Building Virtual Museum Exhibitions with ARCO

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Overview

• The ARCO RTD Project
  – Project goals, Prototype systems and components

• Metadata requirements
  – User requirements, Functional requirements, Interoperability and standards, Museum best practice

• Digital capture to virtual exhibition
  – ARCO system architecture, Digitisation of artefacts, 3D modelling and refinement, Storing and managing cultural objects, Designing virtual exhibitions

• Metadata for digital museums
  – ARCO data model, Types of metadata, ARCO Metadata Element Set (AMS)

• Metadata management
  – Metadata schema manager, Metadata instance editor

• Visualisation and interaction
  – Virtual and Augmented reality environments
The ARCO RTD Project

• ARCO started in October 2001 as a three year RTD project
  – Key Action II – Multimedia Content and Tools
  – Action Line III.1.6 – Virtual representation of cultural and scientific objects
• Co-funded by the EC under the 5FP
  – Total investment is 2.8M Euro inclusive of 2.05M Euro from the EC
• 7 partners, including two museum pilot sites, from 4 European countries
  – United Kingdom: University of Sussex (coordinator), UKOLN@University of Bath, Victoria and Albert Museum, Sussex Archaeological Society
  – France: Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique
  – Poland: Poznan University of Economics
  – Italy: GIUNTI Publishing Group
Goals of the ARCO Project

• Develop innovative technology and expertise to help museums create, manipulate, manage and present cultural objects in virtual exhibitions both within museums and over the Web

• Why?
  – To provide wider access to cultural heritage artefacts
  – To allow museums to have an online (3D) presence
  – To enable interaction with digital representations of collections

• How? By building a set of tools and processes from digitisation to visualisation:
  – Digital capture of artefacts, 3D modelling and refinement, Database and content management, Visualisation in virtual or augmented reality environments
  – Interoperability i.e. an Open Architecture
    • XML Data Exchange between components and other systems
    • Internet, Web, graphics and metadata standards
ARCO Prototype Systems and Components

- **Cultural Object Selection**
- **Digital Acquisition Methods**
- **Object Modelling Tools**
- **Interactive Model Refinement and Rendering Tool**
- **ARCO Content Management Application**
- **ARCO Oracle Database**
- **Augmented Reality Interface**

**Museums' requirements, assessment and evaluation**

**Evaluation**

**Museum Curatorial Steering Group (Museum User Trials)**
Metadata Requirements for Digital Museums

• User Requirements
  – Museum curator, Cataloguer, Digital Photographer, Object Modeler, Object Refiner, Content Designer, End-user

• Functional Requirements
  – Conversion from physical to virtual representations
  – 3D object representation, manipulation, management, visualisation
  – Design of exhibitions and interactive scenarios

• Interoperability and Standards
  – Internet standards (XML, VRML/X3D, HTML)
  – W3C Recommendations (XML Schema, XSLT, XPath)
  – Metadata standards (mda SPECTRUM, Dublin Core)
  – 3D graphics standards (VRML/X3D, OpenGL, DirectX)

• Museum Best Practice
  – Review of standards, VAM (Picture Library), SussexPast (MODES)
Users, Processes and Metadata Related Operations

- **Curator**
- **Photographer**
- **Cataloguer**
- **Modeller**
- **Curator Exhibition Designer**
- **End User**

**Artefact Selection**
- Browse and search existing objects and metadata

**Digital Acquisition**
- Create and describe a digital surrogate of an artefact

**Data Management**
- Describe, catalogue and group objects

**Model Refinement**
- Create and describe object interpretations / refinements

**Building Exhibitions**
- Select objects, metadata, set visualization properties

**Visualisation**
- Browse, search and display objects and metadata

- ARCO Database
ARCO System Architecture

Content Production

- Acquisition
- Modeling
- Refinement

Content Management

- Designing Virtual Exhibitions
- Database

Content Visualization

- Web + VR Presentation
- Web + AR Presentation
Digital Capture

- Method of modelling depends on features of the objects
  - Objects with simple geometry are modelled with modified 3ds max or Maya
- For complex models we use a custom built stereo digital camera system:
  - Result should be an accurate 3D model of the artefact in terms of shape, texture and resolution
  - Automated stereo reconstruction as far as possible
  - No contact between equipment and artefact
  - Artefacts should not be subject to prolonged or harsh lighting conditions
  - Portable in order to gain access to fragile artefacts
  - Ease of use for museum staff who are not experts in 3D measurement
ARCO Object Modeller

