How to Create Online Exhibits
(a nuts & bolts webinar)

Association of Midwest Museums
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Why might we want an online exhibit?

Start with this question: “What is it that you want to accomplish?”

1. You recently opened an exhibit and then had to close your doors.
   a. Want to offer virtual tours of it.
   b. Want to make the content available before it closes (if you can’t extend it)

2. You want to use your collection or expertise to stay relevant right now and/or address at-home needs during this crisis.
   a. Offer new content or information through online experiences
   b. Provide access to collection while people can’t visit
   c. Find ways to repurpose or reorganize existing content into thematic offerings

3. You want to use this as a way to pilot topics or test content for future exhibits.

There are likely many other reasons!
Let’s start with a reminder for how to create great exhibits...
What makes a great in-person experience?

Let’s not forget what makes a great exhibit, no matter the format.

1. **Consider your audience.** Who are you designing this for? Families? Schools? Adults? Children?
   a. Awareness of the subject
   b. Developmental levels and learning needs
   c. Age appropriateness
   d. Attention spans

2. **Have a compelling storyline.** What do you hope people take away from this?
   a. Big Idea/main message(s)
   b. Enduring Question
   c. Interpretive Messages
What makes a great in-person experience?

(cont.)

3. **Make it visually interesting.** What’s going to keep their attention?
   a. Variety of elements
   b. Cohesive environment/design
   c. Create multiple “areas/spaces” to go into

4. **Have a clear hierarchy of information.** What’s important and what’s not?
   a. Be focused
   b. Organize your messages/ chunk them out
   c. Bold key points
What makes a great in-person experience?

(cont.)

5. **Make sure it is accessible.**
   a. Multiple learning styles and access points
   b. Audio narration
   c. Rich descriptions of visual elements
   d. Test designs in COBLIS (Color Blindness Simulator)
   e. Be judicious with fonts and colors

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**Coblis — Color Blindness Simulator**

If you are not suffering from a color vision deficiency it is very hard to imagine how it looks like to be colorblind. The Color Blindness Simulator can close this gap for you. Just play around with it and get a feeling of how it is to have a color vision handicap.

As all the calculations are made on your local machine, no images are uploaded to the server. Therefore you can use images as big as you like, there are no restrictions. Be aware, there are some issues for the "Lens feature" on Edge and Internet Explorer. All others should support everything just fine.

So go ahead, choose an image through the upload functionality or just drag and drop your image in the center of our Color Blindness Simulator. It is also possible to zoom and move your images around using your mouse – try it out, I hope you like it.
Extra considerations for online experiences

There are a few best practices for web-based experiences to consider.

1. **Text length**
   a. Total length, suggest staying around 250-350 words (500 max.)
   b. Chunk out your text, 50-60 words per paragraph

2. **Video length**
   a. In-person is usually around 90 seconds maximum
   b. Use individual, shorter clips (modules)

3. **Formatting**
   a. Have captions and rich descriptions
   b. Don't use too many fonts and choose fonts that are easy to read

4. **Build it in layers**, have multiple “spaces” to visit

5. **Access varies** based on platform used

Attend other online accessibility webinars, like Chicago Cultural Accessibility Consortium
Let’s look at typical formats and elements of online exhibits...
What do online exhibits usually look like?

There seem to be some pretty standard formats for online exhibits.

1. Webpage on an organization’s website
2. Dedicated Website
3. Online Collections Database
4. Apps and Other Platforms
Across Time & Space

Across Time & Space: Multicultural Representations of Girlhood is a survey of girl images from the beginning of recorded civilization to the present. We have put together images from many cultures and eras to see how girls have been represented in different ways. Certainly no singular image is indicative of an entire cultural viewpoint, thus we have utilized specific and general examples where appropriate.

As many societies do not record lasting representations of people, especially children, and others still have yet to really be thoughtfully examined, the exhibition is necessarily considerate of what images are accessible and informative on the themes we would like to illuminate. There are noticeable gaps both in our show and in the art historical record. This is due to a lack of primary research as well as availability of digital images.

