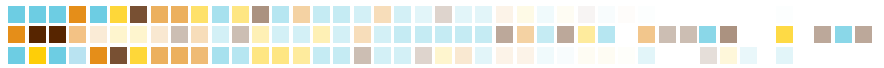


PERSPECTIVES



A monthly look at what's happening in the ever-changing digital world and beyond.

From the Editors

In this month’s issue, the Digital Integration and Innovation team looks at the intersection of brick-and-mortar cultural institutions and the advent of digital technology. We unearth how art museums, restaurant festivals and national parks are using social media, mobile apps and more to engage their target audience and make their experiences more valuable, interactive and in some cases less expensive. In “Get Some Culture. Pick Up Your SmartPhone,” we dissect the best uses of onsite QR codes to educate museum visitors, and in “Explore America’s Parks Online and Via Social Media” we look at how YouTube, iTunes and the like can be used to enhance outdoor excursions. In “Checking in at the Museum with Foursquare” and “Groupon: Good for Consumers, Good for Museums,” we analyze whether these tools are successful drivers of visitor traffic, and examine strategies for incorporating them into a marketing strategy. Finally, new technologies are explored in “Seeing Differently: Vision Technology in Museums” and “Google Art Project – Bringing New Meaning to ‘Digital Art’,” where we evaluate technological advances that provide virtual cultural experiences for museum audiences.

These articles look at many of the digital tools available to cultural marketers—tools that, if used properly, can benefit both the consumer and the institution. We seek to provide marketers with the stepping-stones and thought-starters needed to bridge the gap between an increasingly mobile world and the cultural institutions that have sustained society through centuries of technological changes. Now is the time to embrace this intersection, because the use of technology is a cultural institution in itself.

Enjoy!

Sara Weiner

Associate Director, Digital Integration & Innovation

As always, we encourage your feedback. Contribute to the conversation online, where versions of *Perspectives* are available for comment on our website’s Sparkblog and on SlideShare, or send us an email letting us know what you think. If you are interested in a custom briefing on any topic in this edition, RTCRM is here for you—just contact your Project Manager or Account Manager. If you aren’t a current RTCRM client and would like a custom briefing, contact us and we’ll talk. If you are looking for the latest in digital trends with a healthy dose of attitude, visit *Treffpunkt*—the RTCRM Digital Integration and Innovations team blog—at <http://rtctreffpunkt.blogspot.com/>.

Thanks!

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Seeing Differently: Vision Technology in Museums

Summary: Museums have always existed to make art, culture and history more accessible to everyone. New technological innovations are redefining the traditional museum experience by changing how visitors can access and engage with exhibited artifacts. Eye-tracking technology and location-aware guide devices for the visually impaired will provide the 21st-century museum goer with a more personalized, immersive experience.

Robert Chedid, Analyst
Strategy & Insights

Fascinated by people and what motivates them. Insatiable appetite for info. And Lebanese food. Night owl, blogger, Jersey boy & proud Hoya.

Key Information

Personalizing museum tours for the individual. Traditionally, a museum tour is led by a trained volunteer with extensive knowledge about the museum’s many artifacts. More recently, the pre-recorded audio guide replaced the tour guide, adding a degree of personalization and convenience to the experience. A new software application called Museum Guide 2.0 (MG2.0) works in conjunction with a head-mounted mobile eye tracker to create a customized tour for the individual wearing the device.¹ The eye tracker synchronizes the user’s eye movements to an external scene camera that surveys the space visible to that user. When the application detects that the user’s eyes are fixated on an object, audio information specific to that object is delivered via earphones. The camera, equipped with object recognition technology to identify possible objects of interest, draws on a pre-populated image database that must store multiple images of each object to account for the multiple points of view from which an object can be observed.