Custom built object modeller comprises hardware and software (stereo photogrammetry):

• Image acquisition combined with structured light projection
• Object geometry and textures are extracted from sequences of stereo images and merged to produce a 3D textured model
• 3D visualisation and model enhancement
• Image registration and merging of 3D meshes
• Export of VRML models
3D Modelling and Refinement

• A tool for interactive model refinement and rendering
  – based on 3ds max

• Creation of simple models and refinement of digitised models
  – smoothing the object geometry
  – reducing polygon count
  – re-applying lighting
  – repairing missing parts

• Database connectivity
  – search and browse objects
  – import and export models
    (including models generated using other methods, e.g. Mechanical scanning, Laser scanning)
Storing and Managing Digital Objects

- All ARCO data is stored in a database for consistency (Oracle 9i ORDBMS)
- Museums do not manage the database directly, but through a Content Management Application (ACMA)
- Several managers for ease of data manipulation
  - Cultural objects
  - Visualisation templates
  - Virtual exhibitions
Designing Virtual Exhibitions

- Presentation manager in ACMA
- X-VRML – high-level XML-based language for creating dynamic VR models and parameterised presentation templates
- Dynamic creation of exhibitions by combining data and X-VRML templates

- Template instances for:
  - Search interfaces
  - Parameterised browsing
  - Virtual exhibitions

- Presentation Domains
  - Same database content visualised in different ways by applying different X-VRML templates
Virtual Museum Exhibitions

Europe & America
These galleries show the proliferation of historical styles that were fashionable in the nineteenth century, ranging from Gothic Revival to Neo-classicism and Orientalism.

Gothic Art
Includes Romanesque and Gothic sculpture in stone and wood, with strong holdings of Italian examples, and outstanding examples of Late-Gothic textiles, woodwork, and ceramics.

Mannerism ...
Comprehensive collection of sixteenth-century decorative arts and sculpture, including works by Michelangelo and Oigibolognese.

The Medieval Treasury
A panorama of the small-scale arts of the Middle Ages, including major masterpieces of ivory carving, goldsmith's work and textiles.

The Renaissance
A rich survey of the Art and Design of the Italian Renaissance, illustrated by celebrated examples of sculpture on both a large and small scale, in marble, stone, terracotta and bronze.

See also other rooms:

Mortars
Sculptures
Walkthrough of Museum Exhibitions and Galleries
ARCO Data Model

Cultural Object (CO): descriptive curatorial metadata, surrogate for the physical artefact

Acquired Object (AO): digital representation of the physical artefact

Refined Object (RO): acquired (or refined) object which has been modified

Media Object (MO): individual object which makes up a digital representation (3D model, texture maps, description etc.)
ARCO Metadata Element Set

- AMS – ARCO Metadata Schema, is a vocabulary for describing all the processes from digitisation to visualisation:
  - Descriptive curatorial metadata (mda SPECTRUM)
  - Resource discovery metadata (DCMES)
  - Technical metadata (preservation)
  - Presentation metadata (templates)
  - Themed metadata (intelligence, effort report)
  - ARCO specific elements

- Interoperability
  - Data exchange between ARCO components
  - Cross domain visibility
  - Compatibility with museum best practice

