Boomerang

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1 Introduction

1.1 Description of the exhibit and its context

The boomerang is a part of First Australians: Gallery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, showing in National Museum of Australia. The theme of First Australians is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' history and culture. The gallery consists of two sub-galleries, upper gallery, and lower gallery. The upper gallery focuses on specific indigenous communities, such as trade and cultural exchange, fiber containers.

This exhibit belongs to the lower gallery, which introduces the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history since 1788. There is a sample boomerang in a transparent cabinet. The guide explains how the boomerang work using the sample boomerang. Generally speaking, the boomerang is a kind of hunting tool for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. The indigenous using boomerangs hit the emus' leg and neck. Because emus are good at running, if the hunters hit other parts, emus are likely to escape.

On the other hand, the boomerang can be found in the Link-up showcase. The owner of the boomerang received this boomerang from her father when she was 4 years old. However, the girl totally did not know what the boomerang can be used for, like many young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The exhibits in the Link-up showcase is aimed to reconnect young people to their community.

1.2 How the exhibit relates to the outside world

The boomerang is in the history gallery. It is a kind of signal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's life in the past. The boomerang loads cultural, artistic, social, technical and historical contexts.

- People can learn the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's hunting culture, because boomerangs are effective for some kinds of prey, like emus. Those hunters need to make the emus lose their abilities to escapes with one attack. As we can see that the boomerangs are not sharp, it has limited threat to strong prey, like sheep. Thus, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to hunt prey with thin legs or neck.

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- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander also paint their boomerangs. Those paints are good materials to study those indigenous people's view of art.
- Researchers also can research the technical level of the indigenous based on the material and grinding process of boomerangs.
- The boomerang also can be regarded as a bond between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander today and the people in the past like the Link-up showcase.
- Researchers can do research on the changing of indigenous' view of art, according to the pattern on boomerangs in different time.

2 Observations and research data

2.1 Your experience of the exhibit

Personally, I have a strong curiosity about human being's history. When I walked in the First Australian Gallery, I found the exhibits in the gallery were different from exhibits in China. That made me have an interest in this gallery. I looked at the exhibits carefully. The patterns on exhibits are different with Chinese primitives' products. There is a multi-screens video shows the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' activities. I can feel that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are happy when they engage in their traditional activities.

There are two reasons for choosing the boomerang as my exhibit. When I looked at the boomerang, a friendly staff explained how the indigenous use the boomerang to hunt emus. He also allowed me to hold a sample boomerang. I found the boomerang was heavier than I thought. The hunting process was impressive. My ancients usually hunted animals like rabbits. There was no prey like emus for my ancients. In addition, the girl's store also impressed me. I think it is important for people to understand their culture, their history.

I think the exhibitions do not follow the "Novice and Expert users" principle tightly. Almost exhibits were presented with explanatory text. I think it was difficult for me to understand those exhibitions to some extent without background knowledge when I first visited the gallery. The information from the explanatory text was limited, I think. However, I think the structure of the exhibits is following the mental model because the explanatory text was near to the exhibits. When visitors have an interest in the exhibits, it is convenient for them to find more explanation.

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2.2 Observations of visitors at this exhibit

There were not visitors in First Australian as many as visitors in other galleries, especially in the lower gallery. Most people just walked through the lower gallery and went to next gallery. However, there were some groups of people who stayed in the lower gallery for longer time.

There were a group of people visiting this area after us. They followed the museum staff and showed interests about the tools. They took the samples from the staff and someone simulated how the indigenous use the boomerang to hunt their prey. They kept smell when the staff was explaining what those tools use for.

It is also a good chance to teach the next generation the family bond. I remember there were two little girls with their parents. The little girl pointed an exhibit and asked their mother questions. Their mother answered the little girl's questions patiently with smile and gentle voice. Those two little girls were very happy, when they were in the zone.

Some people just walked through this zone without staying. They just took a look at exhibitions on the both sides of the aisles. Some people stood in front of some exhibits and read the introductions of the exhibits. Some people just took photos without looking the exhibits carefully.

2.3 Research

2.3.1 The National Museum of Australia Website

The National Museum of Australia website shows the boomerang in the Link-up showcase. There is a photo of the Link-up showcase and there is some explanatory text under the photo. This showcase tells three stories of indigenous children taken from their families. Those exhibits, including the boomerang, are the symbols connecting to their families and communities.

*First Australians, by unknown*

There is another webpage in the National Museum of Australia website which contain more information about boomerang history in Australia. We can look at the webpage from top to down. There is a warning to tell people there may be some content can making readers sad on the top of this article. The article title is the word with bright color. There is a subtitle, which give more information about this article. Next, a boomerang photo is presented, and readers will get a prompt without looking any text. On the right, there is a summary. If readers would like to further explore they can click the button under the summary. This design can make the webpage clean and easy to follow.

