One Museum, Multiple Entrances - the Case of Living Cultural Heritage

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ABSTRACT
We define cultural heritage and we distinguish different types of stakeholders, their needs and the expected experiences. Collections of cultural heritage artifacts in time often move into departments of public museums that, consequently, have to cope with a growing variety of intentions and needs between culture scholars, amateur culture participants and tourists. Possible solutions are discussed in terms of museum business models and logistics, as well as the need for involvement of cultural heritage related communities

Author Keywords
Cultural heritage; living memories; private and public collections; amateurs, scholars, and tourists; temporary owners.

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INTRODUCTION
In a set of rather different cultural contexts (a faculty of architecture in Italy, a course for consultants on the internet of things in the Netherlands, a computer science department in China) we teach courses on ICT design for cultural heritage, or “design for precious memory” as we label this [1], and we and our students are involved in maintaining collections of cultural heritage objects. We discovered that in this domain the curators of both private and public collections struggle with the challenge of accommodating the interests of the various types of “visitors” that comprise the public of their collection, and we are developing a way to handle this diversity in a way that supports the viability of this type of collections.

We consider our growing insight may be of benefit for other types of (museum) collections as well and we expect to learn from confronting our ideas with those of other workshop participants.

CULTURAL HERITAGE
Uras et al [2] state: “Cultures develop in societies, by people co-developing and sharing artifacts ... of many types: languages, rules, gestures, physical objects, documents, stories, etc. The artifacts are the product of the culture and, at the same time, the main way to keep the culture. As the people living in the culture will die, the artifacts are needed to keep the culture alive. They are inherited by new generations of members of the culture. Since the artifacts get used, and transferred, they change, get worn out, acquire additional meaning and lose some “previous” meaning, and finally may get lost, or lose their original function and meaning. After that, these artifacts are no longer cultural heritage but just heritage, and at the same time the culture may be in immediate danger of dying”. Our concept of Cultural Heritage is based on UNESCO [3].

Our Ontology
Cultural heritage refers to tangible and intangible artifacts that are kept by (mostly temporal) owners (a person, institute, museum, or community).

Culture, in this respect, refers to the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes a community, and the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior of the Participants in the culture [4].

Participants in (or members of) a culture play one or more of several Roles: Scholars actively support maintenance and knowledge of the artifacts and their use in the living culture: collectors, restorers and curators, makers of facsimiles, expert performers, researchers of artifacts or of the history of the culture.

Amateur is our label for a member of the audience that is willing and able to take the role of member of the culture, knowing and understanding the culture and actively participating and supporting.

Participants in a culture mostly gradually develop into their role, based on living (or even literally being born) in a society where the cultural practices are still actively being performed and attended.

Especially in public collections like in museums there is a 3rd role indicating interested people who are not members or participants in the culture: Tourists. This audience might be...
excited about inspecting objects that appear strange as well as intriguing or beautiful to them.

Cultural Heritage and Stakeholder Experiences

Scholars mostly consider their role to be a mixture of a profession or a mission. Their intention is to keep the culture alive, and to keep it integer, by both supporting development and maintaining authenticity. They live the culture, they continue to learn as well as to teach, to study and guard the artifacts as well as to provide responsible access to the amateurs in order for these to experience the true heritage. And they are aware that their continued devotion is required in order to keep the culture alive.

An amateur contributes to the culture in several ways, from being a sense making audience at events, to (financially or politically) contributing to a healthy context. Like scholars, amateurs will only continue to experience the living culture first hand as long as they remain open to learning as well as open to let their peers learn, and as long as they continue to attend and participate.

These two types of stakeholders in a culture may regularly shift between their roles of scholar and amateur: being authors of a novel and readers of other prose, one day a performer and the next day member of the audience, making a flute and then listening to someone else playing it.

Tourists, on the other hand, will aim at a completely different type of experience: The cultural heritage object collection is for them an opportunity to meet novel objects in an unknown context. If at first sight the context is attractive enough to them and as long as the encounter keeps them interested, they will start their exploration, be entertained and develop a rather new experience that may include (following the conceptual analysis of [5, 6]):

- Developing an understanding of functions and meaning of the artifacts and their cultural context;
- Acquiring an impression of the emotional values of the culture and its artifacts;
- Acquiring a tendency to act regarding the exposition (buying documentation, discussing with peers, leaving) and possibly to interact with it when appropriate and available; and
- Feeling attracted (or the contrary) to the culture as understood so far, which might even result in an attempt to learn more or join.

