

Interactive Exhibit at Mount Vernon and Yorktown Museums

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Link to Exhibit:

<https://www.mountvernon.org/the-estate-gardens/historic-trades/> with following video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnbUF0wgIfw&t=47s> - Weaving on Mount Vernon's 18th Century Loom. Provided link to both museum's online exhibit and the youtube video as the museum's website was down earlier today.

Interactive Exhibit at Mount Vernon Historical House Museum

While not what we now consider an interactive exhibit, the video on the 18th Century Loom at Mount Vernon, Virginia is another way to engage online visitors to the museum. It provides a solid ground of information on the present object (the loom) while also displaying how it would have been used in the time period. Using a video allows the museum to provide both a visual component by showing the bells and whistles of the loom, how one created textiles with it, and its size while also giving an audio background. A great advantage of this type of interactive exhibit is that it allows those who are geologically displaced to get a glimpse into what information is made available to onsite visitors of the museum, as noted in the NHC Horizon Report (2015, p. 17).

Using an Interactive Exhibit in the Yorktown Museum

The Yorktown Museum is tight on space and doesn't have room for more advanced interactive applications such as kiosks, nor does its website currently have any interactive or online exhibits for visitors to scroll through. Videos are common place enough in museums to provide accessory information to onsite visitors, that it's not a large stretch to simply upload a video containing reference material to a website. The Yorktown Museum falls severely behind its peers in their lack of online and interactive materials, and as stated by Paul Marty (2008), "If the purpose of the modern museum is to connect visitors with information, museum professionals will need to adapt to the new expectations modern visitors put on modern museums" (p. 182). The possibility of even just having a tablet which would contain educational videos that visitors can carry with them from exhibit to exhibit is a step forward, and then those videos could also be made available on their website. I chose this video of the loom because it is a similar style of loom to the object I chose, and because I believe that a simple interactive exhibit like a video is more feasible goal for the Yorktown Museum concerning interactiveness.

Potential Audiences

Two potential audiences that would benefit from this type of interactive exhibit would be the Professional/Hobbyist and Facilitator types of visitors. Professional/Hobbyist visitors often come to museums because they have a vested interest in an exhibit or object provided; people in this category typically include researchers, students, and those with a

personal interest. As stated by John Falk (n.d) “Their visits are typically motivated by a desire to satisfy a specific content-related objective” (p. 117). Because these visitors would come seeking information on a specific topic, videos, such as the one about the loom, would provide another way in which they can learn, possibly increasing their understanding more than a simple placard would. Facilitators, also commonly referred to as educators, would benefit as well. Because visits for them are “focused on primarily enabling the experience and learning of others”, videos can help them provide more context to their facilitators (Falk, p.117). Education is an important aspect of modern museums, and creating opportunities for educators to use tools provided by museums is now a huge focus across the field (Marty, 2008, p. 184). Educational videos, be they online or onsite are a great way for all types of visitors, even those who may not realize they were seeking new information to begin with.

References

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