patrons are also protected from any digital data breach because they are mailing in the form separately.

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[1] "NMC Horizon Report 2016 Museum Addition," NMC.org, last modified 2016,
http://cdn.nmc.org/media/2016- nmc-horizon-report-museum-EN.pdf.

Figure 1- Photo Permit Page and Download Link

This protection is also extended to the archives because the archives hold more sensitive information involving the Coe family and the history of the grounds. There is a basic layout of what is in the archives on the website, but, in order to have access to the actual physical documents, there is request form that must be sent to the arboretum.

Figure 2- Planting Fields Archives Request Form

Because this information is also mailed in separately and not done through the website, this also is another way that the patrons are protected from any data breaches. Besides the

few policies that Planting Fields has for using parts of its collection, there isn't much protection for the exhibits in the museums, but there are tools in place to help keep the patrons safe.

Protecting the Patrons

There aren't many transactions to be done on the Planting Fields website, but any transactions taking place are still secure. The only transactions that require personal information on the website are either making a donation or buying a membership, but, even these transactions can cost a lot of money depending on the type of membership.
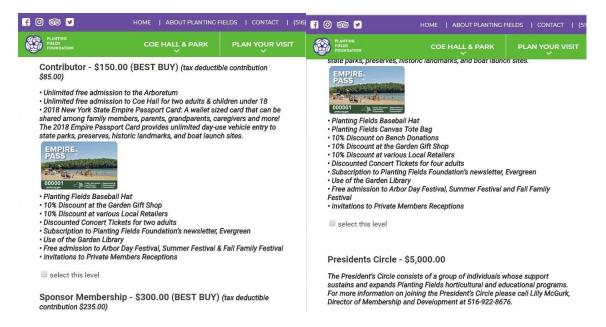

Figure 3- Different Levels of Planting Fields Memberships (Lowest and Highest)

The highest membership, the Presidents Circle, costs $5,000, so it would be obvious why patrons buying something so expensive would want to protect their privacy. This is also true for people making donations, which is also located on the membership page. At the bottom of this page, people are required to fill out their billing information and credit

card information, which may make some people wary, but a patron can quickly check the top of the page next to the URL to see that the transaction is secure.
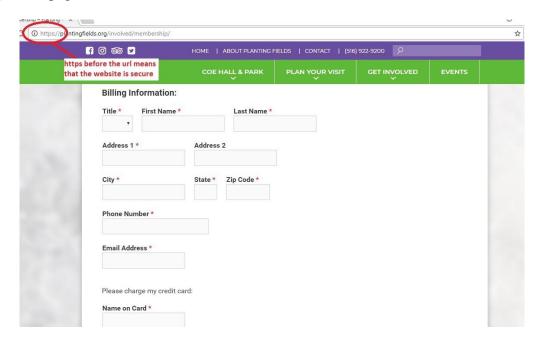

Figure 4- Personal Information Protected by the HTTPS before the URL

The https that comes before the URL secures the information by encrypting it as it travels from the sender to the receiver. The "s" at the end of the https is the crucial letter as it stands for "secure socket layer," and it adds another level of security to sensitive information.[2] With this layer of protection, even bigger transactions will be safe from hackers attempting to steal information.

Future Data Security

While Planting Fields can provide their patrons and members with basic website security, there are more tools they could put in place to ease any worries about data theft. According to NMC Horizon Report 2016 Museum Edition, getting patrons involved in

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[2] "Hypertext Transport Protocol Secure," *Techopedia*, last modified April 2018, https://www.techopedia.com/definition/5361/hypertext-transport-protocol-secure-https.

setting up data security could help create new levels of security for the website and the

actual arboretum, where more transactions will take place, such as in the café or gift

shop: "Museums have an increasing responsibility to communicate and initiate public

dialog on the issues that surround privacy, empowering people to make educated

decisions about the digital tools they leverage."[3] As Planting Fields attempts to create a

more interactive arboretum for its visitors, it can include a conversation on its security

policy and encourage patrons to offer opinions on what can be done to increase protection

of personal information used in the arboretum.

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[3] "NMC Horizon Report 2016 Museum Addition," NMC.org, last modified 2016,
http://cdn.nmc.org/media/2016- nmc-horizon-report-museum-EN.pdf.

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