- Implemented with XML Schemas
# AMS Vocabulary Terms (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Metadata</th>
<th>AMS Vocabulary Terms</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>Creator, Date Created, Date Modified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Object</td>
<td>Source, Name, Name Alternative, Creator, Contributor, Object Production Date, Object Production Place, Type, Description, Rights, Completeness, Condition, Production Period, Production Technique, Material, Dimension, Components, Owner, Acquisition Source, Accession Date, Field Collection Date, Field Collection Method, Field Collection Place, Field Collector, Current Location, Accession Date, Field Collection Date, Field Collection Method, Field Collection Place, Field Collector, Current Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquired Object</td>
<td>Identifier, Name, Creator, Contributor, Publisher, Date Created, Description, Rights, Format, Format Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refined Object</td>
<td>Relation is version of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Object</td>
<td>Name, Type, Subject, Description, Date Created, Technique, Creator, Format Extent, Rights, Skill Level, Person Effort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AMS Vocabulary Terms (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Metadata</th>
<th>AMS Vocabulary Terms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media Type Specific</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Image</td>
<td>Image Size, Resolution, Compression Method, Compression Factor, Colour Depth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Length, Character Set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3D Studio Max Project</td>
<td>Software version, Required Extensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VRML Model</td>
<td>VRML Version, Number of Textures, Composite, Animated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panorama Image</td>
<td>Number of Images, Step Angle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-resolution Image</td>
<td>Resolutions, Software, Algorithms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ARCO Metadata Schema Manager

- Caters for evolution of the AMS specification
- Provides ability to add metadata specification for new MOs
- Import and export of metadata specifications
ARCO Metadata Instance Editor

Provides guidance in authoring and editing instance metadata:

• mandatory elements inserted automatically
• every action is verified against a schema specification
• auto-generation of some technical elements (e.g. Format Extent – size in bytes)
• enumerations or controlled vocabularies displayed in drop-down menus
Visualisation of digitised artefacts

• Visualisation of ARCO media objects from the database
  – VRML models, metadata, images, virtual exhibitions

• Three visualisation interfaces, same database contents
  – Remote web interface (search, browse)
  – Local museum touch-screen (search, browse)
  – Local augmented reality environment (interact)
Metadata display over the Internet

Web interface caters for browsing of exhibition hierarchies and metadata associated with CO, AO, RO and MOs:
Touch-screen display in a museum

Touch screen displays can be used within museums to browse and search for particular exhibitions or objects:

![Cultural Object Metadata search results](image-url)

- **Castor**
  - whole form: cylindrical with fitted domed lid, strapwork handle, footed base, engraved legend opposite handle
  - ... <source:L1756A:1944.1.156</source>
  - <name><castor/></name>
  - <nameAlternative>trophy</nameAlternative>,<nameAlternative>:<nameAlter...>

- **Brass Castor**
  - whole form: cylindrical with fitted domed lid, strapwork handle, footed base, engraved legend opposite handle
  - ... <source:L1756A:1944.1.156</source>
  - <name><castor/></name>
  - <nameAlternative>trophy</nameAlternative>,<nameAlternative>:<nameAlter...>

- **Castor refined KTI**
  - whole form: cylindrical with fitted domed lid, strapwork handle, footed base, engraved legend opposite handle
  - ... <source:L1756A:1944.1.156</source>
  - <name><castor/></name>
  - <nameAlternative>trophy</nameAlternative>,<nameAlternative>:<nameAlter...>
A virtual exhibition as a 3D Gallery

Users can browse objects by walking along the gallery:

- detailed information via interaction elements integrated into stands
- interaction with objects: zoom, rotate, reset
- optional semi-transparent window for metadata display
- metadata updated to correspond with closest object
An Interactive Cultural Heritage Book

A more engaging way of browsing exhibitions …
An Interactive Learning Scenario

- A 3D model and a question are displayed on physical markers
- Three possible answers are assigned to three other markers
- The user can answer the question by turning over one of the markers
- Depending on whether the answer is correct or not, an appropriate response appears in the augmented reality scene…
Conclusions

• ARCO is developing an open architecture that integrates state-of-the-art with ARCO specific technologies to enable museums to build virtual exhibitions
  – Digitisation and modelling of 3D museum artefacts
  – Refinement and creation of the 3D virtual museum artefacts
  – Object relational database and content management
  – Visualisation of museum exhibits in virtual environments
  – Integrated through XML technologies (X-VRML, AMS, XDE)

• The system can be used to serve a didactic function as well as enhancing the experience of cultural objects through interaction

• Metadata plays a central role in enabling and supporting system functionality

• Visit us at the ARCO website: http://www.arco-web.org/
Thank you – Questions?

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