Museums and Technology: Examples to Explore

1. Databases

1.A  University of Alberta Museums  
http://www.museums.ualberta.ca/dig/search.htm  

1.B  Scultpur Demonstrator  
http://www.sculpfeurweb.org/  

1.C  MuseumFinland / MuseoSuomi  
http://www.museosuomi.fi/  

2. Web 2.0 [contributory and interactive]

2.A  Tagging  
Powerhouse Museum, OPAC 2.0  
http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/collection/database/  
2.B Contributed Content: Custom Application Icons – a portrait of England
http://www.icons.org.uk/

2.C Contributed Content: Open Source [drupal]
Science Buzz: Science Museum of Minnesota
http://buzz.smm.org/buzz/

  • von Appen K., Kennedy B. and Spadaccini J., Community Sites & Emerging Sociable
    Technologies, in J. Trant and D. Bearman (eds.). Museums and the Web 2006:
    Proceedings, Toronto: Archives & Museum Informatics, published March 1, 2006 at

2.D Contributed Content: flickr
Brooklyn Museum: Brooklyn Bridge
http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/research/digital-collections/brooklynbridge/community/
http://www.flickr.com/groups/brooklynmuseumbrooklynbridge/pool/

2.E Contributed Content: Open Source Wiki
The Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program (MAEP) – MAEPedia
http://www.arts Mia.org/maep/wiki/

  • Hoffmann, P., and M. Herczeg, Attraction by Interaction: Wiki Webs As A Way To
    Increase The Attractiveness Of Museums’ Web Sites, in J. Trant and D. Bearman (eds.).
    March 31, 2005 at

3. Getting the Word Out

3.A Podcasting
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
http://www.sfmoma.org/education/edu_podcasts.html

  • Samis, P. and Pau, S., ‘Artcasting’ at SFMOMA: First-Year Lessons, Future Challenges for
    Museum Podcasters broad audience of use, in J. Trant and D. Bearman (eds.). Museums

3.B Blogging
University of British Columbia Botanical Garden and Centre for Plant Research
Botany Photo of the Day
3.B.1 http://www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org/potd/ (Botany photo of the day, blog)

  • Mosquin, D., All Weblogs Are Not Created Equal: Analyzing What Works, in J. Trant
    and D. Bearman (eds.). Museums and the Web 2006: Proceedings, Toronto: Archives &
    Museum Informatics, published March 1, 2006 at

  • MuseumBlogs.org – http://www.museumblogs.org
3.C RSS
The 24hour Museum
http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/


4. Engagement

4.A 3-D environments In Interpretation: Monticello Explorer
http://explorer.monticello.org/


4.B 3-D environments Virtual Realities: museums in second life
New Media Consortium Virtual Words project
http://virtualworlds.nmc.org/


4.C Gaming: Discover Babylon
http://www.discoverbabylon.org


4.D Gaming: Questacon

4.E  In-Gallery: PUCRS Science and Technology Museum

During visit students using mobile tablets, see


4.F  Cell Phone Tours

Brooklyn


4.G  Teacher / Student: Wonder Walls at the 4-H Children’s Gardens


4.H  Distance Learning: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Educational Activities

http://www.ushmm.org/education/forstudents/


5.  On-line & On-site


6. Accessibility


7. Evaluation


Museums and Technology: Resources

1. Technology Management Assistance

1.A Non-Profit Management Library
http://www.managementhelp.org/

1.B Alliance for Nonprofit Management: Finding a Consultant
http://www.allianceonline.org/Provider_Search

1.C TechSoup – The Technology Place for Nonprofits
http://www.techsoup.org

Learning Center includes articles on many topics, such as:

  http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/databases/page6085.cfm

2. Collections Documentation

2.A Collections Management Software Review
http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/Collections_Mangement/Software_Review/index.html

- Available products, comparisons and evaluation advice

2.B Technical Advisory Service for Images (TASI)
http://www.tasi.ac.uk/

- Technical advice and documentation

2.C North East Documentation Conservation Center School for Scanning
http://www.nedcc.org/home.php

3. Evaluating your Web Site

3.A Usability Analysis of Web Sites

- Paul Marty and Michael Twidle, Lost in gallery space: A conceptual framework for analyzing the usability flaws of museum Web sites. First Monday, volume 9, number 9 (September 2004), http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue9_9/marty/
3.B Remote Usability Testing


4. Museum Community Resources

4.A Museum-L
http://home.ease.lsoft.com/scripts/wa.exe?SUBED1=MUSEUM-L&D=0&T=0

4.B Museums and the Web Online
http://conference.archimuse.com/

4.C Museum Computer Network
http://www.mcn.edu/

5. Jewish Cultural Resources On-line

5.A The Online Jewish Museum of the Next Generation
http://www.toldot.org/

5.B Beth-Hatefutsoth
http://www.bh.org.il/index.html

5.C Internet Jewish History Sourcebook
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/jewish/jewishsbook.html

5.D Jewish Virtual Library
http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/index.html

5.E Jewish Heritage Online Magazine
http://www.jhom.com/index.htm

5.F Jewish Encyclopedia
http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/
Managing Technology Projects

- Project must address mission/programmatic objective

- What success means must be expressed in non-technical terms upfront
- Widespread understanding and acceptance by staff across museum essential
- Supported from the top

- Functional requirements articulated, agreed, and made basis for acceptance tests
- Project responsibility assigned broadly
- Responsibilities for on-going data contributions and museum wide support accepted by all involved

- Basis for accepting a proposal (in house or out sourced) agreed
- Extensive research conducted to determine where to send rfp
- RFP language blind tested, preferably with professionals from outside museum
- Project includes interim user testing and formative evaluation stages
- Formal instruments for proposal evaluation signed off before rfp

- Substantial time is allowed for assessment of proposals
- Contract incorporates all aspects of proposal and includes payment only for reusable deliverables with significant hold-backs until final acceptance. Internal “contracts” are agreed for project oversight and management
- Concrete schedules for the entire project team – inside and out – are mutually agreed in writing

- Communication around all aspects of the contract is formal and cites the specific requirement and deliverables under discussion
- Each deliverable is formally accepted or not, and acceptance test are rigorously applied
- Payments are directly tied to contracted deliverables and passed tests.
- Implementation plans involve entire museum staff, at least at level of being informed.
  Project progress is publicly posted and regularly referenced.
- When ready to implement, programmatic objectives and success criteria are revisited. Plans for summative evaluations are made before any implementation begins.

- Soft launch if possible; if not possible, conduct extensive usability tests with non-participants before launch.
- Prepare and distribute extensive publicity materials to ensure greatest possible use – failure from non-use is always a possibility.
- Conduct summative evaluations
- Brief museum staff on early feedback, impacts, and implications and ensure they are ready for long-term maintenance and feeding.