Roman Egypt, early 3rd century

From the Roman occupation of Egypt survives a unique collection of portraits that provide unparalleled insight into individuals of that period.

England, late 16th century

Three Young Girls is a portrait of sisters who have a story to tell. They stand in a line facing the viewer all wearing the same elaborate gown that is seemingly the same size even for the obviously thinner girl.
Webpage on an Organization’s Website: National WWI Museum, Kansas City
Dedicated Website:
Jane Addams Hull-House Museum

Look At It This Way

What makes an object an artifact? Why do we save some things and not others? What can we learn from the things we save? It has long been the role of curators and scholars to answer these questions. We wanted to hear from others. Fashion designers, artists, bookmakers, novelists, bicycle repair people, and many more have looked closely at artifacts in our collection and created work in their chosen discipline that helps to illuminate our artifacts.

Look At It This Way is a project of the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum.

Blueprint

Froilan Landeros
Jane Patrick

Blueprint to make tabletop hand loom, circa 1900
Designer unknown
Jane Addams Hull-House Museum Collection

"A man often cannot understand the machine with which he works because there is no soil of out of which such an understanding may grow, and the natural connection of the workshop with culture is entirely lost to him." Jane Addams, First Report of the Labor Museum
Dedicated Website: Google A&C and British Library
Online Collections Database
Apps and Other Platforms

British Museum Guide
London Travel & Tours
Vusiem Tour Guides Ltd

5.0, 2 Ratings
Free - Offers In-App Purchases

Screenshot:
Explore the museum with over twenty and useful guide.
Great guide to the collection with images and audio.
Navigate galleries with an interactive map.
Select from hundreds of objects to create a tour.

Getty Publications

New App: The J. Paul Getty Museum Highlights of the Collections

Zoom in on 150 Highlights of the Getty Museum's Collections with our Mobile App. From treasured in the ancient world and medieval manuscripts to renaissance drawings, French furniture, Impressionist paintings, iconic American photographs, and much more, this app gives you access to 150 of the most beloved objects in the Getty's collection. Each object is presented with an image and a brief analysis, and some also include audio commentary and multiple views. This multipurpose app brings the Getty's most extraordinary artworks and the expertise of its curators to your fingertips.

Features:
- Nearly 200 images.
- Audio commentary on selected works.
- Videos that take you behind the scenes at the Getty Center and Getty Villa and explore the life of J. Paul Getty.

Platforms:
- Free
- iPhone
- iPad
- Android
- Nook
Apps and Other Platforms
Apps and Other Platforms Cont.
This piano was one of three shipped down the Mississippi River in the 1850's for the Rosenberg family, one of the early Jewish families of Helena. This Linstedt parlor piano was ordered for their daughters, and features mother of pearl inlaid keys and a Brazilian rosewood body. These pianos were often called “coffin” pianos, due to their unique shape that allowed them to be placed in smaller homes.

Come out and play at the Helena Museum!

GET IN TUNE WITH HISTORY

Cover photo credit: helenamuseum.com
Common elements of online exhibits

What do online exhibits primarily consist of?

1. Organizing **theme or topic**

2. **Written content**

3. **Images** or image galleries (new or repurposed)
   a. Photos of people, places and things
   b. Works of art or details from works
   c. Objects

4. Embedded **videos** (new or repurposed) - expert explaining a concept, staff member giving a tour, image slideshow, etc

Some examples included at-home or in-school activity suggestions or digital games
Let’s look at creative ideas for reaching beyond status quo...
How might we upgrade the typical formats?

What else might we do to create interest or hold a visitor’s attention?

Things to see:

1. Invite them to click to dive deeper, rather than place all content on a single page
2. Make it accessible - include captions or links to transcriptions, audio and visual elements, describe images
3. Feature multiple points of view or tell stories for varying learning levels/audiences
4. Use Prezi or whiteboard explainer videos to animate content vs. having paragraphs of text (embed as video, of course)
5. Reuse great freely licensed or publicly available content and cite the source
6. Try using infographics to convey facts
How might we upgrade the typical formats?

Some more ideas...

