# In A Flash:

Reinterpreting Vietnamese Cultural Heritage
through Nostalgic Game-Inspired Design

**MICRO – MESO – MACRO** Analysis

— by Ly Du Khanh Han

# Research question

*How can Flash-inspired design be used as a methodology to promote Vietnamese cultural heritage for contemporary audiences?*

# Sub Questions

Q1: What factors cause digital-native audiences to disengage

from current efforts to promote cultural heritage online?

Q2: How do limited or ineffective digital strategies affect the

visibility and preservation of cultural heritage?

Q3: How can Flash-inspired interactive design be used to

reconnect digital-native audiences with their cultural heritage?

# MICRO

- Younger audiences often form their cultural identity within online spaces, where global media and trends dominate.

- Without engaging bridges to heritage, culture is perceived as boring, repetitive, or irrelevant.

- By meeting youth in the digital environments where they already exist, cultural content can become embedded in their values and sense of identity.

**POTENTIAL SOLUTION:**

- Internet-based interactive solutions eliminate entry barriers such as physical attendance, equipment costs, and crowd limitations, making heritage content widely available to individuals.

- Digital formats can incorporate accessibility features (e.g., multilingual options, captions, sensory-friendly design), supporting users with diverse needs and abilities.

- By situating heritage within familiar online environments, interactive design brings culture closer to users' everyday digital lives, increasing emotional connection and engagement.

*Case Study*

# World Heritage Memory Net



- World Heritage Memory Net (WHMNet), a partnership project with UNESCO World Heritage Centre, is a global digital library of cultural, historical, and heritage multimedia collections related to the current 962 UNESCO World Heritage Sites of 157 State Parties.

- The goal of WHMNet is to provide an online library of material related to the 962 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and to provide universal access to a worldwide audience.

- All of the collections are available in at least 6 official UN languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. As of 2012, up to 103 languages are supported by WHMNet, as available.

- Link to site: http://whmnet.org/
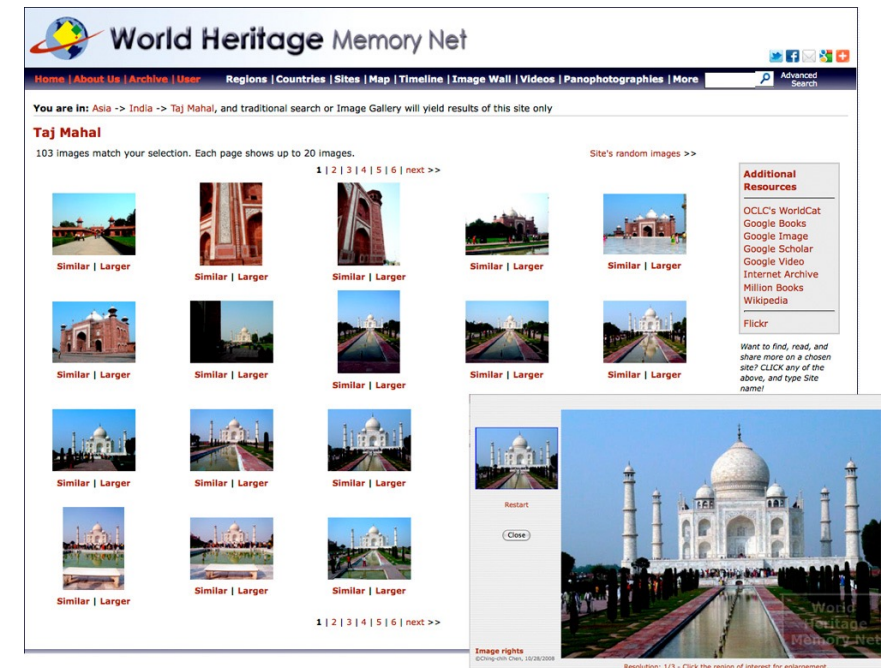
*Case Study*

# World Heritage Memory Net

**PROS:**

- Very accessible and inclusive (can easily be accessed via the Internet and is offered in many languages)

- Initial introduction to cultural heritage that allows for deeper research through links to major sources.

