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Virtual Museum of Canada Lab Projects: Lessons Learned

Canadian Heritage Information Network

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iMuseum: New Technologies for New & Traditional Audiences – OMA-OAAG

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Outline

1. Virtual Museum of Canada (VMC) Experimental Lab
2. Examples of projects
3. Lessons learned
 - a) Planning
 - b) Time commitment
 - c) Open source software and social media
 - d) High Schools
 - e) Benefits
 - f) Audiences
4. Conclusions







1. CHIN's Virtual Museum of Canada Experimental Lab

- www.virtualmuseum.ca – VMC Lab
- Pilot projects testing digital technologies for:
 - relevance to museums & galleries
 - potential for increasing visibility and attracting audiences
- Collaborative projects with museum/gallery partners
- Reports, with lessons learned, tips, and strategies, are added to CHIN's Professional Exchange (www.pro.rcip-chin.gc.ca)



2. Examples of projects

V M C 	Focus/Aim	Content	Audience	Tools tested
	Youth engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Selected works from partner institutions- Student-produced research papers and creative responses to the works	Youth	WordPress Facebook
	Public engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Selected works from partner institutions- Research papers by graduate art history students- User-contributed treasures	Targeted: 18-34 Actual: Baby Boomers	WordPress YouTube Flickr Facebook
 Joe Fafard at the National Gallery of Canada	Public access	Works from the Retrospective of Joe Fafard, at the NGC, the McMichael, and the MacKenzie	All	Panoramic technology



3.a. Lessons Learned: Planning

- Project coordinator
- Brainstorm ideas, objectives, expected outcomes, roles and responsibilities, budget, risks
- Plan the content:
 - Text
 - Images
 - Audio/video
 - Metadata



3.a. Lessons Learned: Planning

- Implications for areas of a museum/gallery:
 - Curatorial
 - Collections Management
 - Education
 - Marketing / Communications
 - IT / Multimedia / Web
 - Administration
 - Legal / Copyright
 - Conservation
 - Volunteers



3.b. Lessons Learned: Time Commitment

- Set target date, but be flexible
- Plan time for:
 - Project planning
 - Content development
 - Design
 - Technical development
 - Usability testing
 - Copyright matters
 - Translation
 - Content QA
 - Technical QA



3.c. Lessons Learned: Open source software and social media

- Third party or open source software (e.g. WordPress)
- Social media (Flickr, YouTube, Facebook)
 - offers flexibility, rapid updates, dialogue
 - Users expect regular interaction – have a clear focus, initiate discussions, and monitor and respond to comments



3.c. Lessons Learned: Open source software and social media

- Review, compare, analyze options
- Social media: possible in your corporate environment?
- Accessibility guidelines



3.d. Lessons learned: About high schools

- Work with schools on the same academic schedule
- Align project with curriculum
- Privacy concerns (or not!)
- Online interaction
- Behind-the-scenes visits
- Step-by-step guidelines
- Permissions from parents



3.e. Lessons Learned: Benefits

For students

- Behind-the-scenes visits; access to experts; Web publication/credit & in-house exhibition; learning to write for the public/web; awareness of & interest in museums; potential career option

For museums & gallery partners

- new, enriched content about works in their collections; increased awareness about the strengths of the students; experience with social media – a technology familiar to the students (a target audience); contributed to succession planning and knowledge transfer; extended life of in-house exhibition; collective effort, greater visibility

Model

- for collaborative projects with students, institutions



3.f. Lessons Learned: About audiences

- Provide clear guidelines on how to participate
- Plan for a target audience, but be prepared for different results
- Expect few user-generated videos
- Log-in and password requirements put off users



5. Conclusions

- Projects were worth doing
- Potential for museums to use these technologies
- Plan for time, money, & resources



Thank you...

Questions?

www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca

www.pro.rcip-chin.gc.ca