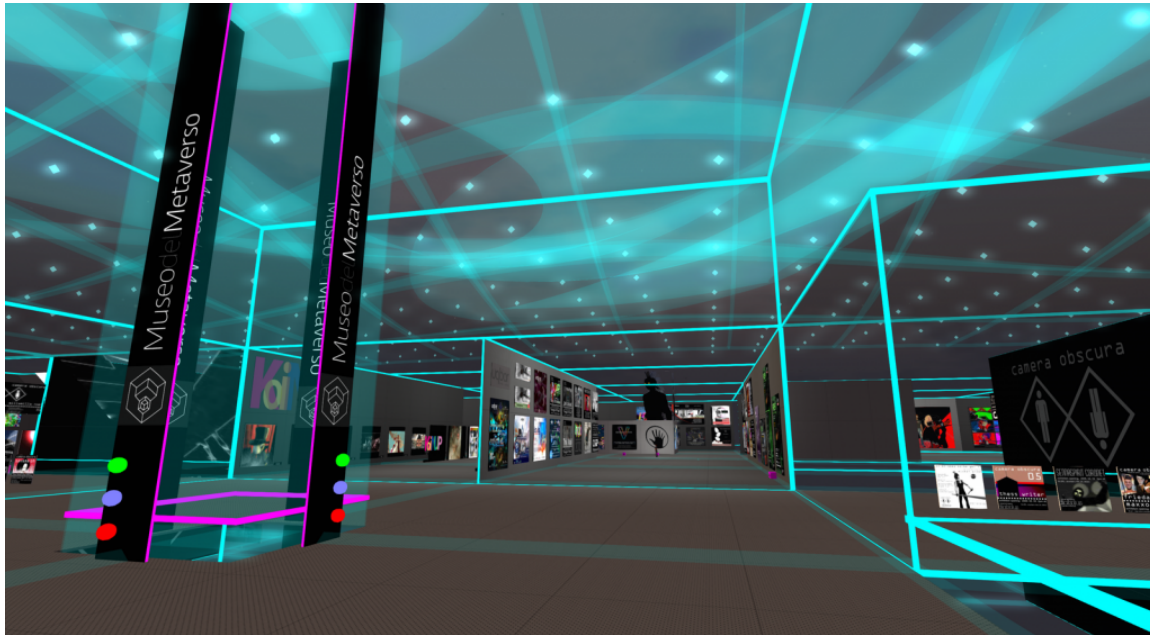


How to Create A Virtual Museum Tour That Generates Real Online Engagement

By Mark Walhimer, July 22, 2022



Metaverse Museum, Second Life, founded September 2007 by Rosanna Galvani

In the digital age, virtual museum tours are becoming increasingly commonplace. They combine the convenience of an online experience with the hands-on experience of a physical tour. However, many virtual tour websites are little more than a list of static images and descriptions with minimal interaction. Visitors can click through images or videos and read short blurbs about each artifact, but there isn't much else to them. To create a virtual tour that truly engages visitors both online and offline, you need to consider several different variables. What are your goals for this type of tour? How does it fit into the scope of your entire site? How do visitors engage with it? These questions should serve as a starting point for creating an engaging virtual tour that works for your users and your museum brand.

1. Define Your Purpose

When creating a virtual museum tour, there are a few different reasons you might do so—starting with how it fits into your overall marketing strategy. Your goal might be to increase visitor engagement, generate leads, or provide more value to your visitors. Understanding why you want to create a virtual tour in the first place will help guide your decisions as you move through the process. Similarly, your organization's goals should drive how you approach the tour. For example, suppose you're part of a historical organization and want to highlight particular artifacts. In that case, you'll likely have a different focus than an entertainment company that wants to showcase props and costumes.

2. Identify Visitor Requirements

Even though you have a clear purpose for creating the tour, you should also consider the needs of your visitors. What problems are you trying to solve? What are visitors looking to learn? Identifying these user needs will help you create a more engaging tour by addressing the real issues your audience is facing. Another way to identify user needs is through research. You can do this by interviewing potential visitors or conducting an online survey. You can also learn more about your visitors by analyzing your site traffic and online engagement. Consider which parts of your site are seeing the most engagement. Are there particular pages that visitors are spending a lot of time on? Are there specific topics that visitors are clicking on frequently? All of this information can help you create a more user-focused tour.

3. Consider UX

You should always consider user experience (UX) when creating a virtual tour. What does that mean? In this context, UX refers to a visitor's experience while interacting with your website or app. While a virtual tour is undoubtedly a website or app, some key differences exist, particularly when creating an interactive experience. You'll want to consider how guests flow through your tour. What order do they see the content in? How do they navigate between pages? How do they interact with the content, and how does that affect the overall experience? You can design your virtual tour to accommodate a wide range of user needs and preferences. For example, you can create multiple paths through the tour to accommodate a variety of learning styles. You can also provide different paths for different types of guests.

4. Select the Right CMS for your Museum

When you create a virtual museum tour, you'll need to select the right Content Management System (CMS) for the job. You can create a tour in any CMS, but certain platforms are better suited for this type of experience than others. Because you're creating a highly interactive experience, you'll likely want to select a CMS that offers a wide range of functionality. You'll want a CMS that allows you to create simple and complex interactions. You'll also want a platform that provides flexibility to customize the experience to your specific needs. One of the essential features to consider is the ability to publish rich media. You'll want to be able to upload a wide range of media types, including photos, videos, 3D models, audio clips, and GIFs. A CMS that supports rich media will make it easier to create an engaging tour.

5. Find the Right Partners

One of the first decisions you'll need to make is whether you want to hire a full-time employee or outsource the virtual tour creation. If you decide to outsource, you'll need to find the right artist/coder combo for the job. As with any outsourcing, you'll want to start by shortlisting potential candidates. You can begin by searching for online portfolios. You may also like to reach out to potential candidates and request a quote. When evaluating potential artists/coders, please pay close attention to their past projects. What types of tours have they created in the past? What kind of engagement have they seen with their clients? If you're having trouble finding the right candidate, consider hiring a consultant to help you with the process.

6. Create an Interactive Guide

Once you've selected your CMS and your artist/coder combination, you can create your interactive guide. The experience guide is the central hub of your tour, where visitors will start the experience. The first decision you'll need to make is what type of content you want in your guide. You'll likely want to include information about the artifacts in your collection. You may also want to include information about the museum's history, hours, and other details. You can then decide how to present this information to your visitors. Do you want to present it as written text? Or would you prefer to add images, videos, or other rich media?

7. Build A 3D Experience

While some virtual tours rely on static images or short videos, you can take your tour to the next level by adding a three-dimensional experience. Visitors can rotate, zoom, and zoom artifacts, bringing them to life in a new way. Depending on the type of tour you're creating, a 3D experience can take the tour to a new level of engagement. When creating a tour for a museum, you may want to showcase certain artifacts in full 3D. Building three-dimensional models add to the development time (and costs), but it can be well worth the effort.

Summing up

Virtual museum tours represent the next evolution in the digital experience. They allow visitors to engage with collections in a way that isn't possible in a physical space. However, not all virtual tours are created equally. To create a truly engaging experience, you must consider all the above mentioned variables. You must define your purpose, identify user needs, evaluate your user experience, select the suitable CMS, find the right team members, create an interactive guide, and build a 3D experience.

[Contact Museum Planning](#) if we can be of assistance with your digital project.

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