

Interactive Technology at The Colonial Williamsburg Museum

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Link to Exhibit:

<https://www.history.org/history/museums/clothingexhibit/>

Interactive Exhibits at The Colonial Williamsburg Museum

The Colonial Williamsburg Museum and the East Hartford Public Library are two very different sites. While Colonial Williamsburg has a high foot traffic and online presence, the East Hartford Public Library lacks in the area of interactivity online. The online exhibit for Colonial Williamsburg, “Historic Threads” has a similarity in the displaying of items from 18th century Americana, although with their online platform, the artifact is given a closer look at than through a glass display case, as is the case for the East Hartford Public Library.

Interactive Features at The Colonial Williamsburg Museum

Given that the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation has a greater budget¹ with donations made by the public and other corporations that are being matched, you can see that the museum has placed those dollars to good use for those patrons that cannot visit the museum in person. This online exhibit shows greater details of artifacts that the naked eye cannot distinguish and provides details on how the artifact was used, its donor, and its date.

Throughout the online exhibit, a patron can search by either the gender and age of the person who used an artifact, the type of artifact, the timeframe of the artifact’s date, and the geological location of an artifact’s creation or materials used in the artifact.

This brings us to the question of “If Williamsburg can do it, why not East Hartford?” However enthusiastic a new web designer and museum professional can be at the East Hartford Public Library, there is simply not an affordable way to implement such an elaborate exhibit for such a small public library and its small collection of town history.

Why is The Colonial Williamsburg Museum a Good Example of Interactivity?

Both Williamsburg and East Hartford are rich in Colonial history, given their locations and their pioneers in establishing these towns. These sites provide the patrons with an opportunity to explore deeper into their local town history, maybe even their own family history. The collection at the East Hartford Public Library is one that gives local towns people pride in their history, which sparks curiosity into other areas of the town, and even the state.

These two collections also are open to the public in plain view for the users own enjoyment. If the East Hartford Public Library could have an online exhibit that is a quarter of what the Williamsburg Museum has, the small glass collection would have an increase in the much-needed exposure and foot traffic that it receives currently.

Potential Audiences for the Pitkin Glass Collection

Although these museums are completely different in size, location, and budget, they both show a collection from the past. They both teach about the same era and have similar stories to share regarding the Colonies and the Revolutionary War efforts. An ideal audience for this exhibit could be older scholars, younger students, and any person interested in learning about their ancestors, glass making, or their town history. However, anyone that just happens to pass through the site is more than welcome to explore the collection; the goal for the East Hartford Public Library is to gain more visitors and to promote their collection.

¹ The Colonial Williamsburg Museum, *About Us*, (Virginia, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2005) Support The Foundation.

References

- The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. "Historic Threads." Explore ~ Historic Threads: Three Centuries of Clothing ~ Colonial Williamsburg's Museum Collection Online Exhibit. 2005. Accessed April 01, 2019.
https://www.history.org/history/museums/clothingexhibit/museum_explore.cfm#index=167&filter=allgenders,allclothing,alldates.
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