

Navigational Threads

(Formerly “Content Compass and Red Thread”)

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

What Project is About

We want this app to not only be a compliment to a visitor's time in the museum but to have a lasting impact and purpose to its users, encouraging meaningful, interaction with the Humboldt Forum and its contents. The app could be used to guide you from one of the many important Highlight Objects such as the statues of Kazike, Vishnu, or Friedrich III to objects that are related. It could also be used as a sort of personal tour guide with different routes proposing different narratives or “Threads” within which a visitor could navigate the collection. In providing multiple different ways to see the same collection, visitors can see the value in learning from the Humboldt Forum through different lenses. These “tours” could also be useful for curators to give as varied and holistic of context to permanent and temporary exhibitions, allowing the Humboldt Forum the greatest potential possible of establishing itself as an educational institution able to provide the many existing truths and histories surrounding its contents.

Why is it relevant to AR, mobile devices

The mobile device is a perfect medium for this app as it will function on an as-needed and complementary basis, so the app is not necessarily distracting from the act of discovering the physical museum. Instead of demanding where a person travels to like a traditional tour or audio tour, people will use the app to learn more about the objects and areas to which they feel drawn and be provided different suggestions of how to route their visit, ever evolving augmentations on a traditional curated flow of the museum.

Learning Experience we want to suggest to audience

We would like to audience to be able to learn more about what they hold personal interest. The app is not meant to guide people through as they look down at their phone, but rather to take them to parts of the museum that they would like to see and to provide them with more information only to supplement their own impression of the piece. Visitors will be able to access critical contexts that a simple descriptive plaque is unable to provide, enhancing their ability to fully understand the ideologies and multiple, interconnected histories upon which an object relies.

DESIGN OVERVIEW I

Context

The context of our project is very much the Humboldt Forum and its highlight objects in addition to the creation of a useful and worthwhile way to navigate the space within the museum as well as to browse its contents at anytime through the app. To establish lasting educational opportunities, all the contents of the rooms should be

available on the app similar to the MET Online Archive or the Rijksmuseum's own app with similar intention. However, where these archives and apps are simply digital versions of tools many museums have had for centuries, the benefits of the Content Compass reach further. Being both an archive and a interactive device that visitors will use to guide themselves through the Humboldt Forum, the Content Compass encourages users to have personal experiences with the archive, creating individualized, meaningful context that will breathe life into the Humboldt Forum's digital archive. We also strive to emphasize the Humboldt Forum's own intersectionality between the object and the exhibition, temporary or permanent, conveyed through grouped content and shared context within Threads.

Core Interaction

The interactions that make the app meaningful must be devised in a way that ensures that the space of the Humboldt Forum is not diminished by someone's use of their personal device and that the experience is not cheapened by the access to the contents. At its core, the Navigational Thread is a tool to ensure a visitor has numerous routes to take, therefore numerous avenues to learn the museum's contents and never one finite explanation of a certain object or exhibition. A visitor could wonder why deities from across the world are in a Prussian palace and be guided on a "Thread" that provides insight to the Colonial and Anthropological and then find other "Threads" introducing them to the cultures they learn about on the way. If done well the apps interactions are a complement to the physical space, if done incorrectly a visitor could be lost in their phone while at the museum, distracted by the apps bells and whistles. Therefore, the interactions within the app will be kept to a minimum. There are two main tabs, a navigational tab with 3D mapping and locational positioning with a camera component that can provide information about the object being looked at. There will also be the "Threads" tab, a touch navigable menu of the different routes, with search capabilities as well as saved/bookmarked museum objects.

Navigation Flow

Wayfinding Part 1

Let's first consider the "navigational flow" in interacting with a traditional museum guide on paper: the visitor wants something from the guide (looking for recommendations; figuring out where they are; etc) → the visitor takes out the guide and opens it → the visitor flips through looks at the list of highlighted contents, or list of exhibitions, or something else content related; OR → if the visitor already knew what they wanted, they find the map section of the guide → (possibly) they look at the surrounding to determine their location on the map → they find out where their destination is on the map → they work out a route from where they are to where they want to be → they try to get there, possibly checking the map several times on the way → they find what they wanted (or not).

In the app, this flow should become: the visitor wants something from the guide → the visitor takes out their phone and opens the app → default open screen is the interactive map showing location from which the user can switch to the camera to learn about an object, object information will then convey related Threads and objects

The Change to the Threads Tab personalized components — a search bar bookmarked objects, Scrollable Navigation of Threads the visitor can scroll through different Threads of interest to objects they have saved, otherwise randomized, with certain highlight objects also showing up → Threads display detailed information revealing possible actions (“bookmark this *Specific Object in Thread*,” “take me there,” etc) → the visitor chooses an action → the visitor finds (or not) what they wanted through instructions updated on the screen.

```
App { Screen {  
    location, curatorial & personalized info {  
        museum objects { actions() }  
    }  
    filter()  
    search()  
}  
}  
MuseumObject: exhibits, themes, stories, places in museum
```

Setup, On Launch

Depending on whether the person is in the museum or not, the functionality of the app would be very different. When the person is not in the museum, the app should function as a browser for the museum collections. Therefore, when the person launches the app for the first time, the app should detect whether the person is in the museum or not, either through asking, or through sensor detections such as Wi-Fi or Bluetooth signal in the museum.

