

Museum Partner Observation #3

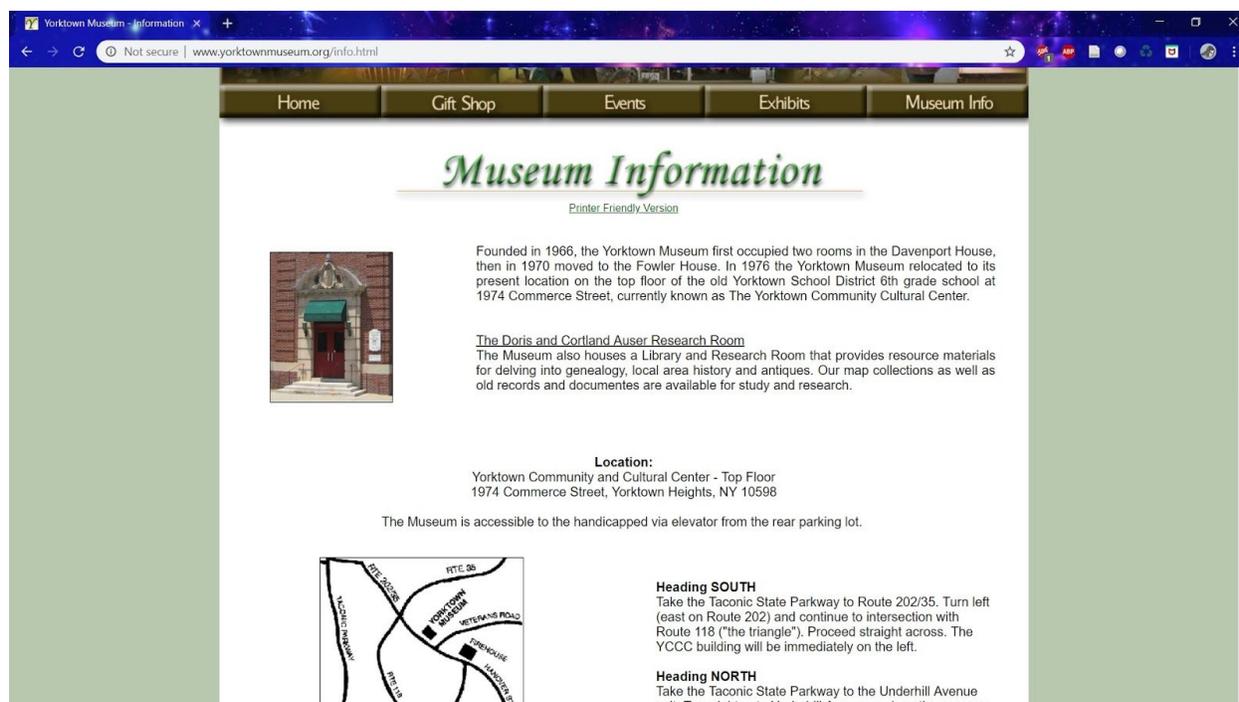
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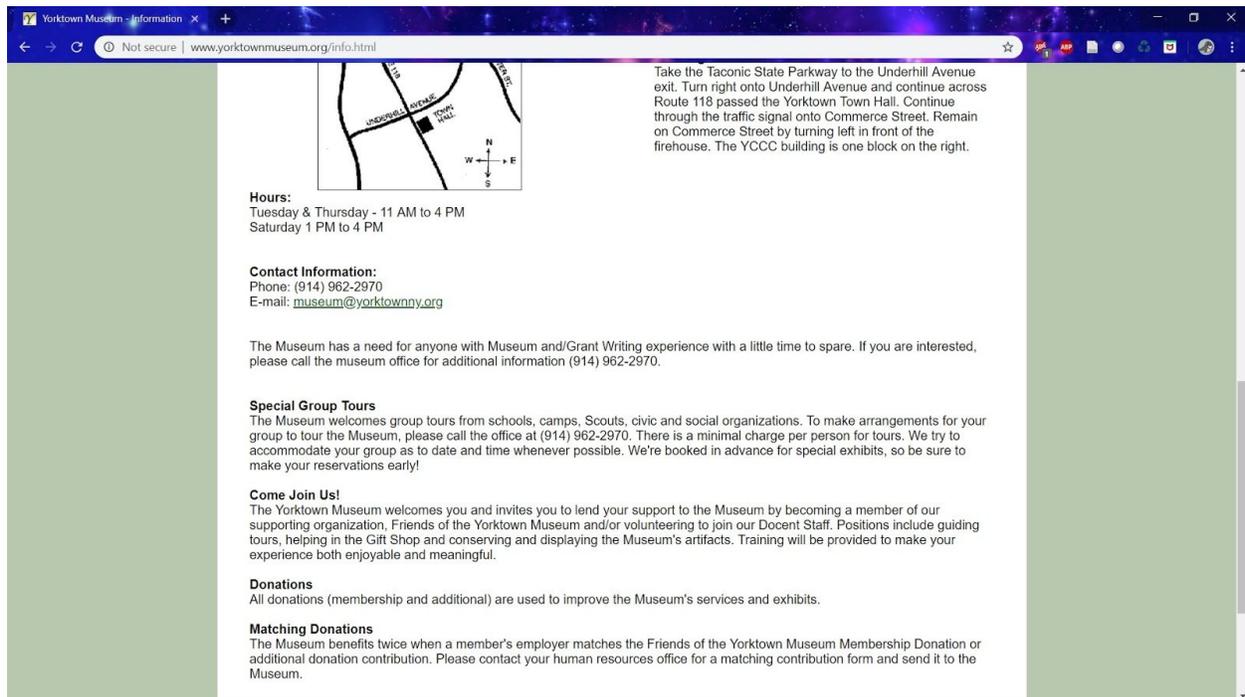
As stated by the National Horizon Report on Museums, “Museums are inherently open public spaces” which makes it difficult to balance out the safety of visitors, collections, and information with the drive to be of use to all (2016, p. 32). The Yorktown Museum is an open and inviting institution within its community, however it is lacking in several areas such as a privacy policy.



