

News

EU project within the South Baltic Programme



Newsletter, Nr. 1/2011

BalticMuseums 2.0: Joint development of cross-border tourism information products by South Baltic Oceanographic Museums

BalticMuseums 2.0 Plus: Implementation of eGuides with cross-border shared content for South Baltic Oceanographic Museums



Part-financed by the European Union
(European Regional Development Fund)



ONLINE INFORMATION PLATFORM RELEASED IN SIX LANGUAGES

The project reached a major milestone at the meeting in Gdynia, 22 - 25 February 2011. After some months of intensive work of all partners, Professor Michael Klotz unlocked the Online Information Platform by simply pressing the ENTER-button! „The preparations had not been as simple as that“, explains Professor Klotz. More than 50 people were involved in realizing the projects' vision of a joint, multi-lingual and multi-media platform for all partner museums. Each museum partner created its own pages for the website. As part of the international project all partners helped each other by translating the pages summing up to 124 translations for each partner. The University of Szczecin and Stralsund University of Applied Sciences coordinated this tremendous workload with the help of an online project management tool. 2000 hours of programming were necessary to set up the multi-lingual platform, currently available in English, German, Polish, Lithuanian, Russian and Chinese.

By implementing web 2.0 elements users will be involved and motivated to interact. Social media will be integrated by using the BalticMuseums 2.0 accounts on Facebook and Twitter, that already attracted many fans and followers. A special social sharing button on the website gives a choice of the major social networks used in the Baltic Sea region. Clicking it users can easily recommend the website on their favourite social network page. For getting a direct user feedback an anonymous guestbook will be installed. To raise the interest of the user a ranking of favourite fauna specimen is included as an interactive element.

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The project is part-financed by the European Union within the South Baltic Cross-border Co-operation Programme (www.southbaltic.eu).

TOPICS

eGuides in museums

Social Media, Augmented Reality and Location Based Services are promising instruments for museum guides. The trend tends to be mobile.

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Partner presentation

Get to know our partner in Stralsund, Germany, the largest museum of natural science in North Germany: The German Oceanographic Museum.

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Become an expert of the sea and get a bonus!

Visit two or more of our museums within one calendar year and get a bonus from our partners. For more information visit our website:

www.balticmuseums.net



continued Further interactive elements such as fascinating panorama tours and a unique fish-identifier are being worked on. Dr. Timo Moritz, Ichthyologic curator at the German Oceanographic Museum, scientifically designed this fish-identifier. This tool for non-scientists combines informative, educational and entertaining elements offering an identification database for all fish in the Baltic Sea.

All partners work on long-term concepts to run the Online Information Platform. The content was set up comprising both dynamic and rather static information. Each partner will update dynamic content like news and calendar regularly. The responsibility for hosting and support services needs to be decided. An online manual for editors of the Platform is currently under development and will be available in the backend of the system. The special website for kids is currently translated by all partners. It will contain a lot of interesting facts about the Baltic Sea and its inhabitants. The release of the online ticketing system is planned for July. Next to technical issues legal questions of a multinational tool have to be solved.

Visit our new website:
www.balticmuseums.net



The participants celebrate the release of the Online Information Platform during the project meeting in Gdynia, February 2011.

Prototype of indoor tour by eGuide reveals potential

Checking the description boards and then trying helplessly to identify the corresponding fish in the aquarium might be a thing of the past. The indoor tour presented at Gdynia Aquarium during the latest project meeting showed the potential of combining photos with speech and text elements. This prototype was developed by the team of the aquarium in Poland and Christina Wegner at Stralsund University of Applied Sciences. This demonstration will help the project partners to define their requirements for an eGuide system that will be installed as part of the new project BalticMuseums 2.0 Plus. Needs already turned out to be different. The Lithuanian Sea Museum for example requires waterproof devices due to open tanks and wants to display current information for their dolphin shows. „The decision for a certain hardware depends on the targets of each museum by introducing an eGuide“, says Professor Klotz. „We want to be independent from suppliers and create our own content by a content-management-system“, claims Jens Oulwiger, Marketing Manager at the OZEANEUM. „For an independent solution internal resources and structures are necessary“, urges Professor Klotz to consider these indirect costs. The next weeks the requirements will be further structured. In order to prepare the purchasing decision additional benchmark visits are planned within the next months.



Team members test the eGuide.

Calendar & Info

- 1 **BalticMuseums at multimedia convention in Berlin, May 2011**
Results of the BalticMuseums projects will be presented at the convention “Culture and informatics: multimedia systems” on 12 – 13 May 2011 in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. Next to the presentation of Dr. Ingolf Sulk a report about the projects will be published in the conference transcript.
- 2 **Project presented in sustainable tourism workshop**
In January 2011 representatives from various projects in the Baltic Sea region met, to discuss strategies for sustainable tourism. The meeting was part of the flagship project 12.10 within the Tourism cluster of the EU-strategy for the Baltic Sea region.
- 3 **Next project meeting**
The next meeting will take place in Kaliningrad, hosted by the Museum of the World Ocean from 28 June - 1 July 2011.
www.world-ocean.ru



eGuide in museums: The trend tends to be mobile

The advent of smartphones, especially the era of the Apple iPhone and its competitor-counterparts (e.g. Android and BlackBerry), is changing the landscape of multimedia-guides in cultural institutions dramatically. Meanwhile, mobile phones, especially smartphones, are exceeding the technical (hard- and software) abilities of common audio- and multimedia-guides in museums. The new Buzz-word is BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)! Visitors are downloading the guide-software via internet and using their own mobiles as a multimedia-guide in the museum. This rapid hardware development is accompanied by an also rapid software development.