- Is and can be updated frequently, allowing for new knowledge to be integrated. Has an extensive database.

**CONS:**

- Very text-heavy, with a few images.

- Site design is rudimentary, design is not appealing, and navigation is slow, with little interactivity, not adaptive to modern devices and screens.

- Site not optimized, hence loads very slowly.
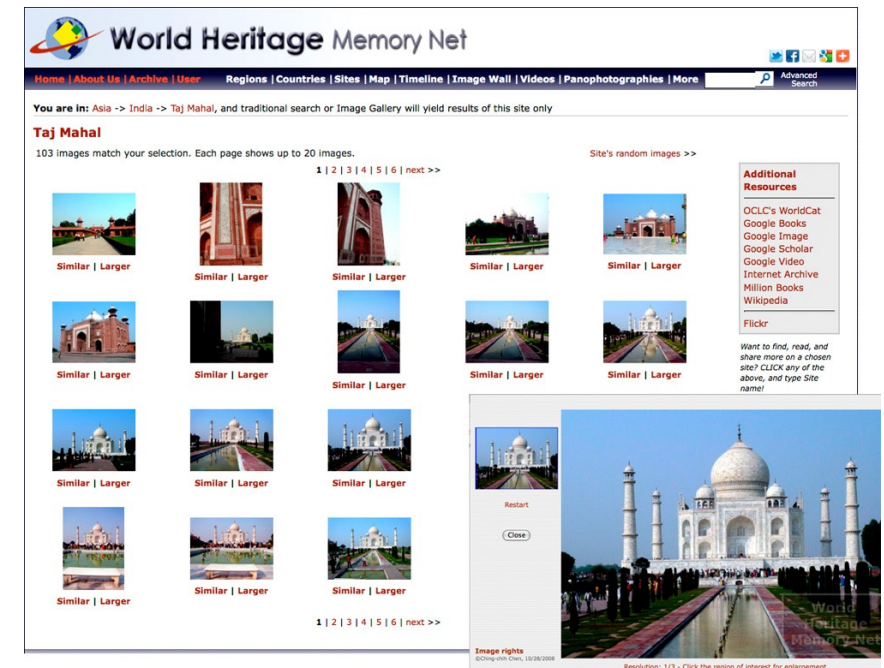
# MESO

- Institutions responsible for cultural preservation often face resource limitations and rely on conventional and repetitive strategies, lacking innovation to effectively engage digital-native audiences.

- As a result, outcomes are limited: initiatives may fail to generate lasting impact or broad participation. This underperformance can risk **reduced future support or funding** for cultural programs, as stakeholders may view them as ineffective.

- Physical and conventional outreach methods make it difficult to **measure impact systematically**, limiting institutions' ability to justify investment or demonstrate success.

**POTENTIAL SOLUTION:**

- **Digital and interactive approaches** provide measurable engagement data (e.g., usage statistics, feedback metrics), which can strengthen support.

- Flash-inspired, templated solutions offer scalable tools that allow institutions to **balance creativity with replicability**, ensuring sustainability while keeping the cultural content at the forefront.

# Norman Rockwell: Imagining Freedom - Virtual Field Trip

- This innovative digital resource provides teachers and students 24/7 access on their computers, mobile devices, smartboards, or other classroom technology.

- On the virtual field trip, students can explore the Norman Rockwell Museum and interact with art and objects in the galleries, and dive deeply into specific themes that support classroom curriculum.

