Promoting Collections using Digital Engagement at MU Library

Heidi.Campbell@mu.ie
Digital Engagement Curator

Yvette.Campbell@mu.ie
Collections & Content Librarian

Digital Sustainability

Virtual Tours

Cloud-based software introduced for virtual tours and exhibitions to reduce website embedding

Bespoke tours of physical subject spaces for academic staff and students
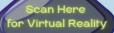
Virtual Experiences

Interactive Advent Calendar created to promote engagement with collections

Virtual Easter Egg hunt promoting new Maynooth University publications

Stop Motion

"ClayCat" created using Polymer clay and reused to reduce waste. Each frame is recorded in the Aardman Animator App and played back in quick succession to give the illusion of movement to the audience.

Scan Here for Virtual Reality

SCAN ME

Sustainable Future

Respond proactively to digital waste by 2025

Recycle & reuse digital images of collections for promotional activities

Virtual experiences to mark events and festivals reducing carbon footprint

Virtual tours for all in-house exhibitions and spaces

Maynooth University
National University of Ireland Maynooth

Abstract

This poster will outline the innovative ways we use digital engagement tools to promote the collections of Maynooth University Library and St Patricks Pontifical University. Utilising virtual and stop motion software, we have created the first virtual experiences including tours, exhibitions, a collections-based advent calendar and a Claymation cat for engagement on social media. There is potential to review data of these platforms to inform future planning and guidelines for making the Library more accessible. This poster will outline the forms of digital engagement that were undertaken in the last 12 months and evaluate their impact on enhanced collection sustainability.

Topics

- Sustainable Collection Development

- The Green library - emerging innovative and smart technologies

- Sustainability in library preservation, conservation, and digitisation

Heidi.Campbell@mu.ie (Maynooth University)

As Digital Engagement Curator at Maynooth University Library, Heidi works collaboratively to harness engagement opportunities provided by the MU Library makerspace. Using 3D printing, Virtual Reality experiences, 3D filming and stop-motion animation, Heidi is developing immersive digital experiences. Heidi has PhD in Near and Middle Eastern Studies (Trinity College Dublin). Twitter: @DrHeidiCampbell

Yvette.Campbell@mu.ie (Maynooth University)

Yvette is Collections and Content Librarian at MU Library working with world-renowned unique and distinctive collections. Her main professional interests lie in the areas of descriptive bibliography, codicology, book history, digital preservation & discovery. She was awarded Associateship of the Library Association of Ireland in 2018. Twitter: @RareBookYvette

Sustainability

The various methods of digital engagement recently introduced to MU library greatly enhances collection sustainability in addition to promotion. The creation of virtual tours for exhibitions offers an eco-friendly alternative to travelling hence reducing our carbon footprint. By creating a virtual alternative, our users can immerse themselves in the experience without losing the overall sense of the physical exhibition or space – usually in greater numbers! This also reduces exhibit time for collections on display therefore protecting and preserving our historical collections and buildings in the long-term.

What is good for sustainability is also good for accessibility. We can now offer users with various accessibility needs an opportunity to interact and participate in library activities in a space that can be difficult to navigate by combining innovative technology with collections to open the door to everyone.

Digital Engagement for Collections

Virtual Tours

For Heritage Week and Culture Night 2022, we were ready to create our first virtual tour for an exhibition on *'Home and Husbandry: farm and home care from the 17th to the 20th century*. This has had 800 views online and allowed users who had not or *could* not engage physically with the historic Russell Library before to celebrate this hybrid event in perpetuity.

For Orientation Week at Maynooth University, a virtual tour of the John Paul II Library was produced to help new students and staff familiarise themselves with the library and to support any students/staff with accessibility needs. This has had 838 views online. As a result of this success, individual departments have requested bespoke tours in an effort to allow their students to visualise where their subject areas are located at any time they wish.

Virtual Experiences

Virtual Reality equipment at MU Library was first utilised to create an interactive Advent Calendar experience to engage our users with special collections materials on a topical theme, but also to allow our users to absorb themselves in a space that can be inaccessible to some. We have also used our VR equipment to create an Easter experience to engage our academic colleagues on innovative ways to promote their own work. Participants could search for Easter eggs dotted around a special backdrop in the library and behind each egg was a new/recent publication by Maynooth University staff and students

Stop-motion Animation

A collaboration between MU Library Makerspace and Collections in 2022 resulted in the debut of ClayCat, an extension of the popular MU Library Cat as a mascot to physically engage in a new, direct and playful way with our collections. Claymation or clay animation is a form of stop-motion animation that uses movable clay figures. In claymation, each animated piece is made out of a malleable substance, often plasticine clay or Polymer oven-bake clay which can be reused again and again reducing unnecessary waste. Each frame is recorded in the Aardman Animator App and played in quick succession to give the illusion of movement to the audience.

Challenges

- ❖ Considerations for digital sustainability to reduce energy consumption generated from the internet. Introducing cloud-based hosting services and eliminating embedding software on institutional websites

- ❖ Security necessary to open up library buildings briefly at the weekends to facilitate preparation for virtual tour photography

- ❖ Gathering a following from scratch for a new service with the setup of a Twitter and TikTok account for MU Library Makerspace

What's next?

- ❖ Respond proactively to 'Green' initiatives locally and nationally to further combat digital waste - such as switching to green hosting to emit 9% less CO_2.

- ❖ To continue seasonal-themed virtual experiences to engage new audiences with special collections including our upcoming Halloween 2023 edition

- ❖ To introduce a student-focused wellbeing virtual experiences in collaboration with Collections and Content and local student bodies

- ❖ To implement a 3D scanning service for further tangible use of the collections cementing digital engagement into the core teaching and research aims of Maynooth University

This poster uses colours to assist those with low vision. Poster designed in Canva: www.canva.com. Digital Booklet designed in issuu: www.issuu.com