The Interactive Experience: Exploring Technologies for Creating Touchscreen Exhibits

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Simpson Library | University of Mary Washington
The Convergence Gallery

Photo by Cartland Berge
Joan Blaeu’s *Nova Virginia Tabula* (Map of Virginia), 1643

[Image of the map]

http://umwdigitallab.org/map.html
Opportunities and Challenges

**Opportunities**
- Showcase content in new ways and reuse it on many platforms
- Bring collections out of the archives to where the patrons are
- Good PR for the archives to show people our collections and services, leads to collaboration
- Can learn new systems, tools

**Challenges**
- Same issues inherent in all exhibit creation: identifying subjects, gathering images, writing text copy, and organizing content
- Finding the right platform or system for the exhibit topic
- Marketing exhibits to community, increasing awareness and usage
- Must learn new systems, tools
Exhibit and Menu Design ---> Implementation ---> User Testing ---> Refinement
Key Insights

- Take advantage of free content hosting and organization tools like Google Drive and Flickr, and free and open source exhibit-building programs
- Reuse content from other exhibitions and initiatives by remixing and editing
- Increase the value of exhibits by providing access on other platforms
- User testing for exhibit design and functionality is very important
- Web analytics provide a wealth of insightful, actionable information
- Use built-in touch functionality to create interactive exhibits without a lot of customization, although customization can increase functionality
What do you need for an exhibit like this?

- Touchscreen monitors and kiosk base
  - We used an Elo 24” touch monitor with multitouch support
- Computer
  - We used a Dell desktop with Windows 7 installed
- Internet connection

- Expensive, proprietary, complicated, hard-to-use software? (Adobe Flash)
- Free, open-source, complicated, hard-to-use software? (Gestureworks OpenExhibits)
- A programmer?
- A server?
Advantages

● Inexpensive
● Removes limits on who can contribute content
● Flexible
● Reusable content
● Reusable standard web skills and tools
It’s just a website

- Use free, easy-to-use, online tools, as many as you want
  - TimelineJS - https://timeline.knightlab.com/
  - StorymapJS - https://storymap.knightlab.com/
  - Prezi - https://prezi.com
  - RevealJS - http://lab.hakim.se/reveal-js/

- Make your own
Setup and Design

● Kiosk mode: make sure the user can’t escape
  ○ iframe sandbox attribute for external content
● Large buttons for easy navigation
● No keyboard, no scrolling, no hovering, no right-clicking
● Needs to be intuitive
● Pinch to zoom, swipe
Challenges

- Touch events don’t always just work

- Free online tools use iframes, Flash, which are hard to manipulate with code
Thanks!

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View all of our exhibits online at
http://umwdigitallab.org/kiosk.html