Making museum visits more engaging for the visually impaired. Most museum visits are primarily visual experiences. Imagine studying a painting or reading artifact descriptions while navigating rooms full of statues, display cases, school classes on field trips and tour groups—it can feel like an obstacle course. Now imagine doing the same, only with a visual impairment. LodeStar is a location-aware mobile device that guides the visually impaired through museums.² Using RFID technology, proximity to an object of interest triggers audio information describing the object in deep detail so the user can create accurate mental imagery. Hardware controls allow the user to select which triggered descriptions he or she wants to listen to and which he or she prefers to skip. In interactive displays, the device can instruct the user to touch the object (and in some cases even smell it), providing spatial information along the way. Redundant information about service area locations such as restrooms and the gift shop help the user construct a mental map of the space. The device is designed so that the controls are intuitive and can be learned rapidly, since users have only the length of a museum visit to use the device.

Implications and Action Items

Technology is evolving and redefining the way museums accomplish their mission of educating their visitors.³ While the basic premise of the museum visit remains unchanged, new devices are creating a more personalized, engaging and enjoyable experience for visitors. Here are some tips for marketers of any product or service:

- **Reduce barriers for new audiences.** Think about audiences your service or product is not designed to serve, and brainstorm creative ways you can use new digital media and technology to remove barriers to use.
- **Design with your target’s special needs in mind.** The LodeStar prototype’s touch-screen was too large. In testing, users said their fingers felt “lost” without any roughness, and important navigation modifications were made.
- **Consider usability in context.** MG2.0’s object recognition capability depends on a database of images that needs to account for viewing 3D objects from different angles, changes in lighting, etc. Consider the environmental variables that will be present when your product will be used, and select which are strategically most important to accommodate.

¹ <http://wndr.mn/museumguide2pt0>

² <http://wndr.mn/lodestar>

³ <http://wndr.mn/e9ah>, <http://wndr.mn/mashable>



Groupon: Good for Consumers, Good for Museums

Summary: Social couponing sites such as Groupon drive not only media coverage, but also foot traffic for cultural institutions and cultural events that otherwise may go unnoticed. These websites, frequented by a range of demographics, provide low-cost entry to museums, concert halls, food fairs and theater shows. Groupon has been criticized for driving one-time, low-value customers. Yet for cultural institutions that people tend to visit only a few times a year anyway, Groupon makes good marketing sense.

Sara Weiner, *Associate Director*
Digital Integration & Innovation

Years of planning, prodding & implementing digital stuff. Philadelphia born 'n' raised. Geeky, athletic and green. Go Big Red!

Key Information

Groupon, an online social couponing site, provides daily discounts and coupons for members. Discounts run across categories, from food fairs to Whole Foods, beauty salons to Broadway shows. Users can opt to purchase the coupons, which generally provide discounts such as “2 days for the price of 1 at Brooklyn Museum” or “VIP access to Taste of DC.” Users then print the coupon and use it as specified. Groupon and similar sites are great for a few reasons: 1) they allow consumers interested in trying a new experience to do so at a lower cost/risk; 2) they entice consumers to try things they wouldn't otherwise consider; and 3) they provide new foot traffic to business that wouldn't otherwise be on the radar. However, these sites have also been criticized for driving one-time shoppers or discount-seekers to venues that they will not return to. Groupon engenders a one-time experience, but not necessarily a long-term customer relationship.

However, for cultural, art and theatrical venues, ones consumers tend to only visit once or twice a year, Groupon incents relevant patrons to attend an event at a discounted rate. A number of institutions across the country have taken advantage of this model. As early as 2009, the Brooklyn Museum offered a Groupon. More recently *Traces*, currently on Broadway, engaged with Groupon to sell tickets; the Grammy Museum in LA, a tourist attraction, utilized Groupon to bring in foot traffic; and Taste of DC in Washington, sold coveted VIP and full-day passes via Groupon.

