African museums in the digital era: case study of Blackitude and other Cameroonian Museums.

Globalization is a reality today which is the result of technological advancements through the development of transport and communications has made the mobility and exchange engines in the changing world in all its aspects: economic, linguistic, social and cultural. Today much is said about the digital revolution through the exploits observed in the areas of ICT's (Information Technology and Communication), upheavals which cannot leave the area of Cultural Heritage in general and Museums in particular indifferent. Hence, there is an urgent need to secure the Museums and the Museum of professionals to this new situation and develop the museum profession on the African continent. Only Africa is lagging behind to adapt to the technological evolution leaving Europe, America and even Asia advancing every day.

The urgency to address this gap in technological development related to the fields of art requires the setting-up of innovative projects, both for configuring installations in museums for capacity building of different actors in this sector.

However, to achieve this objective, there is an imperative call to pool efforts and enable the whole industry across the African continent to maximize the protection, conservation, enhancement, and dissemination of these many rich tangible and intangible collections of African art. This pooling of efforts would also to engage in effective communication about cultural products still held by private individuals or at the community level which is unknown to the general public. One challenge is to move from oral which she has been classified to the computerized level and this will require the training and recycling of museum professionals. It is no doubt that the continuous adaptation art sector to technological advances will generate other jobs related to the museum profession.

By entering into this logic and dynamics, the Blackitude Museum and several other museums in Cameroon and of the Central Africa region have now entered in this process of digitization and offer many programs and options to their audience and visitors, whose prospects are promising.

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IN THE MUSEUM
The integration of videos
The first initiative of integrating the information technology and
communication (Tics) at the Blackitude museum is done with devices that
can restitute the contexts of use of certain exhibitions in the museum. This
approach is based on the principle that for an object exposed in the
museum, a video can show multiple uses of the object. For example, for the
clothes used for ritual dances such as (Kouck gan), the video shows the
garment worn by dancers during a ceremony. In the same manner, the
video shows how the same garment are used in the present exhibition.
for what is in the of living room of a traditional chief of the grass fields, the
video allow visitors to discover the room in question, the layout of objects,
as well as the disposition of the occupants of the living room (chief and
notables and also the guests) and the manner in which the reception
proceeds (how the king is being greeted, how he reacts, the distance
between the king and his subjects, the maximum time allowed for each
topic ...).
The configuration of the entrance of traditional chiefdoms been something
of great curiosity on the part of visitors, also videos show the real entrance
of some chiefdoms in West and North West of Cameroon with emphasis on
materials used for their construction.
We consider it possible to watch videos at all stages of the tour. That is to
say that at the end of the visit of an exhibition segment of such objects for
example, a visualization of their use in different situations may be
undertaken before addressing the next stage of the visit. An approach that
we have refrained us to adopt.
So far, we favor at the end of a physical inspection of objects acting as a
permanent exhibition, a series of videos can be presented to them on the
uses made of some of the objects visited. The power of the image and
viewing these images just after their discovery gives a better understanding
and more whole dimension that takes the object in its operating
environment. These are the ones still in use such as ceremonial clothing or

those recently used such as double bells in some regions).

Digitalization
The digitalization of objects is one of the essential steps constituting the exhibition of objects in a visual form accompanied by necessary and sufficient information. This process, which was followed by a census and documentation of museum collections has permitted us to put up a clean database at the Blackitude museum. More refined, reliable and available on a permanent basis.
While serving as a means of record and means of conservation, digitization seems to us an approach that help to preserve the memory of the world far above a simple source of themed information.

Data base
Thanks to information technology and in particular the computerization process, all data on the subjects of the exhibition at Blackitude are now contained in a database (as much information about the objects and on the images of these items). This allows us to say that ICTs also contribute to the rescue of fragile works, particularly those that do not survive the preservation or suffer accidents. Especially objects considered vestiges where its complete disappearance would be a loss to the cultural heritage.

