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LBSC 622

12 March 2012

Art Project Powered by Google

When people talk about art or museum, the delicacy and culture deposits always play crucial roles. To observe an art work and judge its value, the texture and detail craft should be very important evidences. Traditional online graphic technologies are insufficient for such a requirement of visual display. Therefore, most art works are only available in museum. Google art project is a perfect solution for this limitation. This project moved famous museums to the virtual world with a super high resolution and tour feeling.

Google art project collected 17 world famous museums, including Tate Britain, The Museum of Modern Art, Van Gogh Museum, National Gallery and so on. More than 1,060 works are able to be access by using super high resolution. And both the number of museum and the number of works are increasing day by day. Moreover, Google Art is a free project. Great art must never be the preserve of the powerful and wealthy alone. A masterpiece is universal, and in an ideal world, it should be seen for all the people in the world.

There are two major technologies in this project – Super high resolution image and Google Street View. The former one is based on advanced lens with 'gigapixel' photo capturing technology. This may sound like pseudo-scientific hokum, but apparently it produces an electronic image containing 7 billion pixels, allowing viewers to study the work in microscopic detail. This technology allows users to observe the texture of paint or tiny crack of pottery. Hence, it bridged the gap between visual display and online graphic

limitation. Google Street View was used initially in Google Map. It provided users a sense of walking around in a real scenario. The perfect combination of these technologies makes this project a totally new experience of virtual tour in museum.

For mobility impaired people, it's possible to access art works in museums all over the world without going out. The accessibility of art is way different from accessibility of text files or common images. To know the value and meaning of an art work, we need to observe it closely and dig out the story hidden in the detail. Unfortunately, this is impossible for most mobility impaired people. With Google Art Project, they can even see the tiny things that are unavailable for normal people. In addition, this project provides a safer environment for mobility impaired people to avoid crowd in many popular museums.

As an imitation of museum tour, Google art is very easy to use. All you need to do is to select the museum you want to watch, click the place you want stand and drag your mouse to adjust your perspective. After you focus on the specific art work, you are able to enjoy the super high resolution by rooming in and out. The interfaces are simple and friendly, users are able to locate themselves precisely and easily understand what to do next. The "walking around" feeling would prevent users from frustrating in the high-tech virtual world.

Since the super high resolution technology and Google Street View are combined successfully in Google Art Project. From my perspective of view, it's also possible in libraries and other exhibitions. This expansion would be good news for mobility impaired people. They will access plenty of resources that are unavailable before. And this would be a terrific promotion of universal usability by using advanced technology.

Although Google Art is such an outstanding project, there are still some defects existing in it. Firstly, most museums in this project come from Europe and America. This would limit the diversity of culture communication. As I know, ancient culture and relics of Africa and Asia are amazing, since human being originated in some areas of these continents. It

would be a loss for the whole world to omit such precious heritage. Secondly, Google Street View got involved in some privacy issues. This might be a potential threat for the success of this project. Thirdly, at the moment only a small proportion of works from each collection is available in high-resolution. One of the pleasures of exploring a museum is that you can follow your eyes, and linger in front of any work of art that takes your fancy. This is impossible with Google's Art Project since it prescribes which images you are allowed to study in any depth. Their selection from the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, for instance, favours Neo- and Post-Impressionist painting by the likes of Seurat, Gauguin, Van Gogh and Cezanne, at the expense of modernist masterpieces.

In conclusion, as an advanced and brand new way to visit famous museums, Google Art is a huge improvement in accessibility of online art resources. The super high resolution pictures, the "walking around" feeling and free public accessibility make it possible for all of us with computer and internet to enjoy masterpieces whenever and wherever, especially for people who have mobility disability. Admittedly, this is not a perfect project due to the limitation of collection and some potential legal issue. However, it's a great revolution. It provides a new way to create virtual exhibitions for mobility impaired people and expand public accessibility.

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