Implications and Action Items

For museums, theaters, and specifically once-a-year events such as art fairs, concerts and tourist-oriented museums, Groupon provides a media spotlight and a facilitated customer experience. It creates relevance by being timely and top of mind, and drives purchase by offering discounted entry with a feeling of exclusivity. Cultural institutions can leverage Groupon, but should be aware of the following:

- **Promote the offer.** While Groupon displays all offers on its website, promoting the offer through your own means (newsletters, website, flyers, newspaper) will help spread the word and increase traffic.
- **Encourage return visits.** To gain more than one-time visitors, consider collecting emails or mailing addresses so you can add visitors to your communications. Special offers and experiences once they have arrived at your venue may also encourage return patronage.
- **Know your audience.** Groupon is widely used, but attracts a younger and more digitally savvy audience who are looking for deals. Before moving forward with Groupon or a similar site, consider if this is your core consumer base or if it's a consumer base you want to draw into your cultural community.

Explore America's Parks Online and Via Social Media

Summary: Established in 1916, the National Park Service (NPS) is entrusted to conserve and protect America's national parks for present and future generations. To aid in this endeavor, NPS has begun to utilize various social media platforms and has utilized its .gov website to engage with audiences and connect them to the heritage and spirit of America's national parks so as to get them outside where they can be active and have fun.

Rebecca Johnson, Strategist

Digital Integration and Innovation

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Key Information

At present, the National Park Service (NPS) oversees 395 park units that cover more than 83 million acres and include sites like national monuments, seashores, recreation areas, historic sites, military parks, battlefields, and other designated units.

In this era of digital connectedness, NPS has realized that engaging with and educating park visitors and potential visitors (be they U.S. citizens or not) is something that shouldn't be limited to the physical confines of the park, but rather can be possible on a continuing basis. To do this, NPS has expanded its digital presence by creating a YouTube channel, launching a Facebook fan page, developing park-specific podcasts for iTunes and creating microsities within its current nps.gov website that are focused on specific educational and outreach programs.



Although these efforts have broadened the reach of NPS's mission, because the resources exist in various disparate locations, NPS is losing out on effectively providing users with complete, robust and easily findable national park information and stories.

Implications and Action Items

While the National Park Service's use of YouTube, Facebook, iTunes podcasts and microsities represents a giant leap for this government agency, NPS's efforts have left a lot of room for growth and offer us much to learn from.

- **Think beyond the structure of your website.** Promoting specific NPS initiatives and outreach programs? The nps.gov information architecture and layout weren't built for that purpose. Rather than sticking with that site's template, NPS created internal microsities (e.g. www.nps.gov/americasbestidea) that allow them to break the mold of nps.gov and create digital experiences streamlined for specific content and messaging.
- **Emphasize the main call-to-action.** A big challenge for NPS is to create content that enriches visitors' park experiences but doesn't result in 1) visitors walking around parks with their headphones on and eyes glued to devices, not the park; 2) decreased park visits because of virtual technology. To avoid this, NPS should focus on creating content that's best viewed *before or after* visiting a park, such as a guide on animals to look for or bird calls to listen for, and content that expands on what visitors may have seen and learned during their visits.
- **Create a central portal that builds cohesive, rich stories.** While NPS gains a lot of exposure by posting pieces of content in various formats and on various channels, NPS has not used the functionality of these platforms to create cohesive and robust information sources for its park units. Rather than forcing users to scour for information, provide all of it in one place and organize it in a manner that contextualizes content. Then park enthusiasts can easily find what they're looking for and understand the full weight and significance of its meaning.

Checking in at the Museum with Foursquare

Summary: At first glance, Foursquare and museums may seem like a natural fit. Checking in at a museum taps into its location-based nature – a visit could unlock badges related to an exhibit or specific works in the collection. Foursquare badges and offers can also encourage people to regularly visit the museum. However, Foursquare remains a niche service that lacks widespread adoption: The number of museum visitors who check in is a tiny fraction of total museum visits. This raises a question for museums: How much should they invest in using Foursquare?

Kara Reinsel, Senior Strategist
Digital Integration & Innovation

Digital marketer and online business strategist. DMV local. Art, food and fashion enthusiast.