There may also be an intro screen to the app, that optionally collects preferences from the visitor to generate personalized results.

Currently, we imagine two possible ways of presenting the museum catalogue, either like a traditional “discovery” app (see Rijksmuseum) or show the Humboldt Forum through something like Google StreetView, that allows the person to virtually go through the museum.

Accessibility for visually-impaired visitors

If graphical interfaces pose difficulties for the visitor, then the control flow is as the following: app → screen with simple buttons to activate the app → all info is delivered through VoiceOver → visitor controls the app through voice commands → more info are presented, until the visitor finds (or not) what they wanted.

Interface

Wayfinding Part 2

If not done properly, it is possible for the screen to get crowded and messy. Therefore, info in the screen should have the following hierarchy: location should occupy the top 10% of the screen (prominent location), curatorial info and personalized info should occupy most (80%) of the screen (prominent space), within which only the most relevant (see Media Assets) would be shown, while others would be hidden by a filter system which can be controlled through the bottom 10% area. The filter system works like a tag system: #nearby, #bestof, #onmylist, etc. Additionally, the bottom area should contain an entry to a search function.

For a current mock-up of the interface see end of document.

DESIGN OVERVIEW II / EXPERIENCE OVERVIEW

Media Assets

- [Image/Video/Audio] Preview of museum objects: from the museum.
- [Text/Audio] Information and description of museum objects: from the museum
- [Serial data] Ways of organizing the museum objects (lists, maps, etc.); or instructions on how to present a series of object: from the museum or created by visitors
- [GIS Database] Structure of the museum: from the museum

Overall Experience

The overall experience of using the app should be as “effortless” as possible. Compared to using a museum guide on paper, where the visitor must actively seek information, when using the Content Compass, relevant information are proactively presented to the visitor. However, the visitor is still able to look for more information if they are not satisfied with the suggestions, and given the dynamic, flexible nature of digital apps, the visitor will be able to use the app with ease (e.g. through the search function).

At the same time, given that information is proactively presented, we also want the experience of using the app to complement the museum experience. For example, upon opening the app while standing in front an artwork, in addition to basic information like location and the current artwork, the app should also give contextual information such as further information or related artworks. Since the visitor is more likely to want to know more about an artwork when they open the app, such proactivity satisfies that curiosity, possibly sparking new ideas.

All of this comes together to give the visitor an experience which allows them to connect objects and ideologies from various sects of the museum. Having further topics and other related objects available will allow the visitor not only to fully understand the reach of the object that they are looking at, but also recognize how to recognize its relevance in the face of the Humboldt Forum’s other historical objects.

Describe a Specific Moment

Tony stumbles upon the statue of Friedrich III and really wants to know more about the sculpture. He pulls out his phone, knowing he recently installed the Navigational Threads application, and opens the app to see it has recognized his location, displaying a small dot in a rendering of the space with full 3D renderings of the contents, including Friedrich III. A camera icon blinks, prompting him to click it and face his phone camera towards the object in question. He does so and the app reveals, around the object, its name and a “Thread” underneath it entitled “Gods and Kings”. He taps the name of the work, bringing up the catalog page for the artwork, which contains information surpassing the plaque he sees in the space, detailing curatorial information about its arrival and purpose within the museum as well as an “Artistic Process” section, which annotates different parts of the sculpture using AR technology.

After this, he wonders more about the Thread, “Gods and Kings”, and clicks on it bringing up a scrollable page full of different museum objects that pertain to the subject. He clicks on the statue of Vishnu, detailing him information about that Statue as well as its relationship as a God figure.

Tony is interested more in these “Threads” and swipes from the navigational tab that welcomed him to the app to the tab marked Threads and sees not only “Gods and Kings” but also “Power” and “Colonialism” as well as “Spirit of Opposition” and many more as he scrolls. He’s excited to see that Friedrich III is not only in Gods and Kings but “Power” as well as “Colonialism”, learning that the object has many many stories that he can learn from. He is also excited to go forth and find all the relationships between Friedrich and the rest of the museum! <3

CONCLUSION

The app is meant to provide a supplemental user experience that can also be useful once the user has left the museum. The fundamental principle of the app its founding in personal interest: one can find the parts of the museum that they would like to see, use the filter system to find and save various objects, and access additional/similar information to their searches. The accessibility for the visually-impaired is also integral to the app and its “effortless” digestion.

You are on the 3rd floor
302 Germany in the 17th Century

CURRENTLY VIEWING

Frederick III.



TOUR: HUMBOLDT FORUM
HIGHLIGHTS

411 Madonna →

NEARBY

← 302 Portrait of Frederick III
↓ 302 Nikolaiviertel, ca. 1703

EXHIBITION: GODS & KINGS

↑ 410 Vishnu, Hindu God

MORE ON RULERS IN GERMANY

← 304 Frederick the Great
↓ 207 Frederick Barbarossa

IN MY BOOKMARKS

→ 302 Gezicht Op De Buitenamstel

SHOW ME INFO:

IN THIS ROOM ON THIS FLOOR ON MY TOUR RELATED TO
SCULPTURES PAINTINGS DOCUMENTS JEWELRY MACH

