SHOWCASING GLAM COLLECTIONS VIA INTERACTIVE DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Beata Dawson & Dr. Pauline Joseph

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Beata Dawson
Curtin University
Kent Street, Bentley, Perth, Western Australia 6102
beata.dawson@postgrad.curtin.edu.au; www.beata-dawson.site

Dr. Pauline Joseph

In the presentation at our segment of the digital access stream, we have shared how digital technologies can be brought together to tell a story of a museum object collection through interactive digital multimedia/storytelling.

VISUALISATION AND DIGITAL STORYTELLING

According to Spence (2014), visualisation is the formation of a mental model of something. Casselman (2000) highlights that pictures often play a crucial role in logical demonstration and convey information. In Sviokla’s (2009) view, visualisation is vital to cope with today’s information ocean. Sviokla, further states that visualisation is efficient to let people look at massive information flow quickly, to create, discover and share new understanding, and to combine data.

Baker and Bushell (1995) define information visualisation as featuring full storyboarding, well-chosen representation, high-quality rendering, and professional narration.

Digital storytelling combines the traditional storytelling with digital tools and technologies, such as digital images, video clips, sound components, and audio narration. As Robin determines, it aims to recount historical events. That is what the story of the Markham car collection does.

According to (Spierling, 2005), interactive storytelling allows the audience to influence the story in various ways and levels of interaction. Using various digital technologies, storytellers can create rich stories to leave a legacy of cultural history for future generations. This was the aim of Dawson’s creative research, as well.

In summary, visualisation is an important aspect as “visualisation in a narrative context, such as storytelling can help to communicate information and understand a story, thereby making the story more “comprehensible, memorable and credible to the general public” (Ma, Liao, Frazier, Hauser, & Kostis, 2012).
THE DIGITAL PRODUCTION
THE STORY OF THE MARKHAM CAR COLLECTION

The inspiration for the digital multimedia production is based on Joseph’s research published in the Collections: A Journal for Museums and Archives Professionals in the article titled Heritage of the Markham Car Collection: Estrangement from the West Australian Motoring Community (Joseph, 2016).

The story of the Markham car collection is a panorama tour consisting of interactive digital multimedia elements, the creative part of Dawson’s Ph.D. research. Digitised and visualised information sources and different media formats and modals were combined into one complex multimedia production.

The production is partially interactive, mainly guided; however, the audience can navigate it themselves and interact with the story only to a certain degree. The story itself is linear; the events are presented in a pre-set path, in a predefined (recommended) sequence. Users’ interactions only occur when walking through the different museum rooms and ‘interact’ with various media elements. They cannot alter the storyline; only change the order of scenes and the order of multimedia elements within the scenes. The order of the different multimedia components in each showroom does not affect the storyline, however, the alteration from the suggested path among the scenes can cause misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the story.

The development of the digital production commenced in 2015 and 2016, and involved many stages, including information management; managing information technology requirements; scriptwriting and storyboard; digital media management; establishing virtual museum environment; building the virtual tour for three platforms; and giving life to the tour to make the virtual museum experience engaging for users.

THE USE OF THE DIGITAL PRODUCTION

The story of the Markham car collection is used or can be used for various purposes, and in different areas such as: in research, in museum environment and in the education.

The digital production is the creative part of Dawson’s Ph.D. research. The production was employed in the second stage of her research to investigate its usability by expert testers in terms of learnability, understandability, attractiveness and satisfaction. It is applied in the final
stage of the research project to evaluate the general public users’ experience, using an online questionnaire.

There are some opportunities for museums to deliver the content and provide personalized experiences to users on location, e.g. QR codes, beacon technology.

Dr. Joseph uses the production as an educational resource to address pedagogy topics concerning ethics, role of cultural institutions, advocacy matters and the importance of community engagement.

THE REQUIRED SKILLSETS

For the production of this digital work (‘The story of the Markham car collection’), different skill sets and technical knowledge were needed in a variety of fields.

These skill sets cover three broader areas: (1) information management, including archiving processes; (2) information technology, including web-technologies and basic mark-up languages; and (3) multimedia design and development, including film making, screenplay writing, being aware of design elements and principles, different terms related to audio and video technology.

Through the design and development of the production 17 different software and applications were employed. Gaining advanced technical skills and knowledge was essential to create the production and deliver it to different platforms.

Thank you for your attention. We hope you enjoyed the presentation and how digital multimedia production technologies could be used to tell stories of physical collections in museums for wide access.

Hereby, we would like to invite you to participate in the final stage of Dawson’s research.
REFERENCES


