



Bulletin 63

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Updates for Science on a Sphere

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In November of 2012, I traveled to Long Beach, California, to attend the annual International Science on a Sphere Conference on behalf of the Alaska State Museum. Science on a Sphere®, or “SOS,” is a display system that uses computers, video projectors, and a six foot diameter sphere to create an animated globe.

http://sos.noaa.gov/What_is_SOS/index.html

It is a great educational tool for illustrating and interpreting global data such as weather or any other visuals that display well on a spherical screen. Over 400 images and data sets created by NOAA and NASA are streamed to the 85+ SOS installations around the world via the internet, and some of the institutions that have an SOS installation also create their own imagery.

http://www.sos.noaa.gov/What_is_SOS/sites.php

At our museum, the sphere has become a popular visual aid for augmenting our collections and exhibitions. We recently displayed Apollo 11 moon rocks during a First Friday of the Month gallery walk and for that event I customized SOS imagery to include simple animations of the Apollo 11 blastoff from earth and the landings on the moon.



Thanks to partial funding from NOAA for travel, I was able to attend the SOS conference and give a presentation sharing customized imagery I've created for the museum's sphere, as well as attend workshops and see how other institutions use SOS. Over 100 participants attended the conference from 53 international science centers, museums, aquariums, and zoos. Most participants were from the U.S. but it was also interesting to hear presentations and interact with attendees from Canada, Mexico, China, and South Korea. I enjoyed a conversation with Carlos Diaz Leal on how the Climate Institute of Mexico has built special SOS facilities at over 15 locations around Mexico. Those institutions might be interested in playing some of our custom datasets with a focus on history and culture. I had no idea that Mexico has over 20 indigenous languages that are at risk of extinction. We discussed collaborating on a language dataset for the sphere. A presentation called "Math on a Sphere" piqued my interest as potentially a clever way to engage students in math. The "Math on a Sphere" application is being developed by the Lawrence Hall of Science and the University of Colorado. The presenters demonstrated using SOS as an interactive tool; visitors will be able to "draw" on the sphere and thereby learn concepts of geometry as well as share their artistic creations. Consultant Tom Bowman of Bowman Global Change discussed elements of exhibit design that may apply to SOS facilities and presentations; for example, while uniformity of style and positioning can be helpful, it is also good to mix styles and provide information in a more playful and surprising format.



Besides the formal presentations and informal sharing among participants, there were several structured hands-on workshops on creating custom imagery and techniques for facilitating sphere presentations. For me, the highlight of the trip was learning how to use the Adobe software package "After Effects" as a means to more easily add animation to digital creations. Since the conference was located in the greater LA area, it was fitting that several movie producers came in to discuss the

art and science of visual storytelling. Jerry Zucker discussed his experiences directing movies such as “Airplane,” “Naked Gun,” and “Ghost.” University of California instructor and author Lisa Cron gave a particularly interesting keynote presentation exploring the idea that humans are hard-wired for stories as a survival adaptation; we hunger for good edge-of-the-seat stories and enjoy the neurological satisfaction derived from hearing how the story ends. Other impressive sessions included incorporating theatrics and utilizing theater students to liven up sphere presentations, showing how movies for the sphere are made, demonstrating use of mobile devices and other interactives during presentations, and exhibiting of the new SOS operating system features.

By the end of the conference I felt enlightened and inspired and came home with new ideas to expand the museum sphere’s horizons and keep our presentations relevant, current, informative and engaging. Stay tuned for new developments as I apply what I learned at the conference.



Ask ASM

Question: I have a question about exhibit labels. My museum has NO environmental regulation (it’s an old house) and it gets really humid so papers will fall off the walls and/or curl up and get crinkly. First of all, I’m wondering if you could recommend a type of label material that would be resistant to humidity.

Secondly, I’m looking for some sort of adhesive that would reliably stick the labels to the walls, but not cause too much damage to the walls if we wanted to move them.

So, in sum, I’m looking for a combination of a water resistant label material plus an adhesive strong enough to hold the labels on the walls, but so strong as to take off paint or damage the walls.

ASM: If you have a budget, you can have your labels printed on vinyl. Most any print/sign shop will have these capabilities. The vinyl is used for most exterior signage these days and would certainly hold up. A cheaper option is the back to back laminating trick which was described in an earlier ASM Bulletin. http://www.museums.state.ak.us/documents/bulletin_docs/bulletin_7-8.pdf

There are two bulletin articles that deal with exhibit labels:

http://www.museums.state.ak.us/documents/bulletin_docs/bulletin_7-8.pdf

<http://museumbulletin.wordpress.com/2011/02/23/alaska-state-museums-bulletin-37/#2>

As for mounting, a good application of 3M 99 spray adhesive will hold the laminated label securely to most substrates. There are a number of options for mounting material:

Four-ply museum mat board

Gator board

Aluminum and PVC panel (aluminum composite panel) – various brands are available at sign shops; Plexiglas panel, Extruded PVC panel (Syntra or similar brand product) matted and framed in a molding profile that fits the house period style.

