Museum- Partner Observation
Assignment #2
Lightner Museum

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Godfrey Reggio once said, "It's not that we use technology, we live technology." (2018) Museum professionals here in America and around the world are beginning to see the impact that technology has on their visitors. Museums have begun to evolve and update the way they share and present information. From quick response (QR) codes to AI, and downloadable apps. Museums are focusing their energy on the user experience, not just the artifacts. However, some smaller less funded museums are slower to jump on board and begin applying Digital Principles to their collection.

Audience-Centered

The Lightner Museum is a non-profit museum who's operating costs come from grants, donations, and fundraising. When the museum is not preserving the physical building, which was originally built by Henry Flagler in 1888. They are actively bringing in new traveling exhibits to help generate public interest. For the Spring 2019 Season, they are offering an exquisite insider's view on Degas' history and personal stories, along with displaying his life's work. Experts will be doing presentations, and there is even event scheduled for children called "Drawing Like Degas" where kids will have the opportunity to practice recreating some of Degas' famous paintings. In ways, the Lightner Museum is traditional in how they do things. Marketing funds are limited so the museum takes advantage of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, and Instagram. As part of the Digital Principles, the Lightner Museum "ensures that digital content and services are accessible to all." (Principles, 2015) While also making their website easy to use. By using this format of technology, the Lightner is reaching a new demographic of visitors.

RELATED EVENTS

EDGAR DEGAS EXHIBITION
April 12 - June 16

LIGHTNER LEARNING LAB
April 14 @ 10:00 am - 3:30 pm

EDUCATOR'S TALK
April 18 @ 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Screenshot of Lightner Museums' "Events" page

Sustainable and Scalable

The Lightner Museum has been a staple of the St. Augustine community since 1947

when Otto C. Lightner handed the magnificent building and his eclectic collection of oddities

over to the City of St. Augustine. Though space is limited on this historical site the museum still

finds new ways to grow. After receiving a $25,000.00 grant from the Institute of Museums and

Library Services (IMLS) "The grant will allow Lightner Museum to hire a museum collections

consultant to improve the efficiency and functionality of its collections workspace for staff.

Under the guidance of the consultant, the museum will purchase furnishings for new workspaces,

which will be used to enter 500 new objects into the permanent collection." (Lane, 2017) As part

of the Digital Principle – Sustainable and Scalable: the Lightner is "building for long term

growth." (Principle, 2015) Though, making physical improvements the Lightner should begin to

look into digitizing their collection. Currently, there is nothing in place that connects their

catalog to the internet. It would be beneficial for students, historians, and visitors alike if this

information was available. It would be beneficial for staff as well. Instead of them having to dig

through dusty archives to answer a simple question for example "what year did the Lightner

Museum acquire the Apollo statue?" it would be located online. Making information readily

available to users/ visitors is not only beneficial but makes the search for information enjoyable

and quickly obtainable.

"Apollo" -$25,000 Lightner grant for 4th floor (Lane, 2017)

Entrepreneurial and Innovative

Many of the items within the Lightner Museum have an extensive history with colorful

backgrounds. For example, Sir Winston Churchill's pet lion Rota is on display. Rota at one time

was a living breathing male African Lion that lived in a London residential garden. When WWII

began, and food rations were slim, he was donated to the London Zoological Park and gifted to

Churchill. There is video footage of Churchill and his wife available through YouTube and

presented by the British Path'e that shows Churchill playing with Rota. Currently, the Lightner Museum has yet to add technology to their museum. To meet the Digital Principle - Entrepreneurial and Innovative needs of "making innovative use of established and proven technologies." (Principles, 2015) The museum curator may want to consider adding small digital screens that plays these different videos on loop. This would help engage curiosity within visitors. For young people, it may spark an interest in WWII. It has the potential to create curiosity within the visitor to start learning more about zoology and the care of animals. Or in the author's case to determine how a lion from London found its way to St. Augustine, FL and is now amongst one of the most random museum collections. This technology can be added to many other parts of the museum, such as the Turkish bath, the Tiffany & Co. Stained glass room, and the swimming pool -YES THERE IS A SWIMMING POOL! With so much hidden history throughout the building, the Lightner Museum would benefit from applying this technology to its collection. This way it shows visitors a new side of the museum. Cost of this technology is fairly low and there are many grants available that fund such projects.

YouTube Video *"Premier Greets Rota"*(Movietone, 2015)

Open Reusable and Shareable

When conducting historical research of any kind when pertaining to St. Augustine, one typically starts at the St. Augustine Historical Society (SAHS). Preserved in its archives are bibles and colonial documents from the 1500s. It contains street blueprints of the Spanish Quarter. Diaries of people who were born and raised there, newspapers, and an immense collection of photographs documenting the change of the community over time. A way that the Lightner Museum could enhance their collection through technology would be to form a partnership with the SAHS. In Pairing with the SAHS the Lightner Museum would receive support for their archives and be able to make the digital versions public. The SAHS archives which are currently digitized and available online, with completely open access is a wonderful resource of information. They also own many photographs and documents that were previously owned by the Lightner. As well as records documenting the history not only of the building but also the collection within it. So, in a way, they are already supporting each other's collections.

