

MUSEUM-PARTNER OBSERVATION #2  
for the  
MACARTHUR MEMORIAL MUSEUM

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LIS 258: Museum Informatics  
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The MacArthur Memorial Museum continues to be an educational facility that includes hands-on experiences for students and researchers. This is accomplished by making an appointment at the learning center where students can try on military uniforms and researchers can handle the objects and materials for further study (MacArthur Museum, 2019). This aligns with the objective of the museum's education department which is "to use the life and times of General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964) to enable students and adults to explore American history and learn about their heritage" (MacArthur Museum, 2019). This is a very traditional approach to education without using any 21<sup>st</sup> technology, but if the museum would consider the five principles mentioned in the Science Museum Group's Digital Strategy (Principles 2015) they could create an entirely different experience for all museum visitors from within their doors and their website.

### **Audience centered**

This first principle states to "develop content around clearly defined audience needs." Referring to digital technology, the museum could "define digital audiences through qualitative and quantitative insight" and "analyze which channels are most appropriate to which audience needs." This organization already understands its different audiences and has success with its education resources targeted toward school field trips to exhibits that are more adult centered (MacArthur Museum 2019). These activities attract different visitors allowing personal experiences but adding interactive technology can elevate that experience. Once the information professionals "test on real users as part of the development process" they can "launch with simple products, evaluate and progressively enhance" as they evaluate the successes and failures (Principles 2015). Integrating digital technology that is audience centered can be done slowly

and deliberately after appropriate research has highlighted what would work best for the audience and the organization. One such improvement that could impact all audiences is with its website offerings. Although not an interactive display, increasing the technology already being used by creating a searchable database of all the collections would increase access. Presently, there are only a few collections on the website and none of them have detailed images or descriptions.



MacArthur Memorial Museum. (2019). Featured artifacts. Screenshot by author. Retrieved from <https://macarthurmemorial.org/139/Featured-Artifacts>

**Sustainable and scalable**

Looking toward the future is essential when developing technology because it’s a financial investment for any information organization. This next principle states to “implement processes that ensure that content and technology is well maintained” and to “build for the long-term and for growth” (Principles 2015). As the organization studies its collections and audiences it also needs to decide which types of technologies will work best for them and that they will continue to be used into the future.

**Entrepreneurial and innovative**

This third principle states to “make innovative use of established and proven technologies” (Principles 2015). Below is a screen shot of an upcoming exhibit that is being advertised on the website. As the museum continues to create special exhibits, they can look beyond their traditional displays filled with written descriptions and enhance the experience with interactive technologies.

**Legacies: The MacArthurs in the Far East**

Friday, April 19, 2019

On April 19, 2019, the MacArthur Memorial will open Legacies: The MacArthurs in the Far East - a new special exhibit that will tell the story of the MacArthur's in Asia, while tracing the evolving geopolitical role of the United States in Asia.

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Between 1905-1906, twenty-five year old Lt. Douglas MacArthur traveled through Asia with his father Lieutenant General Arthur MacArthur and his mother Mary Hardy MacArthur. Over a period of nine months, he traveled 19,949 miles from Japan to Calcutta, across the plains of India, to the Khyber Pass, and south to what is now Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Vietnam. He then traveled through China before returning to Japan.

Writing of the trip decades later, MacArthur wrote: "[I visited] countless lands so rich in color, so fabled in legend, so vital to history that the experience was without a doubt the most important fact of preparation in my entire life." For the rest of his life, and the remaining 45 years of his military career, this journey would influence his thoughts about the political, military, and economic potential of Asia. This knowledge would pay massive dividends – inspiring many of the major decisions he would later make as a senior leader in that region.

