

ASSIGNMENT 1

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Course: COMP 3900 Human-Computer Interaction

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1. Exhibit Description

National Museum of Australia is a social history museum and it focuses on cultures, histories, people and environment of Australia. Eternity is a Permanent gallery in the museum. Its complete title is Eternity: Stories from the Emotional Heart of Australia. Eternity exhibits the stories of Australians, including famous and not famous people. Eternity has ten emotional themes, including Chance, Devotion, Fear, Hope, Joy, Loneliness, Mystery, Passion, Separation and Thrill. Each theme involves the story of five ordinary and extraordinary individuals. The exhibit displays a huge amount of object that is related to fifty individuals. Eternity shows how Australians deal with war, triumph and tragedy. It also presents how Australians strive for the best thing.

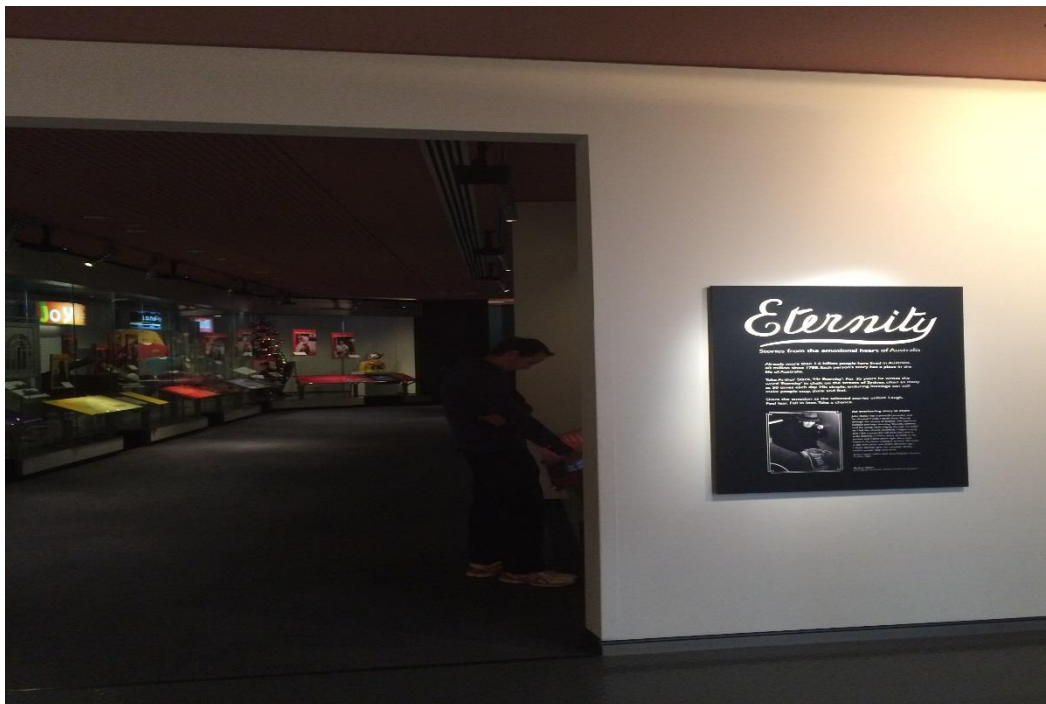


Figure1. The outside of Eternity

2. Experience

I visited the National Museum of Australia on August 10th. I chose Eternity for this project, because personally, I consider it as the best exhibit in the museum and it provides many interactions with visitors.

There was a small rotating theatre called Circa at the entrance of Eternity. Two guides would ask every visitor who intends to enter Eternity whether he/she wanted to enjoy a multimedia experience.

I entered the theatre followed by an old lady, a young Asian couple and three school students in uniforms. After entering the theatre, each of us found a chair to sit on. The demonstrator came in the theatre and checked whether everyone was in his/her seat and ready for the short film. Then the film began. The film gave visitors an overview of Australian history. It used multiple screens to present 200 significant collections, many of which are on display. Visitors sit on a central turntable and it moved through subsequent quadrants. During the film, everyone was absorbed in the film and no one talked or grabbed a smartphone.



Figure 2&3 Circa from the outside to the inside.

Then, a guide guided us out of Circa. After leaving the theatre, the visitors walked into Eternity

The visitors in Eternity were people of all ages, including the elderly, kids and students in uniforms.

According to my field notes, half of the visitors are foreign visitors. Besides, the field notes also indicate that less than half of the visitors were willing to carefully view the collections and read the materials on display. The average time they stayed on one display case was no more than one minute.

In addition, most of young visitors took photos of collections using their smartphones. Kids and the elderly seldom took photos.



Figure4. Students taking photos

Moreover, many visitors were enjoying the experience of using electronic touchscreens. Each person's story was presented on the touchscreen. The touchscreen uses photos, video and directly quoted from a person to tell the story and illustrate a short documentary film. The length of each film is about three minutes. The visitors stood in front of the display case and watched the films. The films had sound effects. Most of the visitors seemed to be enjoying the short film and left the showcase until the documentary film finished. However, since it took a while to play the video after visitors pushed the play button, some visitors thought the touchscreen broke and just left.