Once an agreement is made to work together both the Lightner and the SAHS could begin to share this information with the public. Which would help "Promote content reuse through partnerships." (Principle, 2015) A cost-effective way that the Lightner could begin to apply the archives' information to the collection is by using quick response (QR) codes. QR codes "are a two-dimensional code that is capable of much higher capacities of information storage compared to their traditional bar code predecessors." (Schultz, 2013, P. 207) Though cost-effective because QR codes can be produced for free, it would be time-consuming. However, beneficial. All the visitor would have to do is scan the QR code with their smartphone and information about the artifact comes to life. Making the user experience interactive and entertaining. Below is a picture of a QR code next to a work of art which was inspired by a poem. When the visitor scans the QR code the poem comes up where the visitor can listen to it

while viewing the painting. The same sort of technology could be easily applied to the Lightner. By using the SAHS open access and the Lightner's newly digitized collection (as described previously), QR codes could easily be applied to many different objects. For example, the Lightner Museum has in its collection a desk that was once owned by Louis Bonaparte, brother of Napoléon. This elaborate desk has many compartments and features. It is handled very rarely as to avoid damaging the artifact. Most visitors overlook this artifact because it remains closed most of the time and unless a docent is there to point it out, most visitors just walk by it. However, if a QR code was provided next to the item that would be able to link the visitor to the video of the desk being fully open and explored by the curator (video featured below). I=It would enhance the visitor's experience and gain a new appreciation for what is being displayed in front of them. Later the visitor could re-upload the video and have sharing capabilities discussing their experience that day on social media. Thus generating free publicity for the museum.

Brooklyn Museum QR code (Bernstein, 2011)

YouTube Video "Lightner Museum The Desk" (Bansemer, 2013)

Embedded Across the Organization

The Lightner Museum has a lot to offer their visitors in person. They are just not

equipped to share it online yet. The Lightner is missing out on a new demographic; digital

visitors. It could be argued that having a virtual museum tour available would decrease visitors to

the physical museum, but in fact, it has an opposite effect. It is an "innovative way to attract an

audience**,** and a younger part of it too – the part that grew up looking at screens and that now

lives by hashtags, likes and cyber interactivity" (Kordic, 2015) to the museum. Today you can

roam around the Louvre, in Paris, at 3 AM at your house online while wearing your pajamas. Or,

when visiting the National Art Gallery, in Washington D.C., online you can zoom in on a Picasso

painting from anywhere in the world and study the brush strokes of the piece. There is a grant

through the Knight Foundation's Art Tech Initiative (KFATI) that helps small museums like the

Lightner enter the digital age. "KFATI has committed $1.5 million to art museums to add digital

tech talent to their establishments." (Butler, 2017) It would be amazing to see the Lightner

Museum have a virtual tour on their website for virtual visitors to explore. It could be set up similarly to that of Mount Vernon's (birthplace and home of George Washington – America's first president). At Mount Vernon, they have taken high-quality panoramic photos of the whole estate, including inside the museum and house. Once the visitor enters the virtual tour there are interactive bullets to click on (red arrows featured on the picture below points out a few different bullets to click on) and information appears. Also, featured below.

Screenshot of Mount Vernon's Virtual Tour
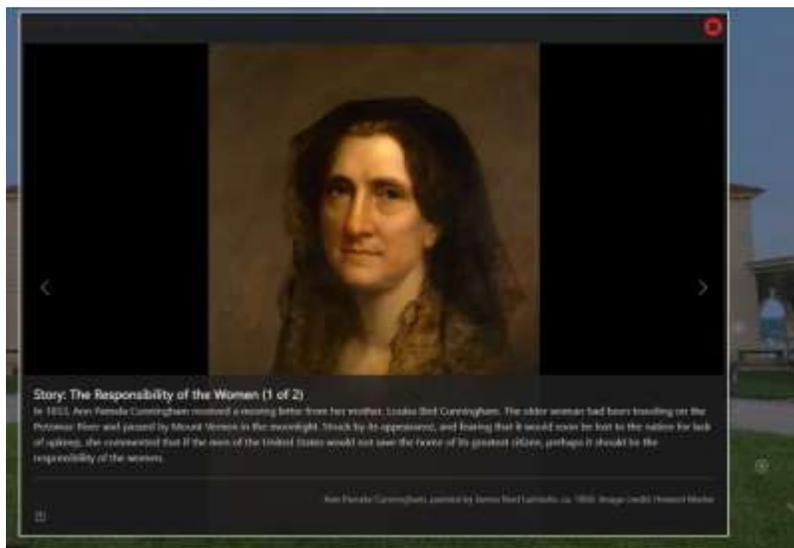
Screenshot of Mount Vernon's Virtual Tour after a bullet is clicked on

If the Lightner Museum received this grant, it would be very easy for them to create a virtual tour. Which would then fulfill Digital Principle: Embedded Across the Organization and "build digital mindset in the organization through knowledge sharing." (Principle, 2015) By making their collection available online visitors from all over the world can see the wonders that are held with their historic halls. They could also learn beyond the collection. For example, if a visitor in the virtual tour clicks on the outside of the Lightner, information about how the building was the old Hotel Alcazar and was designed by Carrère and Hastings. The same architects who designed the New York Public Library. This information is not readily available already through the Lightner Museum. Right now, a person curious about the building has to visit roughly three different pages just to get that small tidbit of information. For a user/ visitor to get information with one click of a button while being able to feel like they are standing right there viewing the artifact/ or building is amazing! Not to mention it would help publicize the museum in a new way that would in return generate new visitors to the museum which equals more money in donations. It would be a win-win situation for the museum and visitors alike.

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