There is not a great answer for the mounting problem without knowing all of the details. A free standing label frame is one way. If there is picture-hanging molding in the house, that could be used to hang frames or panel-mounted labels. We are mounting some of our new labels on 3/8" Plexi and hanging them from the tops of cases with monofilament or fishing cable and crimps. This is quite attractive and is visually non obtrusive. We have a shop and the ability to cut, drill and polish the Plexiglas. Double stick foam tape works well for sticking up labels (again a quality 3M brand will serve you better) but it is hit or miss for removal. Generally a very careful removal will do no damage. Sometimes soft spots in the paint or sheet rock make removal impossible without ripping the wall surface. A hard plaster surface might be safe for removal. I would not use this option on historic paint or wall paper.

Shaking the Money Tree

President Obama's FY14 Budget Proposes Increases for Key Programs, Limits to Charitable Giving

On Wednesday, President Obama released his budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2014, making the case for some renewed investments in programs that are important to museums while again suggesting harmful changes to tax incentives for charitable donations. The \$3.77 trillion budget would provide:

- \$32.9 million for the Office of Museum Services at the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a \$2 million increase from FY 2012, the last complete appropriations cycle;

- \$154.5 million for the National Endowment for the Arts, an \$8 million increase;
- \$154.5 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities, an \$8 million increase;
- \$59 million for the Historic Preservation Fund, a \$3 million increase;
- \$47.8 million for the National Science Foundation’s Advancing Informal STEM Learning program (formerly Informal Science Education), a \$13.58 million decrease;
- \$2.285 billion for the National Park Service, a roughly \$50 million increase.

While the budget proposes increases for many of these programs, many of them have been cut in recent years and would remain below previous levels even if these increases were adopted.

“With the release of this budget proposal, Congress and the President will continue working on important tax and spending decisions that have the potential to affect every museum,” said American Alliance of Museums President Ford W. Bell. “Our field needs to be sure its voice is heard in the debates ahead.”

More Attacks on the Charitable Deduction

President Obama’s budget yet again contains a proposed 28% cap on the value of itemized deductions, including those for charitable donations. The Alliance has joined with a broad coalition of nonprofit organizations to fight against this cap, writing to the President this week about the damage it could do to charitable donations, which account for roughly one-third of museums’ budgets. With many in Congress talking about comprehensive tax reform, now is a great time to tell them to protect the charitable deduction.

Spotlight on Grant in Aid

The application process for Grant in Aid is now open. The legislature has not yet finalized the Grant-in-Aid funding level for next fiscal year. Last year the funding level was \$105,600 and we expect to have similar funding this year. There are 3 grant programs this year (same as last year):

1. Regular Grant-in-Aid for projects up to \$10,000
2. Mini-Grant-in-Aid for projects up to \$2,000
3. Internship Grant (amount determined by the review committee)

Please be aware that you can only apply for one category of funding per institution per year. For the mini-grant and the internship grant programs you will need to contact me to discuss your proposal before you submit your application.

Grant-In-Aid applications must be emailed to me by 4:30 pm AKST Monday June 3rd 2013 or postmarked on or before Monday, June 3rd, 2013.

Grant applications are available on our website: www.museums.state.ak.us

If you have any questions about the process, please feel free to call on our toll-free number 1-888-913-MUSE (6873).

Alaska Museums in the News

Buzz Aldrin in Anchorage

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=KQm9D8IJrho

Professional Development/Training Opportunities

George Washington University's Distance Education

The George Washington University's Distance Education Graduate Certificate Program in "Museum Collections Management and Care" is accepting applications for the fall. The application deadline is August 1, 2013.

The graduate certificate is earned completely online and is designed for those working or volunteering in museums with collections management responsibilities. The courses are ideal for those either lacking prior formal museum studies training or desiring a refresher in the topics of legal and ethical issues, collections management and preventive conservation.

For more information, please contact Mary Coughlin at musede@gwu.edu or visit the website:

<http://ccas.gwu.edu/museum>

Image Permanence Institute

Free webinars on the optimal preservation environment

The Image Permanence Institute is presenting a series of free webinars for collections care and facilities staff in cultural institutions is designed to enable collections care and facilities staff in cultural institutions to work together to achieve an optimal preservation environment—one that combines the best possible preservation of collections with the least possible consumption of energy, and is sustainable over time. This series is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities Education & Training grant program.