As the technical trends Social Media, Augmented Reality and Location Based Services will play an important role for museums, digital appearance will be applied in museums-guides as well. They are going to have an impact on the three main fields education, exhibition and marketing and communication of museums. The following examples clarify that the trends are being realized already.

The Museum Ludwig provides a mobile museum application for smartphones where users and exhibitors are able to enter a chatroom and requested to exchange their opinions and knowledge regarding the exhibits. The NRW-Forum in Düsseldorf uses its YouTube-channel as a supporting exhibition tool. A lot of the new guides are using the main Social Media tools of the museums like facebook or twitter in order to

promote the institutions or to build up customer relationship, e.g. at the MoMA. Augmented Reality in terms of mobile guides means to provide additional information to the existing exhibit via the display of the visitors' mobile. With MEanderthal for example, children are able to see how they probably looked like many thousands of years ago. Visitors of the British capital are directed by the Streetmuseum App on their mobiles through the streets of London and see how these looked like 100 years ago. Location Based Services (LBS) depend on a position as well. They become more and more popular, e.g. for in-app geocaching games. In exhibitions videos or audios start to play automatically depending on the localized position (e.g. via GPS, WLAN, NFC or QR-Codes) of the visitor. For marketing purposes, worldwide available services like facebook places, foursquare or gowalla are applied more and more in multimedia museum-guides in order to increase customer loyalty by rewarding them.

These trends are considered in the project BalticMuseums 2.0 Plus, as they will influence the purchase decision of the museum partners for an appropriate device. The chosen hardware must be able to cope with these new developments also in the long run.

The above-mentioned examples can be found at: www.balticmuseums.org/links.html

Author: Andreas Ahlfeldt

Virtual tours in the museums developed

End of November the team from Szczecin University visited Gdynia Aquarium to take panorama pictures. This is the first step of virtual tours through the museums. After three days of very hard work they could see the ravishing effect. The panoramas will be developed for all participating museums. They will make visitors curious to see the museums live and are one of the multimedia elements of the Online Information Platform. Available soon at: www.balticmuseums.net



Panorama picture of the miniature kids corner in the Gdynia Aquarium, Poland. Photos by A. Miluniec and M. Kantarowski.

Chinese students support EU project

Zheng Wang and Yi Yun Ma, Chinese students from Shanghai, help the BalticMuseums team with translations for the Online Information Platform. "China is a market with great potential for future visitors", explains Professor Klotz the reasons for developing the website also in Chinese language. The two young women are exchange students from the Xianda College of Economics & Humanities at Shanghai International Studies University, who spend some months at Stralsund University of Applied Sciences. This difficult translation work can only be realized due to the excellent German skills of the students. The whole team thanks the two students for their great efforts.



The members of the BM 2.0 team D. Makrutzki, Prof. Dr. Klotz and S. Ritschel with Zheng Wang and Yi Yun Ma. Photo by B. Hinkeldey



Museum

German Oceanographic Museum

Germany



Museum photos: J. M. Schlorke

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Dorota Makrutzki (r.) and Jens Oulwiger (2nd l.) in dialogue with partners from Stralsund and Szczecin.

The German Oceanographic Museum in Stralsund commemorates its 60th anniversary this year. Throughout the years the museum, which was founded 1951 as the city's museum of natural history at St. Catherine's monastery in Stralsund, developed to an internationally accredited institution. Like the project partners of BalticMuseums 2.0 it dedicates its work to the habitat ocean in a deep and all-embracing scientific way and presents it clearly to the public by accumulating a wide range of modern and traditional museum tools.

Besides the main location MEERESMUSEUM at the UNESCO World Heritage site Stralsund, the museum holds three more branches. In the national park "Vorpommersche Boddenlandschaft" – at the Darßer Ort – the NATUREUM informs since 1991 about the landscape and fauna of the Darß peninsula at the Baltic Sea. In 1999 the NAUTINEUM opened up on the small island Dänholm between Stralsund and Germany's largest island Rügen as an exhibition centre for fishery, scientific marine research, hydrography, and sea waterways. Since summer 2008 the modern OZEANEUM on Stralsund's harbor island invites with 39, partly gigantic aquaria to an underwater journey through the northern seas and presents - among four other permanent displays - Europe's largest exhibition about the Baltic Sea. Last year the prize "European Museum of the year 2010" was awarded to the OZEANEUM for its innovative museum-aquarium concept. The German Oceanographic Museum is one of the five most visited museums in Germany. Annually more than one million visitors come to see true-to-life whale replicas, large sea turtles and penguins at the extraordinary buildings of the German Oceanographic Museum.

www.meeresmuseum.de
www.ozeaneum.de



BM 2.0 Newsletter

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April 2011

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Part-financed by the European Union
(European Regional Development Fund)