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS AND MUSEUMS

Cultural heritage artifacts originally are being developed in their culture, are being used for generations (hence “heritage”) and owned by successive individual amateurs and scholars or by a community of these. At a certain moment they are explicitly considered heritage, get the special treatment as such (their historic value is acknowledged, repair is now considered restoration, use is restricted or safeguarded in order to restrict wear) and they are carefully stored in safe climate conditions. Their use and their state is recorded (especially for intangible artifacts), and copies of tangible objects are being made and used when possible.

Gradually these utensils develop into collection items, regarded as the authentic items of the culture that the scholars will need to study and the amateurs might be allowed to inspect and in special cases even handle in controlled conditions.

Most collections of cultural heritage artifacts originate in the original culture, and this is often needed to support the feeling of authenticity and the collective memory of the cultural stakeholders.

How to provide access and document a collection

Based on our teaching, and in fact on how our students developed their understanding of how to supply the knowledge of the cultural heritage objects to the stakeholders, we developed a structure where, for each artifact, at least three types of knowledge need to be available:

- History
- Description
- Digital record

Figure 1. General representation of the history of one artifact, a historic costume (a) and specifics of a single period (b).
A history of the object. Figure 1 shows samples of a student project on developing a not-public tablet tool for a cultural heritage community on historic costumes, which shows that even the general history may well contain private details referring to individual ancestors of current members of a culture. Inside the original culture this may not cause problems, though it could be inappropriate to provide these details to tourists.

A description of the object (see Figure 2) seems relevant even for tourists, though the appreciated amount of details (and the size of pictures or video clips to be downloaded) may be different for different roles.

Diaries need to include all relevant knowledge needed to understand the actual state of the artifact at a given time as well as the background of all changes. Consequently there will be data that contain private information on the current owner or keeper, or on others who manipulated the artifact (including amounts of money paid for services, people involved in cases of abuse). Often, diaries are at least partially considered to be for the eyes of the current keeper only, and a change to a new responsible stakeholder requires careful decisions on what to keep and whom to allow access to this on what date (Our courses contain a separate lecture entitled “What if the owner dies”).

For the collections that we ourselves are involved with, we often need more different categories of specific information, like restoration, multimedia, and a separate account of the original culture. Figure 4 shows an entry page of one artifact that allows authorized visitors to go to various categories.

Figure 2. Description of one element of composed artifact.

Figure 3. Entry in a diary of a single artifact.

Figure 4. Entry web page for a single artifact in a collection of historic musical instruments (for access a login is required).

Collections often Move to Museums
Cultural heritage collections require special logistics (space, climate and lightning control, timely maintenance, protection against damage and unmonitored manipulation), devoted curators, and documentation, as well as a stable financial base to guarantee continuity of all this.

In the course of time this often turns out to require too much from the individual volunteer stakeholders and even from the original cultural community if this is a private group. Hence, the collection is in danger to be corrupted, to be sold in pieces, or otherwise disappear. In that case, political or legal
bodies (a municipality, a foundation) may take over or may be constructed, and the collection develops into a public museum or is incorporated in an existing one. This seems to be the fate of many important and famous collections. In fact, most museums with collections of cultural heritage found their origin precisely in the mechanism sketched above.

**Museums in Trouble**

So far so good: Till a few decades ago, in the domains and museum practices we are aware of, there were many thriving examples where societies of friends of a culture supported the museums’ activities (including performances by scholars of the domain attended by amateurs), where private collections were donated or sold for a token price, and where the curator collaborated in a responsible way with scholars who needed to manipulate the artifacts in order to support the living culture (e.g., for making valid replicas). The collections on display were intended for the original stakeholders, and so was the information available. If a tourist would enter the space, which was a relatively rare occasion, the visit would often be short though not much harm was done to the visitor since no expectations had explicitly be triggered.

