

## How were modern museums created? What are the current trends in modern museums?

### How are museums evolving to adapt to the current digital climate?

#### From personal collection to public exhibits

- The desire to expand cultural preservation can be seen throughout time: from the first privately curated "museum" in what is now modern day Iraq, to the curiosity cabinets privately curated in Renaissance homes. Public history feeds the natural curiosity of humans to derive meaning from the past and relate it to the present.
- In the United States, motivation for the preservation of information was influenced by the need to preserve information from exploration and discovery. In 1786, Charles Wilson Peale opened the first museum in the U.S, thus laying the foundation for future museums. Later, the Smithsonian institution would be founded in 1846 on the premise of scholarly expansion.
- Compared to the past, museums now attempt to function at the educational level: rather than featuring eye-catching curiosities that inspire awe and shock, museums provide historical context and analysis, in order to increase interconnectivity and further interaction with the past.

#### Method

- Although the inclusion of digital resources in museums is a fairly modern phenomenon, the goals of museums have essentially stayed the same: cultural artifacts have been accessible to the public, either in private collections, or in public domains.
- This research project attempts to link past curatorial desires to modern museums, specifically focusing on the inclusion of digital resources in modern museums and archives.



#### Results

1. Compared to the past, museums now attempt to function in an increasingly demanding digital world. Digital technology allows for innovation in archiving, preservation, and information access. Digital application also decreases disparity by bridging the gap between lower and higher income groups
  - With increasing demands for digital diversification, this percentage will likely rise as more museum patrons choose to engage with museums digitally.
  - Digital technology allow public history institutions to provide greater access to their collections, which ultimately allows such institutions to contribute to cultural heritage. This ultimately increases interconnectivity.

#### Discussion

1. Increased digital accessibility has constrained museums to provide new, relevant ways to access and preserve information. Virtual accessibility increases the awareness of tangible assets that illustrate the evolution of mankind.
2. Museums engender cross cultural enrichment by decreasing the disparity between social classes. Access to supplemental educational material is largely correlated with income: by allowing access to digital resources and objects, museums essentially curtail cultural and educational gaps.

#### References

1. Given, Lisa M. and Lianne McTavish (2010). What's Old is New Again: The Reconvergence of Libraries, Archives, and Museums in the Digital Age. *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community Policy*, vol 80, no.1 7-32