EXPLORE THE TROPICS TRAIL

Process Book

Emily Carey
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Advanced Project Studio

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PROPOSAL

Overview

The Minneota Zoo's Tropics Trail showcases the lush rainforest environment home to a wide variety of wildlife. The trail highlights some of our world's biodiversity 'hotspots', which are rich in species that cannot be found anywhere else. These 'hotspots' are also at a very high risk of destruction. Conservation is cruical for these areas if we are to save our diverse ecosystem.

While there are exhibits recently added and updated within the last 10 years, the Tropics Trail contains very traditional forms of signage. To teach and engage visitors, the exhibits rely mainly on large printed signs that are stationed around each exhibit. Some enclosures contain very little information due to the size of the space and some have a wealth of information about their environment, eating habbits, characteristics and physical appearance. With younger children, there are a handful of interactive signs that including touch and feel artifacts, flips signs and larger images.

Audience

Primary Audience: Parents with children ages 3-13 looking for an educational and interactive expeirence.

Secondary Audience: Teenages and young adults that enjoy interactive experiences and are fairly tech savvy.

Goals

The purpose of the Explore the Tropics Trail app is to educate and engage visitors on a deeper level. The app would be used to teach visitors about the various animals, get them to explore exhibits that are generally less visited and teach them about conservation efforts and how they can help.

The app will also allow for users to interact with the exhibits by collecting animals they see, unlocking more information about them, and participating in educational challenges.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

The use of technology at recreational facilities like zoos and museums is quickly increasing. Some create their own apps and can be utilized by the masses and some incorporate technology into the exhibits that can only be utilized there. There are good examples of both types of installments but I will focus more on comparing those that are utilizing an app geared towards the many. The three locations that I reviewed were the Science Museum of MN, the National Zoo and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Science Museum of MN

The science museum lends itself nicely to using technology since many of the areas are focused on teaching visitors by having them read, watch videos and do expirements. They had multiple stations that visitors could interact with and play a variety of games. The tech was a bit outdated and a rolling ball and button for mousing over areas rather than the simpler touch screens. However, these stations were utilized heavily by guests, specifically children. Some newer tech that they utilized included a station where you recorded your face for 15 seconds and after, it would appear on the giant astronaut that stretched all levels of the museum. The idea was to see yourself as an astronaut. There wasn't much educational value but it was a new way to get guests excited about the museum as it was one of the first exhibits when you came in.

