



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

The TW project for A.Y. 2023-24

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Master Course in Digital Humanities and
Digital Knowledge

Summary

- Requirements and specifications for the end-of-course project for the A.Y. 2023-24





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The TTTTTT project

The project

TTTTTT: **Tying Treasure Troves** **to Texts, Timelines**



A framework of tools to create virtual visits and narratives about the content of a collection of arbitrary *physical items* (the **treasure trove**) in a pleasurable and meaningful way by associating the images of the items with **texts** (from very short labels to very long treaties) and providing interesting and non trivial **timelines** to correctly situate the items and their explanations.



The project

A real system, working and doing useful deeds
You can implement it both here or at home.

Emphasis partly on programming (procedural approach) but above all on active documents (declarative approach)

Emphasis on the mashup of existing and sophisticated technologies





Tying Treasure Troves to Texts, Timelines

A framework to easily deploy (in a repeatable way) a companion app to a visit to a collection of interesting and meaningful physical objects. Your job is to help the visitors to plan the visit while at home as well as during the visit itself.

Treasure Troves – This project is about a companion app to a visit to a collection of interesting and meaningful physical objects. Your job is to help the visitors in planning the visit while at home as well as during the visit itself.

Texts – What we are looking for, this year, is geo-referencing. Your magazine will associate articles to specific places (a city, a street, a building, etc.) and will allow the user to access and navigate articles through a map.

Timelines – Articles are not empty vessels of words. They talk about places, people, concepts, events. Magazines are built around a common idea shared by all the articles (the same event in different places, the same people moving from one place to another, different points of view over the same concepts, etc.) and these commonalities need to find a place in the metadata layer of the magazine





The TTTTTT project

You are tasked to create TTTTTT, the companion app for a visit to an exhibition of physical objects in an important museum. The museum is physical and the objects being shown are physical as well. The exhibition has a very precise theme of your choice. Items can be also of disparate nature (e.g., paintings, written documents and historical tools). Special items have been shipped from all over the world for this exhibition.

Items have been professionally catalogued according to the latest metadata vocabularies as appropriate for their nature, and these metadata are available in digital form.

The overall purpose of TTTTTT is to create a system that organizes content into itineraries that are:

- nicely presented according to easily switchable typographic themes,
- shown on a map of the relevant rooms of the museum, and
- able to narrate interesting stories according to multiple points of view/interest areas.





The TTTTTT project

Descriptions

The teams chooses 15-20 (real) items, a (plausible) layout of the rooms of a museum, and places these items in specific places of the rooms, with adequate space for visitors. Each item is then provided with a QR code leading to more information about the item itself.

Each item is presented in a conceptually and graphically rich way, within a narrative that considers both the item and the recipient of the data.

Each item is shown with a picture (to correctly identify the item in the room), appropriate metadata according to the most appropriate metadata vocabularies, and several descriptive texts according to two separate and independent axes:

- age, competency and native language of the recipient
- level of detail of the description

All typographic details, such as font family, sizes, colors, margins, aspect ratios, page sizes, etc. are designed to exactly reflect a graphic theme.





The TTTTTT project

Narratives

The texts and the order of the visit itself are organized along a number of explicitly framed narratives, so that the visitors are not simply strolling about the rooms in a pseudo-randomic order, but move back and forward to follow a precise story telling approach of the app.

Therefore the order (and even the inclusion) of each item in the visit is totally dependent on the narrative proposed to the visitor, and the interface adapts appropriately. This affects:

- The next / previous buttons
- The physical directions from one piece to the next,
- How to recognize the item among the many on display
- The introductory text to each chapter of the visit, if appropriate
- The actual descriptive texts to each item





The TTTTTT project

Use cases

We must consider and plan for a variety of users, from very young to very old, with a wide variety of competencies and available time. Try to plan for at least the following use cases:

- Alice is a teacher in a middle school (11-13 y.o.) planning a school trip to Bologna for her class. She needs to plan ahead the visit to the exhibition (2 hours max), and organize her lessons in class and during the actual visit, caring to keep the interest alive in both her smart and dull students alike.
- Bruno is a businessman from out of town, needing to kill 45 minutes at the exhibition before an important business meeting he cannot fail to go. He has a generic interest in the topic of the exhibition, but little background on it.
- Carla is a PhD student in a topic connected but not overlapping the exhibition. She needs to understand whether a physical visit to the exhibition can add more information than simply reading some further books. If she comes she is willing to spend considerable time with the available material.





Themes

A good TTTTTT theme must not only present the items it was designed and tested for, but it should be immediately useful for a large number of exhibitions, narratives and needs.

It should handle:

- Multiple texts of various lengths
- Images (multiple images for each item) and their captions
- Reasonably sized tables with metadata information





Properties of the stories: ABCD

- **Automatic:** simply by selecting the story switch, all texts, images and layout choices are applied and are visible.
- **Believable:** the narrative supports the perceivable graphic and organizational characteristics of a narrative. All styles for all parts can be invented but must be elegant and plausible according to some specific aesthetical principles.
- **Complete:** all aspects of the HTML document are managed and displayed appropriately.
- **Deliberate:** all design choices (text, typography, layout, tone) must be explicit, planned and firmly grounded in a conceptualization of the narrative characterization of the story. Nothing is random or approximate.



Requirements for texts

Each item is described by a variety of texts according to a grid of length / competence / tone to best capture the variety of audiences.