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Date: April 19, 2019

Time: 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

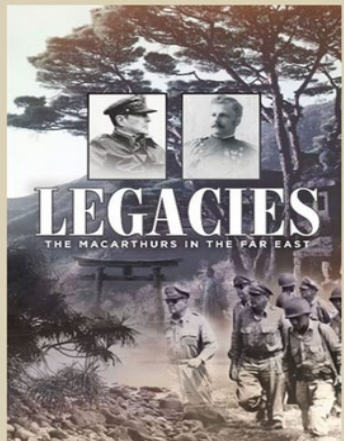
Location: The MacArthur Memorial Visitors Center [View Facility](#)

Address: 198 Bank Street  
Norfolk, VA 23510

Contact: 757-441-2965

Email: [CONTACT](#)

Cost: FREE



MacArthur Memorial Museum. (2019). Legacies: The MacArthurs in the Far East. Screen shot by author. Retrieved from <http://www.macarthurmemorial.org/Calendar.aspx?EID>

### Open, re-useable and shareable

The MacArthur Memorial Museum’s website would benefit with this principle to “share collection data and other data sets where they will aid external researchers” (Principles 2015). Most pages do not have links to more detailed content. Adding this to thumbnail photographic images and giving users larger images to view and information related to those images would be an asset to the website. Currently, only the MacArthur Memorial’s social media accounts on Twitter and Facebook offers a level of sharing with patron reviews and uploaded photos. This is not as in-depth of what could be accomplished but this platform could spark a conversation to “promote content reuse through partnerships” (Principles 2015).

The screenshot displays the Facebook profile for the General Douglas MacArthur Memorial. The profile picture is a circular logo with a red 'M' and stars. The page has a 4.8 star rating based on 318 reviews. A recent review by Marc Reyes from December 29, 2018, states: "Great place to learn history and appreciate the sacrifices made by so many soldiers for our freedom." Another review by Graceson Tor from October 25, 2018, says: "Awesome museum my family really enjoyed it. I grew up in the Philippines and people there have a lot of respect and admiration to the General. A town in Panay". The page also features a poll asking "Do you recommend General Douglas MacArthur Memorial?" with "Yes" and "No" buttons, and a notification about updated ratings and reviews.

Facebook. (2019). Facebook reviews for MacArthur Memorial Museum. Screen shot by author. Retrieved from [https://www.facebook.com/pg/macarthurmemorial/reviews/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/macarthurmemorial/reviews/?ref=page_internal)

### **Embedded across the organization**

Once an information organization uses digital technology, it should continue to “embed digital into development processes for all initiatives” (Principles 2015). This keeps the museum relevant and ensures that effort is being made to invest in technology. One way includes “enhanced digitization including 3D scans of key objects...to help bring the stories behind collection objects to a global online audience and support new forms of learning resources for teachers” (Stack 2016). The author’s museum object could benefit from a 3D display allowing the viewer to choose different parts of the badge and look at this detailed object from various angles. Studying the different attributes of the badge with a detailed description for each symbol would enhance this digital display and the personal interaction.



MacArthur Memorial Museum. (2019). Digital image of General MacArthur’s War Staff identification badge. Digital photograph by author.

The MacArthur Memorial Museum is not currently creating interactively digital and engaging exhibits. They are staying with what they know, and this includes videos. They use videos on You Tube, their website, and in the museum, visitors can hear the audio before they turn the corner and see the video monitors. These videos contain live footage of General MacArthur's speeches, travels, and war footage. Another way to bring interactivity to the museum could be with the videos. "Interactive video (also known as "IV") is a type of digital video that supports user interaction. These videos play like regular video files, but include clickable areas, or hotspots, that perform an action when you click on them" (Christensson 2011). This would allow the patron to choose one of the hotspots they find interesting and learn about it. Like the 3D technology mentioned for the author's museum object, this is another idea to incorporate interactive exhibits at the simplest level.

Information professionals blend the digital and the physical worlds in museums by giving patrons an experience where they feel connected to the subject. Blending both worlds allows a fuller, richer story as they discover information while it keeps the institution relevant and interesting. "Strong commitment and visionary leadership are required for an organization to understand how to effectively transform the way they think about digital to deliver on their missions" (Developing Effective 2016, p. 23). This would be a welcome addition to the MacArthur Memorial Museum as the foundation for changing the mindset toward implementing digital technology.

## References

Christensson, P. (2011, January 4). Interactive Video Definition. *Tech Terms*. Retrieved from [https://techterms.com/definition/interactive\\_video](https://techterms.com/definition/interactive_video)

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