



CASE STUDY:

Plum Voice Portals and Museum411 Alter the Museum Experience



Museum411, a division of Sandbox Studios, develops cell-phone based interactive audio tour and information systems specifically designed for cultural institutions, museums, galleries and gardens. Sandbox Studios creatively applies tested technologies and innovative educational strategies to bring museum collections and people together.

Museums often try to increase their audiences by reaching out to communities with new activities and innovative programs. These strategies help increase satisfaction among their staff and the public, enhance their offerings and also cultivate donor support. Museum411 offers one such way to deliver new programs that can engage the public.

Museum411 Offers Museum Visitors a Multimedia Experience That Goes Beyond Traditional Audio Tours

Museum411 delivers a new breed of museum audio tours through visitors' cell phones via interactive voice response applications based on the Plum VoiceXML platform. Making program content accessible worldwide on standard phones, Museum411 provides museums with unprecedented flexibility and versatility with their audio tours.

All Museum411 solutions are based on open-standard software (W3C VoiceXML 2.1) and file formats (MP3, WAV) making them easy to modify, migrate and integrate now and in the future.

Museum411 in Action: Art on Call at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis

When visitors at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis dial 612-374-8200 on their cell phones, they find a dynamic resource at your fingertips called Art on Call that dramatically enhances their museum experience. Art on Call enables visitors to access pre-recorded interviews with artists and curators and computer-spoken-text using state-of-the-art-text-to-speech technology. How it works: Upon dialing the Art on Call number, callers are presented with a menu that allows them to hear descriptions about select exhibits/pieces. Each of these select pieces has a corresponding four-digit code, which the caller enters to hear short pre-recorded interviews with artists and curators about the specific selection of artwork. In addition to the museum's works of arts, Art on Call enables visitors to access, via their personal cell phones, information about the museum's events, exhibitions and daily/hourly happenings.

"Plum's superior service, 24x7 tech support and industrial grade infrastructure enable us to deliver high performing, dependable professional solutions that our museum clients can trust."

**- Scott Sayre
Principal, Museum411**

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Original Challenges of the Project

When the Walker Art Museum and Sandbox Studios collaborated on the proposal to develop a new museum audio tour system - the main goal of the project was to research how technology could impact the visitor experience. It was clear from the outset that core to this project would be a VoiceXML platform. Specifically, they wanted to explore:

- Real-time integration of Web server-based information (audio files, text, etc.) via Text to Speech (TTS) translation, Voice Extended Markup (VoiceXML), and Speech Recognition Software (SRS).
- Abilities to convert multi-use XML text information into an audio based application.
- Abilities to develop a scalable audio information system design that can be replicated in other museums or cultural centers as an alternative to or extension of traditional audio guides
- Identifying exactly which platform would be the best would be a critical phase of the project.

Plum VoiceXML Platform Wins Out

The selection process for the VoiceXML platform was comprehensive. Ultimately, Sandbox Studios and the Walker Art Center selected the Plum VoiceXML platform for a number of reasons including:

- **Superior Services:** Plum's services were key in driving the Art on Call project, as they provided support in all phases of the project from application development to data and phone integration to system maintenance.
- **Flexibility:** Plum delivered enormous flexibility by offering the VoiceXML platform via range of options: hosted on reliable data centers, on-site systems fully owned or leased at the museum premise
- **Versatility:** Ability to support a number of audio files was key, and Plum demonstrated its best of breed status by demonstrating that it could natively support mp3 files.

Scott Sayre, Principal, Museum411, says of Plum, "We were highly impressed with the support services that Plum provided from installation to implementation. Plum's technical expertise and client dedication consistently help us demonstrate that Museum411 offers the most robust and versatile solutions for our demanding clients."

Please contact us for more information via sales@plumgroup.com or call 1-800-995-PLUM to speak with a representative.

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About Museum411

Museum411 develops interactive audio tour and information systems specifically designed for cultural institutions, museums, galleries and gardens. Museum411 is owned and operated by museum professionals with over 30 years of award-winning experience in interpretation and media integration strategy. All Museum411 solutions are based on open-standard software (W3C VoiceXML 2.1) and file formats (MP3, WAV) making them easy to modify, migrate and integrate now and in the future.

Museum411

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About Plum Voice Portals:

Plum produces standards-compliant IVR and computer telephony solutions. Plum VoiceXML platform software and complete turnkey systems provide powerful and flexible functionality, supporting all VoiceXML-2.0 features and advanced functionality such as data-driven scripting, speech recognition, text-to-speech synthesis, and CTI.

The Plum team is composed of professionals with computer telephony and user interface expertise from Siemens, Compaq, Xerox PARC, and News Corp. Customers include New York State, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cummins, National Institute of Health, and AT&T. Partners include Intel and Hewlett Packard. Plum is a privately held company with primary offices in New York and Boston.

Contact Us:

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For more info, visit www.plumvoiceportals.com