However, political and societal situations change, and museums in many cases had to decide for a change in business goals and business models. In the last couple of decades we perceive a common view on how museums should serve the general public in all its variety (including children or enterprises), should aim for a profit, should advertise the cultural state and vision of the political body that controls them and of the corporate sponsors that are replacing the financial support of cultural communities. Museums, in this situation, should conform to new visions of what is a good balance and dosage of information, entertainment, esthetics, and variety.

In the domains of historic costumes and of historic musical instruments we have seen striking changes: rather complete costume collections, even if they may keep their fashion gallery, loose visibility to changing exhibitions in relation to temporary interests triggered by events other domains (London’s Victoria and Albert Museum celebrated 100 years of Hollywood film making, and staged a film costume exhibition): exciting for the general public that discovered a relation to other simultaneous cultural events. World famous large and important collections of historical musical instruments in the same London museum and in the “Gemeente Museum” at The Hague completely disappeared: Parts were silently taken over by specialist museums, larger parts are supposed to be in store without a curator being in control and with information unreachable for scholars. These cases include large parts of the collections that originated from donated private collections that once belonged to their original living cultures.

**New Venues bring Traffic Issues**

These museums do not have a choice: The management needed to conform to the new political and cultural visions of their authorities. Their new business models require them to provide opportunities for patrons to organize a reception in museum premises that should be exciting and fit for the occasion. They are supposed to provide an appropriate mix of learning and entertainment for families with children, and to provide accommodation for visitors to have a drink and a chat in an amusing environment [7]; all of this for a consumer price that allows a healthy financial profit.

In current museums different types of visitors will meet quite different types of traffic: The fashion gallery is most of the time rather empty, but the thematic exhibition on movie costumes is crowded. The more a (often temporal) exhibit attracts the general public, the more space and routing is an issue, and at the same time, the more the exhibit could be in danger regarding climate conditions and damage.

Historic textiles and historic artifacts with certain types of coloring and dyed decoration may be deteriorating if light is too strong for a long period, but visitors should be able to see what is displayed. With heavy traffic these conditions are contradicting each other.

**DEALING WITH DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS**

A soon as the authorities that are responsible for the business goals and business processes are no longer mainly the community of members of a culture, we need to design solutions. Museums and comparable institutes that keep cultural heritage collections need to maintain a long term survival strategy.

This includes a sound financial support model (which may well be based on a mixture of corporate sponsorship, corporate sponsorship, entrance fees and commercial activities, and support from culture members (individual or as a culture focused society). Preserving cultural heritage may for many modern museums be a secondary task, often inherited from a different business model in the past – this is why this types of collections disappear without a trace or are explicitly repelled. In this case the original culture needs to act, negotiate with the sponsors, and find a way to make the authorities accept maintenance and support to allow the members of culture access to whatever they need is a specific task.

**Different stakeholders need different types of experience**

The general public in a museum (often literally tourists), including families with children, school groups, corporate sponsors and their guests, all expect something amusing and entertaining.

- This includes the opportunity to get some easy explanation in order to understand exciting unknown things as well as things that are supposed to be new or hot; to interact with artifacts, the context, and with people like themselves; to get a scent of emotions that might be appropriate regarding the exhibit and the context, and to have a generally enjoyable time during their stay.
• In addition, they may well feel the need to build some memory of this occasion: a souvenir, a picture, some easy documentation or even a pointer to what more could be found in this building might be highly appreciated and, if needed, payed for.

Regarding each collection of cultural heritage (a museum may well have a variety of collections in their premises) the members of the culture will have very different expectations and needs.

Scholars will need, both:

• Hands on experiences: measurements, actual use, maintenance and restoration – all of which should be carefully monitored by a responsible curator, documented, and restricted to the bare minimum. The good news being that there will be a restricted number of scholars who need this, that they may collaborate and cooperate (providing each other with measurements taken, attend a joint session of actual use, and document this on multimedia);
• Access to documentation regarding each artifact as sketched before (e.g. related to figures 1-4) – history, complete description, restoration reports; etc. as well as access within reason regarding the diary information. On the other hand, scholars should understand, and can be requested, to provide any available new insights, findings, recordings, and references;
• Access to the full collection, including whatever is stored in depot.

Amateurs will expect the true experience of the living culture.