- Thematic lesson plans aligned to content standards give teachers the ability to easily facilitate a virtual field trip in their classroom.
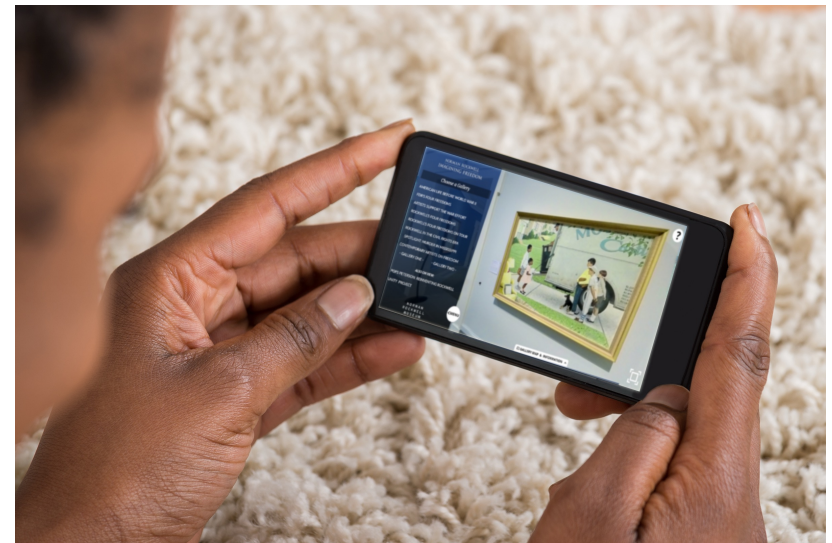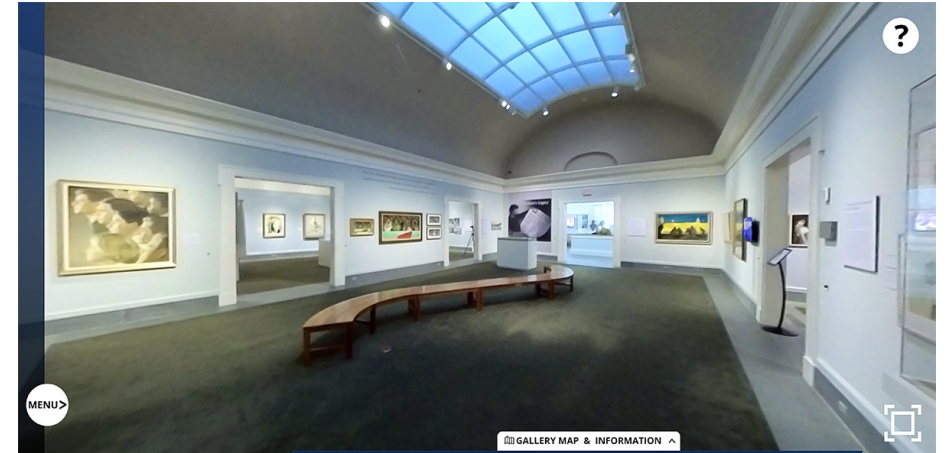
# Norman Rockwell: Imagining Freedom - Virtual Field Trip

**PROS:**

- Accessible and free to students and teachers, easily integrated into classroom activities, eliminating the physical distance and trip planning logistics limitations.

- Digital content can be flexible divided into modulars and fit into existing curriculum.

- Included many interactive activities that creates interests, keeping students engaged.

- The museum's online audience grew from approximately **200,000 annually to 2 million visitors per year** since launching digital educational content.

