Musealisation in Mobile Apps:  
A communitarian museum for Ilê Aiyê

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This is work in progress, which presents the principles and some solutions to be implemented on the construction of a mobile app in a form of a digital museum for the Carnival Cultural Association Afro Krewe Ilê Aiyê. Based in Salvador – Bahia – Brazil, this Association develops several political-cultural and educational activities to combat racism through arts and music. In order to create this museum, we are transposing the chains of processes which characterise a museological institution, aiming at emphasizing the collaborative aspect on the management, diffusion of the acquis and memory of this Krewe with the intense participation of its audience through the experiences proportioned by the utilization of technology for the construction of mobile apps.


1. INTRODUCTION

The project of creating a digital museum for the Carnival Cultural Association Afro Krewe Ilê Aiyê (Salvador – Bahia – Brazil) has as its developing team (under the coordination of Professor Lidia Oliveira, Aveiro University, and Professor Rita Maia, Federal University of Bahia): Daniela Afonso Sousa – danielaafonsosousa@ua.pt, Leonor Nascimento – leonornascimento@ua.pt, Vânia Fidalgo – vania.fidalgo@ua.pt, Raquel Tavares – raqueltavares@ua.pt.

We have observed, through an exploratory study, that there is a great audience potential for the creation of digital museums adapted to mobile platforms. Also, it was observed that the existent experiences broadcasted by the museums do not aim at encompassing all the activities developed by that institution. Thus, guided by the definition of museum proposed by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which states that:

“A museum is a permanent non-profit institution, in the service of society and its development, open to the public that acquires, conserves, studies, exhibits and communicates the tangible and intangible world heritage and of its environment for purposes of study, education and enjoyment.”

The present works wants to develop a mobile app that presents the forms of interaction between museums and public-users listed below:

- digital exhibition;
- collaborative documentation and research;
- collaborative conservation;
- cultural and educational activity.

From that resources structuring aimed at favoring a more collaborative interactivity, the digital museum Ilê Aiyê will provide a digital territory for sharing stories, memories and experiences of the people of African descent from the city of Salvador – Bahia.

Ilê Aiyê Krewe is characterized by expressing, through its cultural production, the same artistic forms that are found in the movements of the Negro-African rebirth, Negro-American or Afro-American, creatively adapted to the specific context of Bahian reality. The main objective of that Association, assimilated in the organizational mission of this museum, is to act on the combat to racism and on the valorisation of the African cultural heritage in Brazil.
For this being, this digital museum is justified as an action which will broaden the symbolic territory of its associates and will make its production available to other types of audiences, generating accessions to its style and its cause, both in the local and immediate context and also for people from all over the world who admire and share its ideals.

2. DESIGN ASPECTS OF THE PLATFORM

The team started by searching parameters offered by other museums (digital ones or not), looking for experience models to be adapted or developed. From that research, some apps for mobile devices were selected, such as those offered by The Metropolitan Museum of Art (EUA), The Field Museum (EUA), MoMA (EUA), Madame Tussaud's (UK), Design Museum (UK) and Serralves (PT).

These apps present a set of positive experiences that can be adapted to the objectives of our project, such as: presenting the works exhibited in galleries with additional audio and video information; a space for the user proceed their registration and to access the contents in personalized way, thus creating their own museum”; the offer of possibilities of manipulation of the preferred works in order to share them via social nets; online diffusion of the store; a platform for funds donation; possibility of creation of tours by the visitors; use of georeferencing for visiting the spaces; and space for chatting among the users.

With that work, we found solutions that, aggregated with ICOM definitions and to organizational aspects of the museums, brought an enrichment of traits to the app, such as: access to news feed, with updated publications of the museum, its events and contents. Regarding to educational activity, there will be a digital library where it will be possible to access and to download documents provided by the museum itself and also a memory game with a quiz on the institution and its political-cultural production. An online store will be another functionality of the app where users can buy products from the museum and also sell their own products. Also, it will be possible that the users make donations, essential resources to the sustainability of that institution.

The application will be developed for mobile devices equipped with android and iOS, while recurring to languages such as HTML CSS, JavaScript, PHP and SQL. PhoneGap and jQuery Mobile will be the frameworks used, as well as some APIs: Facebook (login and sharing); Google Maps (georeferencing); Google Calendar; and Dropbox.

It is important to stress that the digital environment created by this museum aims at motivating the visitors to the utilisation of new technologies, while stimulating a new form of sociability among the admirers and members of that association, a factor that enables the creation of community bonds and also political mobilization that go beyond immediate physical territories bringing to light questions and models that emerge from peripheral cultural scenarios.

3. EXPECTATIONS OF CONTRIBUTION

We expect that this app can be adapted to any cultural and educational institution which wants to interactively make aquis management available for its visitors.

We wish to offer communication autonomy and also to attenuate the lucrative appropriation of the image and memory of the culture producers by groups and companies that are the detainers of the great platforms of the social nets.

Lastly, it is important to stress the possibilities towards sustainability and the diffusion of the actions and products offered by the Krewe.

The innovating aspect of that proposition in the field of museology lies on the specificity of the promotion of a greater deepening of relations between the public and the museum through digital media, favoring the prominence of the user in all museological processes of research, acquisition, preservation and education, which characterize this kind of institution.

4. REFERENCES


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