• This includes at least the opportunity to inspect the original artifacts as well as documentation as far as there are no privacy issues regarding the current owner. They will understand restricting issues regarding climate control, damage prevention and lighting regulations.
• This also includes the opportunity of participating, as a knowledgeable audience, in actual use by scholars – performances where dresses get used in a relevant context (e.g., a staged ceremony) or musical instruments are being played in a concert.

Split the venue, keep the richness of multiple resources

It seems inevitable there is a need for diverse spaces with functions that match the needs and intended experiences of the various visitors and stakeholders.

• A museum shop seems to be relevant for almost any type of visitor. Providing easy to understand and appreciate souvenirs will mainly serve tourists and corporate sponsor guests. Though, once in the shop they can be seduced to browse and may well discover there is more in the collection, and even consider the status of amateur to a culture that seems to be exciting enough (CDs and well-designed books may be a first step to embracing a culture)
• Food, drink, reception, and meeting facilities, first of all for various types of tourists, for families with children, and for special events organized by corporate sponsors. Museum management might have good reasons to be less nervous if the drinking crowd is not too close to the most well-known painting in the collection.
• For members of a culture, there is a need for entrance to a library of archival material and documentation. Some types of access (related to the state and possible sensitive content of the documents) may need to be monitored or restricted to certified scholars.
• As far as space can be made available, scholars and amateurs will be able to walk their dedicated galleries, mostly without the need of a guide (whether audio or human). On the other hand, a tourist who happens to enter such a specialist room might feel the need and will appreciate a guidance that highlights “specialties” which me be either artifacts that look “extreme” or that are related to a well-known story (the hat worn by Napoleon at Waterloo, the largest violin in the world). This way there is no need to prevent disappointment and restrict access of these collections.

For running these types of access, professionals and experts are needed. e.g., for the shop, for the library, as guides or for monitoring the audio guides, for monitoring manipulation by scholars. Maybe not all of these need to be (full time) employed by the museum organization: in the case of cultural heritage collections the original community may well be able and willing to provide recognized scholars that volunteer or are in other ways working on behalf of the interested community. These volunteers often will be happy to work, both, for the benefit of their living culture, and for developing appreciation for their culture from tourists.

Different doors (and routes) with united management

Our students did the exercises: they suggest that (at least conceptually) a museum could have separate doors:

• Tourists may be served best by providing them with a nice and smooth route along exhibits and installations that are easy to appreciate and that are safe for crowds. Obviously, food and drinks, as well as the shop should be strategically located in this tract.
• A separate and appropriately indicated VIP door could lead to special event facilities, designed for the purpose and, at the same time, making specific use of the museum context (some special exhibits, the newest sponsored acquisition).
• Amateurs will often enter especially for “their” section. Make sure they will be able to find it immediately (also on the museum website: try to locate the historic costume collection for the Victoria and Albert museum). They will not expect a nice route, just as many objects with appropriate information as can be made available.
• Scholars will sometimes need access to artifacts in store, as well as to the archive and library. Guided by them, this will also be the case for amateurs.
For the display of cultural heritage objects, the main question is what is safe to be responsibly made available, and in which environmental conditions (humidity, temperature, lightning). Members of the culture will understand the restrictions in this respect.

For amateurs, some examples of cultural heritage objects will often be appreciated, though in their route this could well be copies that show how the objects originally looked: They will be happy to experience what people in the old days had available. Often copies are fine, and for some types of experience they may even be handled: Some museums successfully provide look-alikes of historic costumes for making pictures, or copies of musical instrument mechanics to allow touching and sounding.

In the same way new technologies can be applied: even the concept of mumification (whether this is in fact still cultural heritage or just a far cry from a past culture) can now be studied through a video clip [8] that gradually show the unpacking of a mummy till the bare bones and beyond: just the metal amulets. And, in the same domains, [8] shows how kids may get a feel of the practices by or even practiced by children based on a Barbie doll [9]

Providing access to these technologies in the route that is dedicated for amateurs will certainly support the intended experiences. Moreover, techniques like augmented reality with the use of the omnipresent smartphone will allow visitors to find vivid references to (use of) the exhibits in the past. Museum websites could contain additional information specifically intended for members of cultures related to the cultural heritage collections, like illustrated before. This information could, obviously, be password protected a far as only qualified scholars should have access.