Figure5. Visitors watching documentary film

Following are some interesting things I recorded on my field notes.

I noticed that there was an old couple standing in front of a display case and looking at a diary which feature the story of Jesse Martinwere. Because the words in the diary were in small size and the wife had poor sight, the husband read out the content of the diary so that the wife could know the content.

They spent nearly 5 minutes on reading this diary.

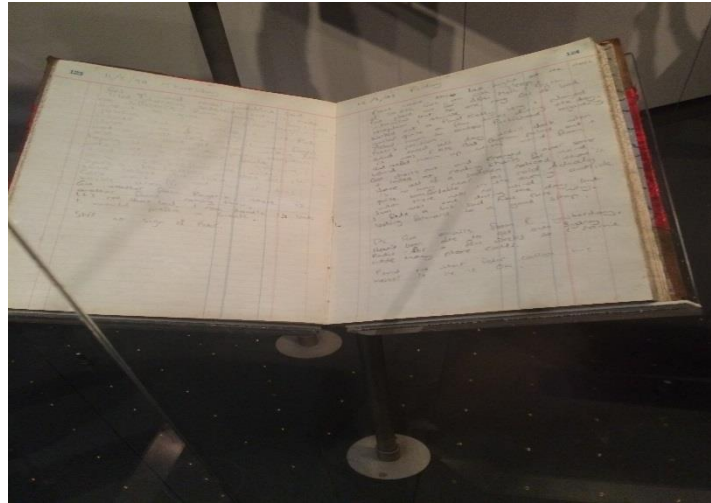


Figure6. The diary of Jesse Martinwere

When I was observing the visitors, a child aged around 6 or 8 shouted “I found it!” He was holding a booklet provided by the museum. The booklet showed several wonderful collections on display. It encouraged kids to follow a trail and find these collections one by one. The child was very excited when he found a Wiggles shirt in Eternity. Besides, the booklet also allows kids to collect free Museum Trailblazer stickers for fun and souvenir. The booklet is designed just for kids as a fun way to visit the museum and obviously, kids like it.

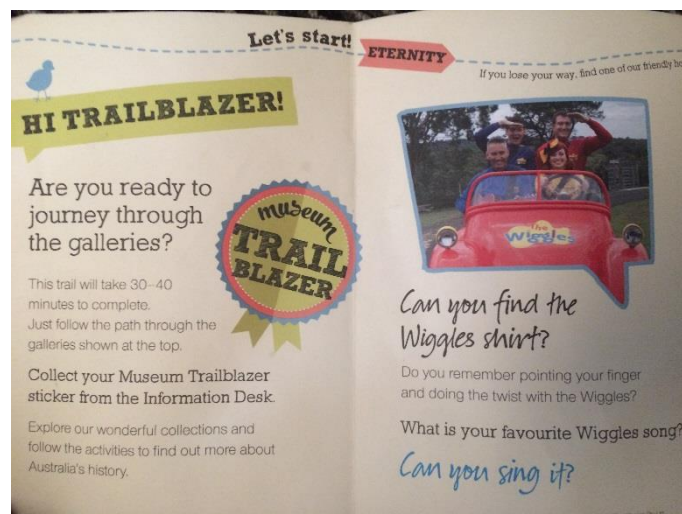


Figure7. The booklet that the kid was holding

3. Online Representation

An online representation of Eternity should fulfil following requirements.

3.1 User-friendly interface

The elderly are especially interested in Eternity, because they may live about the same time as most of these 50 individuals. Therefore, an important requirement for the representation is that it should be easily accessible by all groups. The interface should be simple and have big fonts.

3.2 Foreign language options

According to my field notes, half of the visitors are foreigners. In addition, since it is an online representation of an exhibit, it will include some words that are hard for foreigners to understand. For example, the exhibit mentioned “Saxon Merinos”, which may confuse foreigners. Therefore, the representation should provide foreign language options.

3.3 Photos and videos

Since only less than half of the visitors read the stories carefully and more visitors tended to watch films via touchscreens. It means that people are more willing to acknowledge the stories via videos and pictures. Therefore, there should be plenty of pictures and some videos. If people read a story of a person in long paragraph, they will get tired.

3.4 Ambience

Personally, I think the meaning of Eternity is to encourage Australians to fight difficulties, make contributions to the society and strive for the best things. The online representation should have

inspiring ambience. So it should have bright colours and exciting music.

3.5 Social tool

The exhibit involves several famous people, including Mary Donaldson. Many people are interested in these famous people. Therefore, the online representation should include a forum for visitors to share their opinion about these famous people. Besides, it also should have online share links with Facebook and Twitter. So that visitors can invite their friends to view the online representation.

4. Interview Script

Introduction:

I am a student at ANU and currently doing an assignment of a course, which is Human-Computer Interaction. The assignment requires me to design an online representation for Eternity. Eternity is an exhibit in the National Museum of Australia. The exhibit features the stories of fifty Australians. It shows how Australians deal with war, tragedies and discrimination and how they strive for happiness. Are you willing to be interviewed about the design of online representation? Thank you!