**CONS:**

- Limited to K-12 students only and requires sign-up from educational institution personal to be able to access.
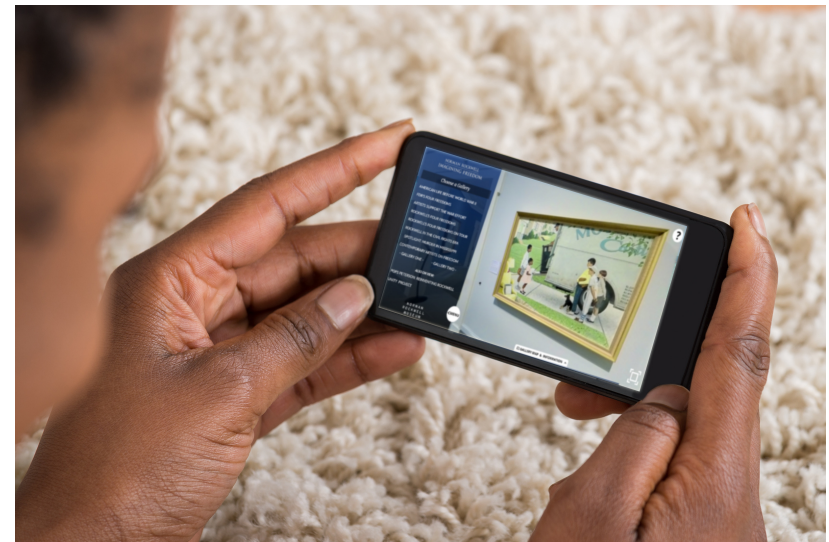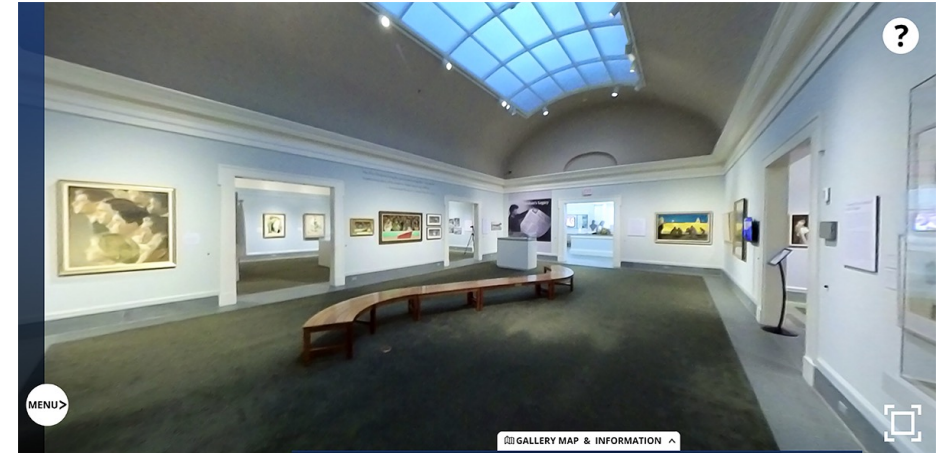
# MACRO

- The survivability of cultural heritage rests on younger generations, who increasingly inhabit digital spaces shaped by global media.

- Globalization produces a homogenizing effect that risks diluting cultural uniqueness and shaping youth perceptions of heritage as outdated or peripheral.

- Without digital reinterpretation, heritage risks being overshadowed by the ubiquity of global cultural products.

**POTENTIAL SOLUTION:**

- By effectively adapting traditions into interactive forms, heritage can maintain its **unique, local character** while being presented in a medium familiar and accessible to digital-native audiences.

- Interactive design highlights cultural nuances and provides a counterbalance to global homogenization, while still leveraging the potential virality and shareability of online content via popular trends.

*Case Study*

# Globalization and Cultural Homogenization

- *"However, the more sensitive aspects of national identity—customs, habits, and ideologies—are also at stake. Globalization enhances information flow, leading people to adopt foreign ideas and practices, which can impact local cultures. This influence may either erase the essence of original cultures (cultural homogenization) or create hybrid ideas (cultural change)."* (Lucky 9)

- This essay demonstrates how culture can be at risk due to globalization, which can lead to erasure or change.

- But globalization can also be an opportunity to foster social innovation that reinforce the unique characteristics of our national identity (Lucky 8).