By designing separate routes and indicating them carefully for the diversity of visitors, both the crowds and the specialists may be served better and with much less frustration, which will, in the end, hopefully provided arguments for the various stakeholders (from authorities to cultural communities to sponsors to tourists) to provide more support, financially as well as by explicit opinion, to maintain museums and collections to serve everyone.

CONCLUSION
In our current world, even when cultures vary, the business models of many (public) museums has to change towards decreasing focus on maintaining cultural heritage and increasing priority for entertainment and education of the general public and provision of accommodation for corporate sponsors.

Communities of people united by their living culture, and consequently motivated to keep their cultural heritage, are increasingly situated amongst a heterogeneous mixture of other types of cultures (professions, social networks, political and religious movements). People move, people live in social media and become aware of a growing diversity of cultural movements and make choices about what cultures they want to actively belong to and to support. The geographical community is no longer by default the supporter of their cultural heritage.

Members of a culture related to a cultural heritage collection have decreasing possibilities to find support for their “own” collections, since their specific culture is increasingly hidden to the general public in their context. Only actual authorities with financial power and a value system that includes the goal to support cultural heritage can decide to take a role in the business goals and business models of museums.

EXAMPLES OF CURRENT PRACTICE
Our suggested solution will require a change of attitudes and values, both for the original culture communities, for museum management, and for authorities and sponsors.

We will find many examples of museums where only the tourists are served: an exhibition in the History Museum in Puertollano in 2005 commemorated the musical culture from the time of Don Quijote (a roman written in 1605) by showing historic pictures of period Spanish instruments and rather simple “reconstructions” of the instruments depicted: certainly interesting for the general public but definitely disappointing for amateurs and scholars who knew quite well that many actual music scores of that time and context existed as well as original instruments, and were well aware of performances and recordings by groups like those lead by Jordi Savall based on original manuscripts and performed on original instruments or faithful copies. This exhibition only had a single door: for the tourists.

On the other hand, we find the Horniman Museum in London that, next to an easy entrance for tourists that allows access to a selection of the collected items, provides scholars with facilities like clearly described procedures to access the many artifact in the depots, and even policies and procedures to request a loan – a second, if not physical, door to the collections. For the amateurs there is a 3rd door through the internet, where all artifacts in the collections are visible (though only with very small pictures lacking any relevant details), and these are often randomly categorized (e.g., there are 32 “traverse flutes” and 12 “flutes” that are in fact traverse flutes) and descriptions often lack relevant details and the indication of whether some of them are on display often incorrect.

Some cultural heritage collections in the domain of music are part of institutes for professional music education, like the Museum of musical instruments at the Royal College of Music in London. The museum shows in fact nearly all its cultural heritage artifacts, in a display that clearly aims at the students and staff, an audience that is mostly of the category “amateur”. Tourists will not find in this display and content too much to be excited about, but for scholars the curator is most of the time available to provide additional access and information. The same situation is the case for the Musical instrument Museum in St Cecelia Hall, part of the University of Edinburgh. Amateurs and Scholars will find a rich
collection with a lot of exemplary documentation, and a helpful curator to provide access whenever needed and at all possible, where tourists will probably never know about it and would not be challenged to enter, browse, and study. This types of specialized museums seem able to survive financially because of their relation with an educational institute in a related domain, and, consequently, shape their “door” to fit the intended specialized audience.

In the same domain of musical cultural heritage the Markneukirchen musical instrument museum seems to mainly aim at amateurs, providing over 3000 historical instruments and related artifacts, though, in one of the buildings (in fact with a separate door) there are bizarre exhibits like the largest tuba in the world, the largest accordion in the world and the largest violin (14 feet) – complete irrelevant for amateurs but a favorite background for tourist selfies.

We are currently developing our own example of a website for musical cultural heritage where at least amateurs will find relevant information including audio and video of actual use by scholars, and where scholars will be able to apply for actual access to the physical artifacts. Though this activity currently does not focus on the (largest) tourist category, we intend to consider educational entries (mainly by website access) to provide adequate learning opportunities that provide an experience that should be positive enough to create basic understanding of a cultural context that is currently not encountered by the general public.

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REFERENCES