Webinar presentations will focus on broad environmental challenges and provide useful and effective suggestions for dealing with them. Webinars will be presented by IPI staff unless noted otherwise. Each webinar will be presented on a Wednesday from 2:00 to 3:30 Eastern Standard Time. You can get additional details and register for webinars at <http://ipisustainability.org/>

May 1, 2013

Best Practices for Collecting and Analyzing Environmental Data

June 5, 2013

Dealing with Summer Heat & Humidity

July 10, 2013

Investigate your HVAC System & Identify Potential Energy Savings – Guest Speaker Peter Herzog, Herzog/Wheeler & Associates, Energy Management Consultant

August 7, 2013

Practical Approaches to Environmental Control for Small Institutions – Guest speaker, Richard Kerschner, Director of Preservation and Conservation, Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vermont

September 4, 2013

Sustainable Preservation Practices—Key Team Activities

Connecting to Collections May Webinars

Webinar 1: Physical and Chemical Properties of Photographs

Tuesday, May 7, 2013

9:00-10:30 a.m. AKST

Instructor: Debra Hess Norris

This session will provide a basic familiarity with the fundamental physical and chemical properties of photographic print and negative collections, including albums and scrapbooks, and the causes and mechanisms of their deterioration.

Webinars 2 and 3: Technological Development of Photography

Thursday, May 9, 2013 and Thursday, May 16, 2013

9:00-10:30 a.m. AKST

Instructor: Debra Hess Norris

These sessions will focus on supplying a basic knowledge of the technological developments of photography in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries with special focus on albumen, silver gelatin, and chromogenic, print materials, and glass plate and film base negatives.

Webinar 4: Preventive Care of Photographs

Tuesday, May 21, 2013

9:00-10:30 a.m. AKST

Instructor: Debra Hess Norris

This session will look to give a basic understanding of and appreciation for issues relating to preventive care of photographic collections, including risk management; appropriate environmental conditions; handling and maintenance procedures for storage; exhibition and display parameters and monitoring techniques; and emergency preparedness, mitigation, and response.

Webinar 5: Advocating for the Care of Photographs

Thursday, May 23, 2013

9:00-10:30 a.m. AKST

Instructor: Debra Hess Norris

This session will provide a basic knowledge of best practices in photograph preservation and building a case statement for effective fund raising. Advocacy for collections will be stressed as a first step in raising awareness of the richness and importance of photographic heritage.

To register <http://www.connectingtocollections.org/courses/registration/>

Professional Time Wasting on the Web

Disaster recovery still on going for art after hurricane Sandy

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/21/arts/artsspecial/conservation-team-restores-art-and-artifacts-after-disasters.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

More about Nina Simon and her success with the Santa Cruz Museum of Art

http://www.santacruz.com/news/2013/03/19/innovator_drives_museums_success

Setbacks in the museum world

<http://blogs.artinfo.com/modernartnotes/2013/03/the-sad-unnecessary-situations-at-moca-indy/>

Are Registrars endangered species?

<http://world.museumsprojekte.de/?p=920>

Major break in the Gardner Museum heist

<http://www.boston.com/metrodesk/2013/03/18/feds-reveal-investigative-developments-publicity-campaign-gardner-heist-probe/VmSiOGRgKbRakLJr1wCA3I/story.html>

Is this a glimpse of a future where visitors can explore collections in new ways?

<http://engagingplaces.net/2013/04/12/video-starry-night/>

Or might this be the future for museums?

<http://goo.gl/maps/LwFqV>

Sandy damaged Seaport Museum Gallery Closes due to Storm Damage

<http://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20130408/south-street-seaport/sandy-damaged-seaport-museum-galleries-close-on-fulton-st>

\$7 garage sale Renoir turns out to be stolen

<http://gma.yahoo.com/blogs/abc-blogs/mystery-over-7-renoir-flea-market-deepens-171107612--abc-news-savings-and-investment.html>

Oldest harbor in the world discovered in Egypt

<http://www.scienceworldreport.com/articles/6294/20130417/archaeologists-uncover-worlds-oldest-harbor-egypt-papyrus-collection-discovered.htm>

Crazy story about someone stealing ivory from a museum with a chainsaw

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/mar/31/chainsaw-man-stealing-ivory-paris-museum>

Cool website all about ivory

<http://www.ebur.eu/index.php?q=1&s=0&t=1>

Cool website all about an alternative to ivory

<http://www.ivoryalternative.com/>

LED lighting: Fact and Fiction

<http://collectionsconversations.wordpress.com/2013/04/02/led-lighting-fact-and-fiction/>

How the Technology Behind Airport Scanners Can Reveal Hidden Ancient Art

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=how-the-technology-behind-airport-s-2013-04>

Every year Heritage Preservation encourages libraries, museums, archives, historical societies, and preservation organizations to set aside May 1 to participate in MayDay. This year, make sure your institution is prepared! Any cultural institution submitting a brief description of its 2013 MayDay plans or accomplishments by May 31, 2013, will be entered in a drawing for disaster supplies donated by Gaylord Brothers. Heritage Preservation will also offer its award-winning Field Guide to Emergency Response and Emergency Response and Salvage Wheel at special MayDay prices from April 1 through May 31. For project ideas, information on prizes, and the book sale, visit Heritage Preservation's MayDay site,

<http://www.heritagepreservation.org/PROGRAMS/TFlessons/MayDay.html>.