Screenshot of Yorktown Museum's Museum Information page; top of page

There is no privacy policy or similar implementation in the Yorktown Museum. In regards to users of the museum, they do not collect information, except for visitor statistics to know approximately how much the museum and associated research room is utilized. No personal information has ever been recorded by the museum unless it is for the records, and at most it is a name to be put with an artifact or picture. As for the privacy of its collections and their associated persons, the Yorktown Museum only uses Past Perfect for digital data storage

and, once again, the only information they keep on it is names and dates of accession/creation. Other than that, all records are kept on paper documents and available for the public to come in and study as long as the museum is open.



Screenshot of Yorktown Museum's Museum Information page; bottom of page

Because the Yorktown Museum operates on such a small scale, the current and previous directors may not have thought it necessary to provide a privacy policy, or to even consider the privacy rights of the visitors and of their own collection. If, say, a donor wanted to give the museum years of a deceased relatives work for the museum to use in its researcher, technically speaking it is that deceased individual's intellectual property now in the care of the Yorktown Museum. They currently have no public policy on these issues, nor one in place at all.

While the Yorktown Museum currently has no privacy policy, it is possible that in the future, with the adoption of newer technology and possibly different museum policies, they may create one. If this is the case, I would highly recommend that they base their policy around their collections, as much of the information housed in relates to local residents, the towns previous residents, and family/property histories. In regards to their visitor and user policies, I would suggest providing an online survey that would allow all visitors to provide more statistics, while also not asking for any of their sensitive information.

If and when the Yorktown Museum begins to collect information regarding their users, it will have to implement a privacy policy to accommodate, but until that time there should be a focus on protecting the information of those association with the collections.

Resources

NMC Horizon Report 2015 Museum Edition, “Expanding the Concept of Visitor,” pp. 32-33.

Retrieved from: [NMC_HorizonReport2015MuseumEdition.pdf](#)