Things to do:

1. Add **interactives**, such as games or online versions of digital elements in other exhibits
2. Provide **DIY activities**
3. **Virtual tours** of a place or space featured in the story
4. Try interactive or scrolling **timelines**
5. Add **zoom or spin effects** for images of artifacts
What ideas have you had?

Share ideas in the chat box.
Resources for DIY online games

Some resources exist for creating free online games to add to websites, often used by teachers. Give them a try!

1. **WISC-ONLINE GameBuilder** - matching, crosswords, jeopardy, sports-related games, etc.

2. **Quizlet** - make flash card style games

3. **Interact** quiz tool
   a. **Colonial Williamsburg** uses these quiz games in their online exhibits

4. **Educaplay** free gamification tool - riddles, memory games, word scrambles, matching columns, etc.
Resources for other content

You may be interested in unique ways to deliver content in your online exhibit. Here are a few ideas:

1. **Fiverr** - hire an artist or animator to create an animated or whiteboard sketch explainer video for you (among other things) - quickly!

2. **Slideshow Presentations** - turn your PowerPoint into a video presentation or try [Prezi](#) instead

3. **Videos** - look for videos marked as [Creative Commons on YouTube](#) videos, check out [Creative Commons](#) and [Vimeo Creative Commons](#). You can also repost other videos and cite them, but be careful of the source and contents.
Here’s an example exhibit...
Online Exhibit about Pet Careers

This online exhibit will be about how pets - and other domestic animals - are trained to help or entertain us.

We want to deliver the following messages:

1. **Pets are sometimes trained to help and entertain us**
   a. Guide Dogs are specially trained to help blind or visually impaired people
   b. Some animals help to comfort us when we are sick or sad
   c. Dogs, horses, and other animals serve in law enforcement or military
   d. Pets and domestic animals are sometimes trained to perform in movies, shows, etc.

2. **Different animals are well-suited for different types of jobs**

3. **Our community has many great stories about service animals**
Online Exhibit about Pet Careers

We could feature:

1. **Local stories** about service animals and pets
   a. could record some interviews using Zoom or other program to get current stories
   b. mainly stories about guide dogs, military and law enforcement in newspapers or on TV, and pets that have appeared commercials or movies
   c. Might be able to get other local stories from community partners like veterinarians, the local police and fire departments, senior centers and hospitals
   d. We also have members and volunteers who use service pets

2. Photos and videos in **our archive** that show service animals and pet careers dating back to 1920

3. Background **research** on the topic

4. A **game** we create using a free online tool
Introduction to Pet Careers

Pets are sometimes trained to help and entertain us. They play important roles in our communities.

Play a matching quiz game
Match the dog and its natural abilities to the need or service they are most suited for.
Let’s look at how you might use VAMONDE to build an online exhibit...
After the Western Toy Company was destroyed in the Chicago Fire in 1871, Alfred Schueminger reinvented his business as Western Wheel Works, manufacturing bicycles. Located on Milk Street, Western Wheel quickly became the largest bicycle factory in the country, producing more than 70,000 bikes in 1894. They shipped their popular bicycles, the Crescent, Rob Roy, and Juni, around the country in dedicated train cars as well as around the world. Western was the first American factory to stamp parts on a large scale.
VAMONDE Digital Tools

Content Performance

This span, your adventures were viewed 1739 times in total. Broken down, your content was viewed 980 times on web and 759 times on mobile.

- Adventure Views: 1739
- Post Opens: 1426
- Shares: 10
- Engagements: 662
- Last span: 1685
- Adventure dwell time: 3min 26s
- Last span: 2min 52s
- Last span: 1563
- Last span: 693

You promoted your content 10 times which drew 232 visitors from across the web.
Questions?
Resources:

1. Association of Midwest Museums webinar recordings and demos about [how to collaborate from home](#)

2. Google Cultural Institute Platform [FAQ](#) and list of [online exhibits](#)


4. [VAMONDE Examples](#) and [Digital Tools](#)

5. Video Captioning Options: [Add your own captions in YouTube](#), try software like [Rev](#) to add subtitles or transcribe videos, or hire services like [CaptionLabs](#) or [3Play Media](#)