*Boomerang, by unknown*

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2.3.2   The Australian Museum Website

The design of webpage in the Australian Museum website is similar with the webpage in the National Museum of Australia website in some extent. They both color the title in bright color and there are boomerang photos and summaries near the titles. There are two main differences. The first one is there is no "reader more" button in Australian Museum webpage, because the it is a short article. On the right side of this webpage, there are some related links for further read.
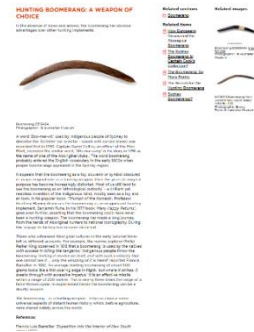
Hunting Boomerang: a Weapon of Choice, by Stan Florek

2.3.3   The South Australian Museum Website

Speaking Land, by unkown
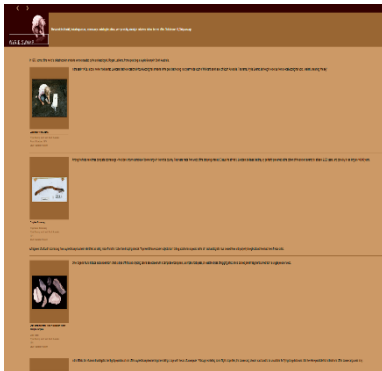
This webpage shows evidence that the boomerangs have a long history in Australia. The first impression it leaves me is the color is totally different with the two previous webpages. The dark background implies serious theme. There is only a summary of this webpage on the top, but when scrolling down, the summary will fix at the top. The evidence is arranged in a time line. However, I think this webpage has some shortages. The font size is too small and the text color is also not obvious, which is inconvenient for readers, especially for Myopia.

3   Discussion with your friend

I discussed the design concept with a designer friend. I told her that I would like to introduce the history of boomerang in Australia and my plan is design an on-line interactive webpage. She gave me many useful suggestions. I think the most import five suggestions are:

- She confirmed that it is a good idea to show history content with interaction, because interactive design can help attract the users.
- She emphasized that the design should consider the user experience which is consistent with the lecture. She said because the users do not have background knowledge about boomerang history, it is important to keep the content simple. She also suggested that good design should concern the user psychological feeling.
- I also asked questions about the version effect. She said my current idea was not good. I should do some research about Australian design which can be easily accept by the locals. Some symbols in Australia have different meaning.
- Sha explained human are visual animals. When I showed the sketch of my design to her, she complained that my design was terrible. There are too much components in one page. She suggests I should make the webpage simple. Simple is beautiful. The next step for me is replacing the text with photo, allowing users reading by watching.
- Finally, she emphasized that the content should be under the same design style. They interactive action should follow the same mental model.

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4   Your design concept

The visitors need to follow the staff in National Museum of Australian to understand how the boomerang works and how the connection between boomerang and the young Aboriginals, so my plan is merge them into one website.

4.1   Your audience and what they will learn

There are type of people who may have interest of my project. The first group is those Aboriginal people taken from their family when they were young. Those people understand where they come from, but they are not familiar with their cultural. The second group is people who have interest about Australian boomerang history. The boomerang has existed in Australia for a long time. The National Museum of Australia states that the earliest boomerang was produced 20,000 years before.

The project theme is to show the connection between boomerang and Aboriginals. My project will represent the history of boomerang in Australia in different periods and how Aboriginals use the boomerang in their life.

4.2   Present your exhibit on-line; what will the audience do?

The on-line exhibition will apply the flash and the design style will be simple style which will allow user focus on the content. When users open the webpage, they will see a boomerang photo and the background color will be warm color, because I think when they follow my trip, they should feel warm.

When users click the "start" button, a timeline will show up. When the user moves the cursor to the timeline, a graph will show up. The graph will be about Aboriginals do some activities with the boomerang. The boomerang will be highlighted in some way, which means the user can move the cursor to the boomerang. There is a trigger, when the user click the boomerang, a summary about the boomerang will show up and the user can choose to read more by clicking the "read more" button. The boomerang in different period should be different.

There should also be Aboriginal music. I think the music for hunting can be a choice.

4.3   Additional on-line resources

The boomerang is the symbol of endurance in Aboriginals culture and Aboriginals have a long history to use boomerang. There is only handmade boomerang in Aboriginals. Boomerangs play an important role in their culture. Boomerangs have different application. They can be used for hunting, battle. The Aboriginals also even can use it to play music.

If the taken from children known their boomerang culture, they would understand the expectation from their families. They can also have a deeper insight of their own culture, as I described in part two.

The right music can also improve the experience when people visit this webpage. Preece, Sharp and Rogers state that the right sound can convey emotions to users (Preece et al. 2015, p206). There are some Aboriginal alums can be found in the Smithsonian Institution. Those music may be useful to help people to learn Aboriginals' culture.

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5 References

National Museum of Australia (n.d.) Weapon Boomerang, by unknown, on line at
http://collectionsearch.nma.gov.au/?solrsort=random%20asc&f[0]=obj_collectiontitle:Dr%20Herbert%20Basedow%20collection&f[1]=obj_type:Boomerangs&object=10913.

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http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/first_australians/upper_gallery_stories_slideshow?result_6095_result_page=4#slideshow-gallery

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Australian Museum (n.d.) Hunting Boomerang: a Weapon of Choice, by Stan Florek, on line at https://australianmuseum.net.au/hunting-boomerang-a-weapon-of-choice, accessed December 2017.

South Australian Museum (n.d.), by unknown, online at
https://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/gallery/aacg/speakingland/story10/10_main.htm

The Smithsonian Institution (n.d.), Australia: Aboriginal Music by various artists, online at
https://folkways.si.edu/australia-aboriginal-music/world/music/album/smithsonian

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6 Appendix

6.1 Scan of your notes when you observed visitors to the exhibit

people take photos

walk around and read the introduction

~~~~ Listening to the guide

parents teach their children. ~~& ~~~~ They tell their children what do~~

some people stay ~~in the~~ front of ~~some~~ ~~for long~~ to longer time

some exibits usually ~~become~~ are ~~~~ ignored.

environment:

soft light. Inductive lighting. Orange background — wa

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6.2 Scan of your notes from your discussion

representing clearly.

users experience

design → address questions → user psychological experie

Austrilian websites → local design

Too ~~much~~ much text

Simple style

interative

Humen → visual animals

follow the same style

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