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## Globalization and Cultural Homogenization

Atukunda Lucky

Faculty of Business Administration and Management Kampala International University Uganda
Email:lucky.atukunda@studwc.kiu.ac.ug

ABSTRACT

Globalization, while fostering interconnectedness and technological progress, has also prompted intense cultural transformations worldwide. This paper examines the complex interplay between globalization and cultural homogenization, highlighting the historical, economic, political, and sociocultural factors that contribute to the erosion or transformation of local identities. Drawing from various theoretical frameworks—homogenization, polarization, and hybridization—the study evaluates how Western cultural dominance often standardizes global experiences through media, education, consumerism, and political influence. Through case studies like Hollywood's global reach and reality television formats, the paper illustrates the mechanisms by which local cultures are influenced, co-opted, or threatened. Simultaneously, it emphasizes the resistance movements, adaptive local strategies, and hybrid cultural formations that challenge and reconfigure global cultural flows. The paper concludes by advocating for a more balanced understanding of globalization—one that acknowledges its capacity to enrich as well as homogenize—and stresses the importance of preserving cultural specificity in an increasingly interconnected world.

**Keywords:** Globalization; Cultural Homogenization; Identity; Hybridization; Media Imperialism; Cultural Resistance; Westernization.

### INTRODUCTION

Understanding globalization requires grasping its basic features that connect societies. Cultural globalization extends beyond media, while technological globalization surpasses global communication. Economic theories of capitalism highlight three perspectives. Global and regional developments are crucial, sometimes overshadowing cultural and political changes. Macedonian merchants transported not only goods but also language, religion, philosophy, and art. History showcases the rise and fall of civilizations and conflicts fueled by cultural and religious imperialism. In the 1950s and 1960s, post-colonial nationalism surged in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Cultural globalization reshapes cultures, understood as civilization and lifestyle patterns. For anthropologists, it encompasses the total way of life, including beliefs and knowledge. Culture, often seen as universal, features shared human behaviors, yet varies among social groups, being a learned behavior. It thrives through communication, necessitating its reconstruction and transmission as societies evolve, with new members joining and others departing [1, 2].

### Historical Context of Globalization

Culture is a constructed social artifact within human environments, with valuable objects like monuments and paintings being less relevant in this context. Preferred are social constructions over natural phenomena resembling cultural elements. Globally, there are around six thousand distinct human languages, each capturing memories, social values, and objectives that enhance the diversity of existence and growth. Cultures are often viewed as formations of common expression that shape how people perceive the world. Their verbal and visual connections transform reality into a conceptualized society rich in meaning. The interaction between cultures is a key focus for cultural studies. Divergence theory suggests that embracing local cultures may alter existing cultural attributes. A history of eurocentrism shows cultures as concrete entities influencing objective-natural communication, leading to global homogenization via colonization and trade. The 13th-century Renaissance, labeled by Michel Foucault as the 'West', marked a shift toward industrialization and modernization. A survey in fifty-three

# Research Framework

- The project adopts a **practice-based Research through Design (RtD)** approach.

| Author(s) | Key concept |
|---|---|
| Frayling (1993)<br>– Research in Art and Design | Defines research through design as knowledge produced through practice. |
| Schön (1983)<br>– The Reflective Practitioner | Introduces **reflection-in-action**. |
| Zimmerman, Forlizzi & Evenson (2007) | Defines prototypes as **research probes** in interaction design |
| Löwgren (2007) | Argues that **design artifacts** are **knowledge contributions** in themselves. |

# Research Framework

- The research cycle will move through **exploration, prototyping, evaluation, and reflection**:
  - **Exploration:** Semi-structured interviews to identify underrepresented aspects of Vietnamese cultural heritage.
  - **Prototyping:** Development of Flash-inspired interactions, from low-fidelity sketches to high-fidelity prototypes.
  - **Evaluation:** Surveys (quantitative) and playtesting with think-aloud, observation, and interviews (qualitative).
  - **Reflection:** Thematic and descriptive analysis feeding insights back into subsequent iterations.
- Through this iterative framework, design outcomes will both **embody and generate knowledge**.

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