

## Digital Media Related to Visitor Strategy

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Over the last year I have been to a lot of conferences and listened to a lot of different museum voices. A common question that comes up is “What is our digital strategy?” Other questions along the same lines are “What should our digital strategy be?” “We need an app!” “Our website needs to have a database of all of our entire collection!” Bringing to life the dream of *the one magic creation*.

The dream of the *one magic creation* is one thing that will solve all the digital problems and of course is a one size fits all experience. The *magic creation* shows up in all our lives but alas it is yet another urban myth, much like the perfect love match (never has bad breath) and nice boss. The *one magic creation* never solves the real problem. *Who is your visitor and what are they interested in.* The real question to be asked is “What is your visitor strategy?”

I have sat with people that believe since so many visitors are staring at their phones, visitors just want to visit your space and continue to stare at their phones or *the magic app*. Visitors are waiting with baited breath for your museum to have the coolest app that they can download it and keep forever!

Yet if your visitors were to download the app or interact with their phones, why would they need to visit the museum? Yes, you may be able to interact with an exhibit with the app but the main behavior we don’t want to encourage is the visitor interacting with another phone-based experience.

And depending upon the age of your visitor they may have some or no interest in your app or website.

The first questions to be answered are who are your visitors? Older generations? Millennials? Gen Z? Families? Super fans?

Older generations might visit the website to get access to the visiting information but Millennials and Gen Z are NOT interested in your website or app. They won’t download it. They will ask Google, Siri or Alexa about the hours and directions and continue on their way.

There has been a lot of desire in Museums to have all artifacts and images digitized to be available on the website, tablet app and mobile device. Allowing digital visitors to find artifacts, art, special exhibits, items that they may never get to see if they live far away, is a wonderful reason to digitize and share your collection. Democratizing of information – allowing art or history students in other states access to rare pieces is an amazing way to expand your museums reach.

BUT

If your group believes that there will be overwhelming curiosity from local visitors to immediately download your app and keep it on their device forever... that is only a fit for a small number of super fans.

So if the older generation and the younger generation is not interested in your application and Gen Z isn’t interested in your website then what? The experience is the hook. Something that visitors can do that has little to do with a phone or tablet is a rarity and perhaps photo worthy via Instagram or Snapchat (FYI - Gen Z is embarrassed by Facebook and only use it to check on Mom and Dad!)

There is nothing surprising or interesting about a computer/table/phone anymore. Experiences that bring art/materials into focus in a personalized and emotional way, create lasting memories. The visitor remembers where they were and what they were doing! With experiences, you may be able to create instant fans. Creating the usual experience that allows the visitors to have an impact, participating in the art, history or science content. Personalizing the museum to suit their needs and desires. Sharing the amazing time, they are having and what they are creating on their social media storyline. Allowing visitors to form a link between themselves and your content. These are the social experiences that all people are hungry for. Experiences matter.

Some of our Blue Telescope projects highlighting visitor creation/exploration are linked to below. There are some wonderful experiences that have been created in recent years. We are in a fantastic time where the ability to create personalized experiences for all our visitors is possible. Helping us all to change our visitors into life-long museum advocates!

### **Human Tree**

Transforming visitors into living works of fractal art!

<http://blue-telescope.com/project/national-museum-of-mathematics/>

### **Tessellation Maker**

Allow visitors to freely explore the geometry of patterns and tessellations!

<http://blue-telescope.com/project/beyond-rubiks-cube/>

### **Daisey – Injection Simulator**

Train physicians on the injection of a solution into the correct muscles in the head and neck in real time with millimeter accuracy.

<http://blue-telescope.com/project/daisey-injection-simulator/>