



Web 2.0 and De-Colonization in the Uganda National Museum

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The Inspiration

National museums around the world struggle to present an authentic and meaningful web presence of their spaces and the artifacts they house. With the arrival of Web 2.0 (architecture of participation) technologies such as Facebook, Flickr photo sharing, Twitter, and YouTube videos, museums now have an opportunity to interactively share and discuss their artifacts and exhibitions with audiences around the world online. In light of these developments, Professor Mary Leigh Morbey's Web 2.0 site development project with the Uganda National Museum in Kampala addresses this challenge in the context of a Global South museum.

The Project

As the Global North advances rapidly in Web 2.0 development, it is imperative that collaborative opportunities be made available to Global South museums in ways that edify their historical and cultural inheritances and presences, with sensitivity to de-colonizing approaches. The Ugandan National Museum and the Acting Commissioner of the Uganda Museums and Monuments, Ministry of Culture, invited Professor Morbey to undertake this project. A research team of York University and University of Toronto faculty, York PhD students, and Ugandan technologists working in the museum as well as the Uganda Ambassador to France and delegate to UNESCO Uganda, was formed to bring sustainable support to the project. With the conceptualization direction being decided by the Ugandans in the museum, the Web 2.0 project builds on Web 1.0 (point and click) structures and towards de-colonization with an implementation of the Ugandans site development directives in light of historical Ugandan colonization by the British and others, as well as possible Web conceptualization and content. The project faces the tension of addressing a new colonization emerging from the openness of Web 2.0.

The collaborative team work will bring forward a theoretical conceptualization for the Uganda National Museum Web 2.0 pilot site development including e-learning offerings, actualize the development with Web 2.0 sustainable technologies, engage Uganda UNESCO and the Ugandan government to give ongoing support (financial and technological), and offer an initial Museum Web 2.0 model for other Global South museums. Further, it will mobilize project knowledge through symposia and online discussion of the project as well as publications to theoretically and in practice document the Uganda National Museum Web 2.0 pilot development.

Project Illumination

For an illustration of what a Web 2.0 representation might look like, view YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=CA&hl=en&v=wEZilqG666c> of a musical performance employing a traditional xylophone in the Uganda National Museum. Professor Morbey can be contacted on Facebook and Twitter.

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