

Karlsruhe, 12/4/2017

Digital strategies for engaging new groups of visitors: ZKM | Karlsruhe launches new *experience_zkm* app – experimental app concept and sustainable development

ZKM | Karlsruhe has developed the innovative *experience_zkm* app, which is available to download for free in the app store (iOS) and in the Google Play Store from December 4, 2017, as part of the smARTplaces EU project (project by eight European partner institutions, co-financed by the European Union's *Creative Europe* program). The aim of this new app is to reach potential visitors who are removed from culture, who do not yet know about the cultural institution ZKM and should get to know it. Here, not only have entertaining augmented reality applications been used, but also, in particular, game elements which build up curiosity and reward users through a variety of incentives.

The app is based on the "LBSEngine" platform, which was selected in order to guarantee sustainable further development: the "app ecosystem" can be modified dynamically and as required.

experience_zkm – overview of the structure of the app

The area of activity for the app is limited to the city of Karlsruhe in the first stage as *proof of concept* and is divided here in the form of concentric circles over the city region and the ZKM area. Structurally, the app is divided into two areas: entertaining (game) offerings which lead to ZKM and basic information such as opening times and current events at ZKM. New game elements which should "trigger" the potential visitors will be implemented in phases and can be swapped out or updated at any time.

The following elements were implemented in the first phase (December 2017):

- "Play me!": visitors become virtual art hunters with *ArtHunt*. Works of art which are visible via augmented reality and can be collected are hidden in Karlsruhe city center. Once all of the works of art around the city have been "collected", a reward awaits the successful users at ZKM.
- "Feed your Brain": footprints which can be used as markers are placed in the ZKM_forecourt and in the ZKM_foyer: Using

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experience_zkm
App

In app stores from 12/4/2017!

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augmented reality, facts about ZKM are “brought to life” in the most literal sense.

The basic information includes:

- “Follow the Code”: a guidance system consisting of zeros and ones can be used to navigate to ZKM using augmented reality.
- “What’s on?”: information about current events at ZKM can be found here.
- Additional general information such as opening times, admission, program and getting here can also be found in the app.

Additional features will be added in the second phase (February – April 2018). The app also includes a digital guide which makes audio files available to accompany the *Open Codes* exhibition for the duration of the exhibition. The audio guide cannot only be listened to at home, it can also guide you through the subject areas for “Open Codes” by means of beacons in the exhibition space. Furthermore, it is possible to search for hashtags which give the exhibition pieces their names and thus explore the subject of the exhibition in more depth.

Why *experience_zkm*? Just another museum app?

While the classic audio guide is still well received in museums, there appears to be less and less demand for museum apps which make additional information in parallel to “experiencing” the exhibition in-situ. At the same time, it has been found that the use of apps is unwavering, particularly in the consumer industry: whether for information retrieval or, in particular, for entertainment purposes, the demand remains constant.

The main aim of the *smARTplaces* EU project is to expand the visitor experience into the digital realm and thus prioritize changing needs of the visitors: this requires the development of new service offerings which make it possible to address audiences who currently do not often or do not visit museums more specifically. With the help of games and game-like elements (keyword “gamification”), *experience_zkm* is particularly aimed at visitors who are removed from culture and/or who do not know ZKM in the educational strata who enjoy using digital technology but currently don’t often visit museums.

“smARTplaces” EU project

The “smARTplaces” concept is being developed by eight cultural institutions from across Europe and two universities (project duration 2016-2020). The focus is on the development of an intelligent location, a

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“smart place”, which prioritizes the expectations and needs of visitors: today, the “user experience” is more important than the “brand” itself, the focus is on the “visitor experience”. The smARTplaces project is co-financed by the European Union’s Creative Europe program.

smARTplaces conference | INNOVATION in Culture (03/01-03/02/2018)

As the first of a total of three conferences, *smARTplaces | INNOVATION in Culture* determines the relationship between visitors, institutions and technology. Innovation talks, experience flights and fishbowls, workshops and seminars take up the topics of cultural activities in the early 21st century across two days: from experience design in cultural offerings through design thinking in work processes to change management in the institutional structure, the conference aims to support cultural institutions in their development into “experience destination museums”.

Information about the smARTplaces project and the conference program, to be published soon, can be found here <http://smartplaces.eu> and at <http://zkm.de/en/project/smartplaces>

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