On the Internet
Internet presents for the Blackitude museum a host of benefits, including on information, training, etc.
- About Information

The website of the Blackitude museum
the first detail is that of adaptation of the museum to the TIC's. This precursor of the global village which has created a world without borders making no structure or organization nonexistent if it is not visible and identifiable in the new village. This is because communicating means existence, the Blackitude museum has invested in this village by posting a website **www.blackitude.org.**
This site allows you to get in touch with different internet users. One obvious benefit is that of **existing certainly in the Internet**. We have had Western and African visitors who discovered the museum directly across the http://www.blackitude.org/ site. With the internet, the museum is beyond its sole location, it embraces the world. This first discovery of the museum by the fabric encourages visitors to come to the museum and visit quietly entire exhibitions to their satisfaction. Internet makes it possible to achieve equal access for people to cultures through Tic.
The photographs on the museum website gives an outline of objects installed and exhibited in the museum. These objects can be viewed all over

the world. This is the first option of sharing information on the web that makes the Blackitude museum to enhance and increase its visibility.

There is also the need to provide practical information to internet users on the themes of the museum, its opening and closing hours, terms of visits, etc. We have also received this information on our website from Australians and Americans. Similarly, when there are activities, users are informed through emails sent to them following the addresses we have in our records. This action helps to retain the public and inform them directly.

Information monitoring

With the museum now on the world wide web through its website, it conducts weekly information monitoring. This is for the staff of the museum to follow the evolution of the news in the field of museums and related fields. For example, during the recent celebration of International Museum Day, a special eve was organized to assess the initiatives in Europe and Africa. This preceded the choice for free visits to the museum during the week of May 27 to 31 and was recessed with a discussion meeting with other museum stake holders in our country. Given that the celebration of the national day on May 20, the date of May 18 was not convenient, that is why we had to postpone the date of the celebration of the global event in Cameroon. The day before permits us to learn what is happening in the world about museums.

Subscribing to thematic information or specialized websites on issues of museum permits us to receive on a regular basis data on the sector.

Discussion Forum

The other important element is the exchange of experiences on multiple forums available on the web. These forums is for the various personnel of the structure to exchange their experiences on their daily work. The difficulties encountered, the strategies developed to address them, the activities developed and the reaction of visitors, etc.

The training and recycling

A professional whatsoever and regardless of the sector in which he finds himself is in need of learning constantly new developments in their field of work. Thus, the internet offers privilege means of small training or distant recycling.

ACTIVITIES

With the new information technology, museum activities are conducted taking into consideration the tools where the impact is considered.

Visiting the museum

the integration of the video in the museum brings added value to the explanations of mediators in the museum an action that has been much appreciated by many visitors, others innovative projects are being finalized notably guided virtual tours, and games based on the names or objects installed in the museum.

The guided virtual tour project. The project intends to produce videos of different aisles of the museum accompanied by explanations of cultural mediators on objects that are exposed. Thus, in the museum's new website under construction, internet users can make a visit to the museum from their seats. This approach is to go beyond simply presenting pictures of objects as is the case now. We rely on the feedback received so far in the hope that this approach will encourage further the desire of users to make the trip (when they have the opportunity to visit the Blackitude museum). Here we are talking of a recorded video posted on the website.

An alternative formula will allow the user to be guided in the museum and gallery via video (as in a video conference) and interact with the guard. Possibility will be given on such occasions for one to be able to order directly articles online.

GAMES: museum classes

The visit to the museum by pupils and kindergartens arouses an ambitious project on games based on two formulas.

The first game developed for the students in these schools is one that will provide partial name of an object and ask the children to find the name of the object in question in the museum, identify it, find it among the installed objects, and to explain its use. Thereafter, it will be asked to make a personal comment on this object, its form, its use ... This part of the game will be filmed in a floppy disc and given to a student who appreciated his performance. The aim is to ensure that young people are accustomed to visits to the museums.

  The second game will be a sort of reconfiguration on tablet or computer objects by shape and then to rank them according to their origin on a virtual map. Their work will be sent to the address of their parents or at school and every parent or coach will be responsible to produce a proverb and tell a story inspired by the object chosen by the youth, it will be played back during the next meeting. An initiative of valorization, education as well as appropriation of local cultural practices.