National Zoological Park

The National Zoological Park has a multi-purpose app that delivers a lot of content. It can be downloaded ahead of time to assist with planning your visit, it has animal cams that can be accessed outside of the park, and it has puzzles to entertain the kids. While this app boasts a lot of features, it doesn't have a lot of features that enhances the expiernce to the park. The most engaging components would be the 'Become an Animal' section where you can take your picture and add animal features to yourself and the 'Make Some Noise' section where you can hear vocal calls from various animals. The app contains a lot of information but you have to discover each part of it on your own with little direction.
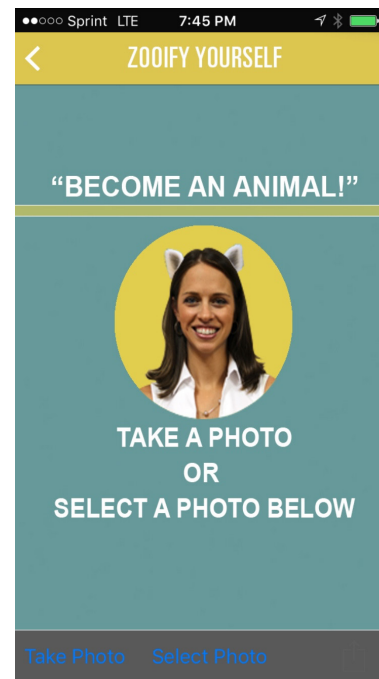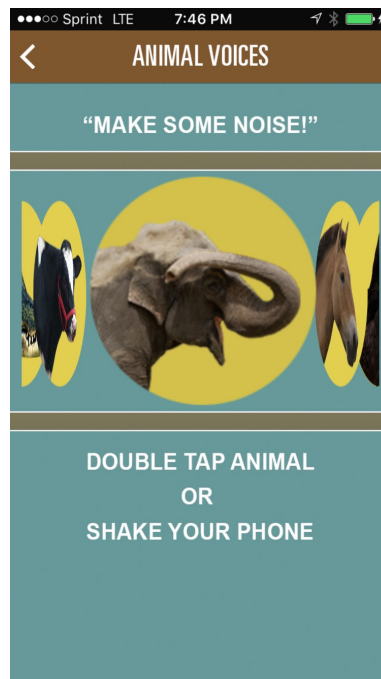
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Metropolitan Museum of Art created a mobile website that digitized a game called Murder at the Met. It was already a scavenger hunt-like game that they offered at the museum but wanted to bring it to the next level. The game has you search for people, weapons and scenes found within the American Wing at the Met. The site allows you to choose your own path and provides a map of the museum to help you navigate your way. It encourages users to really spend time looking at each piece of art while playing the game. The game has gotten great feedback from the public, specifically emphasizing that the game enhances the experience instead of distracting visitors from taking in the art. One of the biggest concerns was that guests visit to take a break from their technology and enjoy the ambiance of the museum. I believe their creation of 'Murder at the Met' was carefully crafted to only encourage guests to spend more time looking at the art and taking in new perspectives of the pieces. This game is most like what the 'Explore the Tropics Trail' app will be. The goals for both are quite similar and are specific to one area of the facility rather than an general purpose application.
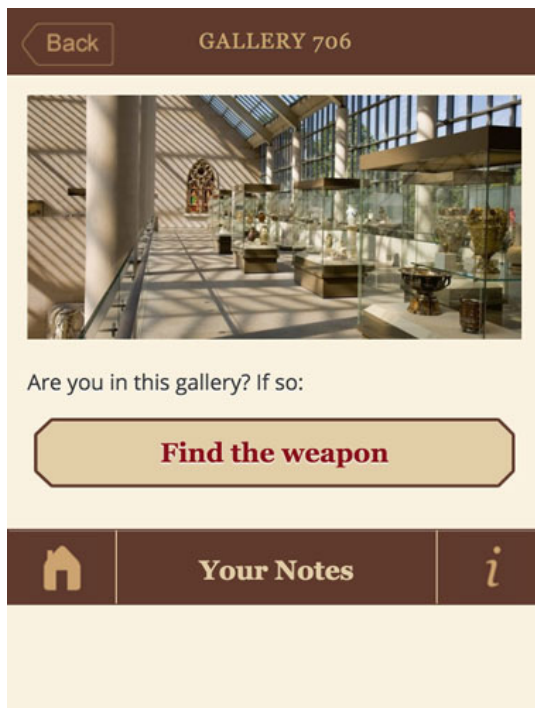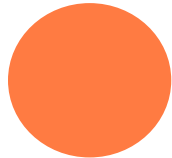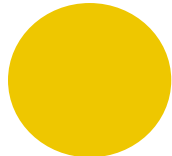
Resources

https://metmystery.oncell.com/pages/

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/28/arts/artsspecial/
museums-engage-children-with-digital-programs.html?_
r=0

https://nationalzoo.si.edu/visit/app

INSPIRATION
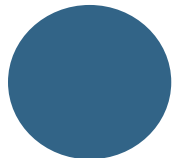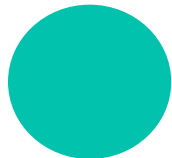
SAMPLE HEADER FOR TROPICS TRAIL

Sub Header for Tropics Trail
There will be some text that will be visible throughout the Tropics Trail App.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

SKETCHES AND USER FLOW

- Welcome/home page
  - → How to play
- Start
  - Choose level
    - 3-6
    - 7-10
    - 11+
- pop up
- map of trail
- Choose exhibit
- exhibit/animal
  - img
  - info
  - challenge → pop up Challenge
    - answer questions
    - activity
  - Completed? ← Skip
  - completed!
- map of trail with progress/completed challenges
- Finish/Results
  - number of completed challenges
  - ranking
  - Thanks for playing
  - Start new game
- Share results
  - FB
  - email

Explore the TROPICS TRAIL
How to play
Start!

How to Play.
① Choose exhibit
② Learn
③ Accept Challenge
④ Next Exhibit Got it!

Exhibit 1
Challenge!

Exhibit 1 Challenge
Task
Question

Exhibit 1 Challenge
Not quite right, try again
Question

Exhibit 1 Challenge
Correct! Great job!
← click to continue
You earned a badge

Finish

End of Trait
Ranking
Thanks for playing
Share

Back to welcome page

Share
I just completed the Tropic Trail Challenge...

Choose level
- Beginner (age 3-6)
- Intermediate (age 7-10)
- Advanced (11+)