Image yourself viewing the website for Eternity and answer the questions I ask you please.

Question1: What are you expecting to see on the website? (A generate question about interviewee's expectation about the website.)

Question2: How would you like the website to be designed? Do you prefer videos? (Based on my field notes, visitors tended to watch videos. I want to confirm that.)

Question3: Would you like it if it has an inspiring ambience? (I think the stories are very inspiring,

so that the representation should have inspiring ambience)

Question4: Would you share the link on Facebook and invite your friends? (A question about social tool.)

Possible follow-up questions:

Question5: Do you think the foreign language options helps a lot? (For interviewee who is a novice at English)

Question6: Do you prefer simple content or rich content? (Decide which style is more user-friendly in this case.)

End: Thank you very much for your effort. Have a nice day.

5. Interview Record

I have paraphrased what they said

Interview 1: Serena Lyu (ANU student, Bachelor of International Relation)

Me: What are you expecting to see on the website?

Serena: I would like to see a video on the front page of the website. Because it will capture my attention. And it should categorize individuals based on their professions, such as athletes and politicians.

Me: How would you like the website to be designed?

Serena: It should be modern designed and vibrant. Because I like this kind of style. Besides, it should be colourful and full of pictures. Although I don't mind if I have to read a long paragraph. But it will leave me with a bad impression.

Me: Would you share the link with your friends on Facebook?

Serena: Hmm, I don't think so. Because all of my posts on Facebook are political and have certain themes. I don't want to post anything that is irrelevant to politics, which seems abrupt.

Me: Yeah, fair enough. Then, would you mind if the ambience is inspiring? For example, what if the web page has exciting music?

Serena: I love that! I don't like a lifeless website with all black and white.

Me: Thank you very much. Have a nice day.

Interview2: Raina Tang (Student from English Access Program, ANU College)

Me: What are you expecting to see in the online representation of Eternity?

Raina: I would like to see pictures on the website. I would close the webpage if it has many words. I don't have patience to read a long paragraph. It would be great if each of these stories is made into a short film. Because I love to watch films. I will be willing to sit in front of the computer for an hour and watch all of these films if your online representation has them.

Me: If the website provides foreign language options, do you think it will help a lot?

Raina: Of course. For my part, I could hardly understand the word "Eternity" when you mentioned it. If I can view the website much more smoothly in my own language. I will definitely love this design.

Me: I think videos will be your favourite part. Then which one do you prefer, language options or plenty pictures?

Raina: For me. I would choose language options. I don't mind if I need to read a long paragraph as long as it is in my own language. Pictures are good. But words can feature stories better.

Me: What if there is simple content on the website?

Raina: Come on. You are telling stories. How could it be simple? I would like to read a story with rich content. Anyway, it is based on the assumption that you provide foreign language options.

Interview3: Ashley Mills (ANU student)

Me: What are you expecting to see on the website?

Ashley: Videos. I think videos help to tell stories. For me, I especially like to watch documentary videos.

Me: Would you use the share buttons on the webpage so that you can share the link with your friends on Facebook?

Ashley: Sure. I usually share the link of anything I find interesting with my friends. And some of my friends have been to the National Museum of Australia several times. They are quite interested in the exhibitions there. They would like to click the link and have a look at Eternity.

Me: Great. Then, do you prefer an inspiring ambience for Eternity? Something like exciting music.

Ashley: Hmm. I don't like this style in this case. It should have serious ambience and serious music like classic music.

Me: Why? The stories involved in Eternity are pretty inspiring.

Ashley: Yeah. But based on what you said, these stories are about war, discrimination and person tragedies. Exciting music is not suitable in this context. You should show your respects to these stories and use serious music. BTW, the webpage shouldn't be colourful, it'd better use black and white. Black and white is suitable when it comes to historic stories.

Me: You are right! Thank you very much for pointing it out. Have a nice day.

6. Comparison and Improvement

Three interviewees have the same educational background and are all ANU students. And they are about the same age. However, the answers to my questions were different from person to person, which depends on personal taste. The common thing was that they all love videos. All of them were interested in the videos presented on the website. And they all thought pictures are important. There are also some different answers. Serna loved inspiring ambience while Ashely did not think it was a good idea. Ashley liked the idea of social tools, but Serna did not because of personal reason.

Compared with the outcome of my interview, my design needs to be improved in some ways. Ashley was right about the ambience, which I need to change. Besides, Raina suggested me to show rich content of stories. However, some of my ideas were recognized by the interviewees, including foreign language options and videos.

I would change one of my interview questions, since Ashley was right.

Question3: Would you like it if it has inspiring ambience?

Question 3: Would you like it if it has serious ambience?

Besides, since everyone loves videos, I would improve the question about the video.

Question2: How would you like the website to be designed? Do you prefer videos?

Question2: How would you like the website to be designed? If each story is featured by a video, how long do you prefer the video to be?