Key Information

At a top level, the audience of Foursquare users and museum visitors do not naturally overlap. Foursquare is a location-based service (LBS). According to Forrester Research, 80% of LBS users are male and 70% of them are between the ages of 19 and 35.¹ In contrast, the median age of a museum visitor is 43 years old² and men and women visit museums on an equal basis.³

For example, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) had 3.1 million visitors in 2010⁴ with only 52,914 Foursquare check-ins (1.7% of visitors). Other museums' total visitor vs. Foursquare check-in statistics follow a similar pattern. With these demographics in mind, why would any museum professional spend money on Foursquare?

Most museums appear to be using Foursquare as a way to experiment with an emerging technology and engage with new audiences, not as a means to generate revenue. For example, MoMA had a "secret" Foursquare badge for the Marina Abramović performance art piece "The Artist Is Present" that could only be unlocked if you sat down opposite the artist and cried. It's unclear if word of the badge's existence increased attendance at MoMA, but it did generate buzz.



It's also important for museums to consider the audience they want to engage—is it repeat visitors, locals, out-of-towners, once-in-a-lifetime visitors? Each of these groups has distinct needs, and what motivates them to use Foursquare will vary. If the majority of a museum's visitors are one-time-only, then reward first-time visitors. A museum could also experiment using the new Foursquare Lists functionality by creating lists that encourage visitors to explore. For example, the Smithsonian is a perfect match for Foursquare Lists because it could create a list that incorporates visits to its numerous museums such as the Museum of Natural History, the Museum of American History, the Portrait Gallery, and the Air and Space Museum, just to name a few.

Implications and Action Items

For museums, or any industry that is considering using an emerging technology such as Foursquare, it is helpful to keep the following in mind.

- **Align resources with audience size.** The amount of financial and human capital used to support a presence on Foursquare should reflect the number of visitors who are actually engaging with the technology. Just because Foursquare is the hottest, latest app, doesn't mean a museum should invest significant resources upfront—consider doing a beta test first to determine visitor interest and engagement.
- **Have clear goals.** Knowing why you want to use Foursquare is critical. Valid goals can include: PR opportunity, attracting new visitors, interacting with visitors in an innovative way, or a chance to try something new and gather key learnings.

¹ *Advertising Age*, "Forrester: Why Most Marketers Should Forgo Foursquare." July 26, 2010.

² *The Art Newspaper*, "Will US museums succeed in reinventing themselves?" January 2010. <http://bit.ly/872bNs>

³ Institute of Museum and Library Services, *InterConnections: The IMLS National Study on the Use of Libraries, Museums and the Internet*. 2008.

⁴ Museum Musings, "Visitor numbers as a chart of success." April 4, 2011. <http://tinyurl.com/5vdbg5m>

About RTCRM

RTC Relationship Marketing (RTCRM) is a full-service direct marketing and relationship marketing agency based in Washington, D.C., in the heart of Georgetown, with an additional office in New York. RTCRM boasts more than 40 years' worth of innovative, targeted solutions that grow its clients' brands and help them forge lasting, valuable relationships with their customers. What distinguishes RTCRM is its unique ability to analyze data and research on both a rational and emotional level. RTCRM's clients include major brands in the telecom, technology, pharmaceutical, and other business sectors such as AARP, BlackRock, Eli Lilly, and Novo Nordisk.

To learn more about RTCRM, please visit www.rtcrm.com or follow the Twitter feed @rtcrm.

About the Digital Integration and Innovation Team

The RTCRM Digital Integration and Innovation team is tasked with keeping track and making sense of the ever-changing digital world. It's our job to understand the nuances of how and why different types of people use technology and what that tells us about them. More importantly, it's our job to help our clients apply this knowledge to better communicate with their customers. We help clients translate business goals into marketing campaigns that build relationships with customers. In the 21st century, understanding how and why someone uses technology is as important as understanding where they live, what gender they are, and how old they are. That's where we come in. From ensuring that technographics are considered in the research phase, to tactical plans that align digital, print and broadcast tactics, we work with clients and internal partners to make sure it all works.

It's not about what's cool. It's about what's smart.

Treffpunkt, Digital Integration and Innovation Team Blog: <http://rtctreffpunkt.blogspot.com>

