Proposal for integrating digital interpretation planning into Interpret Europe's training programme

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Using digital technology in museums and other natural and cultural heritage sites is one of the most common ways to engage the audience nowadays.

However the principles of integrating it into interpretation haven't been clearly defined and the related professional training opportunities are missing as well.

Interpretation is helping people connect with the heritage in a meaningful way

The challenge for the interpretation at YOUR site

The dramaturgy of the visit together with the (digital) content
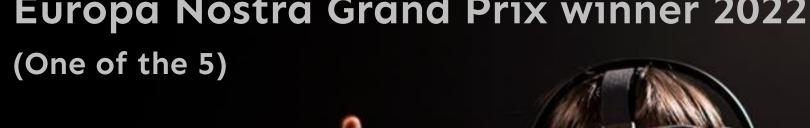
The main question of the training

HOW

Can digital technology help participants to connect with THE object/phenomenon?

Europa Nostra Grand Prix winner 2022

(One of the 5)

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Never do anything digital if there is a better analogue option!

Complementing the physical with the digital

Brooklyn Museum, African art collection

Complementing the physical with the digital

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Mask

Unidentified Ngbaka artist, 19th century
Équateur province, Democratic Republic of the Congo
Wood, 13 x 9 ⅞ x 5 ¾ in. (33 x 25.1 x 14.6 cm)

Museum Expedition 1922, Robert B. Woodward Memorial Fund, 22.1585

ART OF

concealment

Mask

Ali Amonikoyi (Yoruba, circa 1880–1920), early 20th
century
Kete Krachi, Volta region, Ghana
Copper alloy, 10 ½ x 7 ¼ x 5 ½ in. (26.7 x 18.4 x 14 cm)

Museum Expedition 1922, Robert B. Woodward Memorial Fund, 22.1592

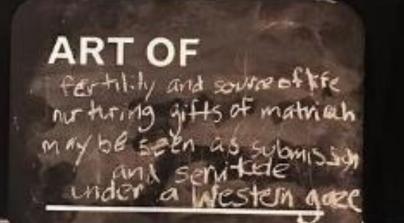# Complementing the physical with the digital

Kneeling Female Figure

Areogun of Osi (Yoruba, circa 1880–1954), early
20th century
Osi-Ilorin, Kwara state, Nigeria
Wood, 8 ½ x 2 x 2 ½ in. (21.6 x 5.1 x 6.4 cm)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Gerofsky in honor of Ruth Lippman, 1992.70

ART OF
fertility and source of life
nurturing gifts of matriach
may be seen as submission
and servitude
under a Western gaze

Kneeling Female Figure (*Arugba*)

Maku of Erin (Yoruba, d. 1915) or Toibo of Erin
(Yoruba, d. circa 1937), early 20th century
Osogbo, Osun state, Nigeria
Wood, pigment; 22 x 7 x 8 in. (55.9 x 17.8 x 20.3

Gift of Helen and Robert A. Mandelbaum, 82.100a–b

Possible Pros and cons of digital technology

Capacity

store and display a lot of information with limited space

It can revitalise the heritage

Accessibility

rapidly share information (e.g. social networking)

deliver audience-specific content

use visitors' own equipment

ability to collect valuable evaluation and feedback

ability to create special interactivity that engages different senses and intellectual levels (can be creativity booster)

Flexibility

easily update content to refresh exhibitions and reflect changes in collections

share digital content across different platforms and technologies

Obsolescence

fast-changing of trends and technological developments

Not environmental friendly

Cost

technology can be expensive to maintain and update

Reliability

technology can break down and detract from visitor experiences if poorly maintained

Invasiveness

technology can distract people from engaging with the 'phenomenon'

Exclusivity and Limited experience

Excluded audiences depending on the choice of technology / media

often involving only a small number of people at a time

Passivity

e.g. sit and stare at a screen (can be creativity killer)

Inflexibility

difficulties in updating (proprietary versus open source)

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KÖME   interpret europe

The aim of a digital interpretation planning training is to show and practice the opportunities and limitations of the technology in developing content for interpretation

The Muse.ar opportunity:

- Artists
- Museums
- Developers

How can interpretation provide them with aspects to consider?

Digital technology in heritage interpretation (evaluation sheet)

1. Is the digital device properly selected to suit the intended audience(s)

2. Is the digital technology properly selected to suit the site and site management?

3. Does digital interpretation fit in the wider interpretive scene?

4. What effect does it have on the audience?

5. Do content elements support each other and work as a whole?

6. Is the content clear, simple and appropriate for the intended audience?

7. Does the content help participants find meaning?

	0	+	+ +	+ + +	Comments
Has the digital interpretive product weaknesses/deficiencies which could have been avoided with a proper research prior to and/or testing during its development?					
Is monitoring incorporated?					
Are the environmental, physical conditions favourable to include the device (e.g. sufficient space; amount of light; humidity; noise level; conservation issues)?					

3. Does digital interpretation fit in the wider interpretive scene?	0	+	+ +	+ + +	Comments
Does it work in conjunction with other forms of interpretation of the site?					
Does digital interpretation enhance existing interpretation?					
Does it contribute to layering the content?					
Does it include first-hand experiences with the phenomenon?					
Is the image of the design in line with the image of the site or does it differ for purpose?					
Has the digital interpretive product weaknesses/deficiencies which could have been avoided with a proper testing during its development?					

4. What effect does it have on the audience?					
Is the service attractive and make people want to use it? (first impressions)					
What is the holding time of the service?					
Is the image of the design in line with (assumed) expectations of the intended audience?					
Does it use motivational techniques (e.g. raising open-ended questions, offering fun, humour, collecting, status, gaming and other methodological and/or rhetorical 'stepping stones')?					
Does it help the intended audience relate to the phenomena/feature by connecting with the audience's everyday lives, experience, interests and culture?					
Does it evoke emotional connections with the phenomenon?					
Does it involve the user physically (other than punching the screen or scrolling)?					
Does it encourage interaction with others? (staff, other audience members)					
Does it provoke thoughts and further thinking?					
Does it give the opportunity to the users to react or express personal thoughts?					
Does it orient the user well in space, time and activities?					

Digital technology in heritage interpretation (evaluation sheet)

The current version of the evaluation sheet is available if you send an e-mail to:

arpad@heritagemanager.hu

Any feedback and comment is also welcome!

The IE training programme:

- writing, guiding, planning hosting, performing

- training + certification process

- Target audience: creators but not designers

Target audience

The course targets participants who already possess some basic experience in content development for digital tools and want to work more closely with designers, to be more clear in briefing them and to do all this work based on an interpretive approach.

Training + Certification

Day 1-2: basics of HI on digital examples

DAY 3-5: Certified members can join only the relevant parts (days 3-5) which concentrate on the specificities of interpretation applied in the digital environment.

Training + Certification

TRAINING tasks:

- one phenomenon-topic-theme trinity of the training site,
- concept note + two connected stages (text, layout, transformations, interactions) of a storyboard,
- written test

HOMEWORK:

- full concept note and storyboard including the first brief to the dedveloper,
- critiquing

Testing the training

WHO: Creatives, museum professionals, IT experts, curators, academics and university students in different stages of the development

HOW: Test trainings, hackathons, workshops

FEEDBACK: written survey, semi-structured discussion and interviews

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