- Very brief (2-3 lines, less than a minute reading time), mid-size (10-15 lines, 1-2 minutes reading time), long (as needed, several minutes reading time)
- Introductory (no previous knowledge of the topic expected), average (general knowledge expected), advanced
- Tone for young audience, for generic adults, for scholars.

The visitors themselves switch from one presentation mode to the other through a number of switches (buttons):

- Tell me more / tell me less
- This text is too simple / This text is too difficult
- Do you want to play? / Do you want additional details and references?





Properties of the metadata: RSTU

- **Rich:** Editorial information about the item, its provenance and its characteristics.
- **Systematic:** All interesting facts of the item are captured and represented.
- **Tailored:** Facts about the items are represented according to their specific nature and characteristics, without undue forcing and twisting.
- **Uniform:** Facts are represented according to a shared and uniform model that emphasizes and allow aggregated presentation of the relevant data





Organization of the project (1/2)

Teams must:

- identify 15-20 real life items with a common theme
- identify a real layout of a museum building, and (virtually) place the items there.
- Create 3-9 texts for each item, according to a different narrative and level of detail and tone.
 - Texts must be related to a single item.
 - Each text must be specific to a cell of the grid length/competence/tone.
- Create 2-3 narratives for visits
 - Historical time line (required for all projects)
 - Others according to the topic of the exhibition
 - Transition texts between chapters, introducing chapters, and moving inside the museum
- Choose a graphically accurate typographic theme that can fit all items and lengths and that is appropriate to all narratives.





Organization of the project (2/2)

- Implement a web site for the exhibition (give it a title!) with:
 - A cover page
 - A map of the musem giving access to each item
 - A n introductory text giving justification of the exhibition and reading hints to the histories (ok on the cover page)
 - The visualization of the items with images and texts
 - An about page providing details about the group
 - A documentation page providing detailed discussion on design choices
 - A disclaimer page specifying the scope and purpose of the site and the copyright of the documents
 - Each page has a previous/next pair of buttons, plus as many switches as necessary to pass from one type of text to the other.





The disclaimer

Place a page in your site saying more or less the following:

The purpose of this web site is to explore various types of typographic and layout style for musem pages, as an end-of-course project for the "Information Modeling and Web technologies" course of the Master Degree in Digital Humanities and Digital Knowledge of the University of Bologna, under prof. Fabio Vitali.

The documents contained in this web site have been selected for their length and complexity from **XXX**. Their publication here is not intended to be an alternative or replace their original locations:

- *File 1: <http://aouhadosuvosh>*
- *File 2: <http://alekfpahvaoeh>*
- *etc.*

All copyrights and related rights on the content remain with their original owners.

All copyright on the typographic and layout choices are 2024 © XY





Warnings

Support HTML in its most generic form.

- You can (and probably should) restrict the HTML vocabulary.
- Use whenever possible special classes or data-* attributes

Plan ahead wrt aspect ratio and orientation

- The canvas should be exactly as big as the viewport. Individual texts and metadata viewer will scroll autonomously within the canvas.

Document everything

- Place in the documentation many visual examples of real publications justifying your typographical choices.

Design deliberately

- There are no wrong answers, except unplanned ones. Always plan, always document what you planned.



Deliberate design

The ***one and only*** requirement for the design of theme and metadata is that ***everything*** you place in the style and metadata is conscious and deliberate. E.g.:

Q: Why did you choose to specify a 3.5em size for the left margin of the main text block?

A: Huh?

Very bad answer!



Deliberate design

The ***one and only*** requirement for the design of theme and metadata is that ***everything*** you place in the style and metadata is conscious and deliberate. E.g.:

Q: Why did you choose to specify a 3.5em size for the left margin of the main text block?

A: I don't know

Very bad answer!



Deliberate design

The ***one and only*** requirement for the design of theme and metadata is that ***everything*** you place in the style and metadata is conscious and deliberate. E.g.:

Q: Why did you choose to specify a 3.5em size for the left margin of the main text block?

A: It felt prettier this way

Bad answer!



Deliberate design

The ***one and only*** requirement for the design of theme and metadata is that ***everything*** you place in the style and metadata is conscious and deliberate. E.g.:

Q: Why did you choose to specify a 3.5em size for the left margin of the main text block?

A: We tried 3em, 3.5em and 4em, and after comparing them, 3.5em seemed the best choice.

Mediocre answer!



Deliberate design

The ***one and only*** requirement for the design of theme and metadata is that ***everything*** you place in the style and metadata is conscious and deliberate. E.g.:

Q: Why did you choose to specify a 3.5em size for the left margin of the main text block?

A: Because this is compliant with the philosophy of adoption of the golden ratio typical of a pleasant style.

Good answer!



Deliberate design

The ***one and only*** requirement for the design of theme and metadata is that ***everything*** you place in the style and metadata is conscious and deliberate. E.g.:

Q: Why did you choose to specify a 3.5em size for the left margin of the main text block?

A: Because, as we describe in section 3.2 of the documentation, this is compliant with the philosophy of adoption of the golden ratio typical of a pleasant style.

Excellent answer!



Le plan est le générateur.

Sans plan, il y a désordre, arbitraire.

Le plan porte en lui l'essence de la sensation.

The plan is the generator.

Without plan, you have lack of order and wilfulness.

The plan holds in itself the essence of sensation.

Il progetto è il generatore.

Senza progetto, c'è disordine, arbitrio.

Il progetto ha in sé l'essenza della sensazione

Le Corbusier, ***Vers une architecture***, 1923





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