


Chapter 5

A Typology of Personalized Museum Experiences Using Real- World Examples: Innovation, Engagement, and Visitor-Centered Design

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ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, museums have evolved from places that simply preserve and display artifacts into dynamic spaces that embrace innovation, encourage learning, foster self-reflection, promote dialogue, and offer transformative experiences. This chapter uses a combined methodological approach to examine the contemporary landscape of technology-driven, on-site museum experiences and introduces a practical typology based on real-world examples. The classification outlines six key experience types: immersive engagement through extended reality (VR, AR, MR); multisensory exploration via immersive projection environments; tailored tours powered by artificial intelligence; sensory-rich storytelling using holograms and 4D theatrical shows; hands-on learning through gamification and 3D printing; and “smart” engagement using technologies such as RFID, NFC, and QR codes. Professionals, academics, and students will gain insight into how museums use technology to create personalized, engaging, and memorable experiences across culture, history, heritage, art, nature, science, and creativity.

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INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, innovative technologies have transformed – and continue to transform – numerous industries and sectors, including tourism, in which museums serve as key cultural attractions that enhance a destination’s appeal. Museums have evolved from institutions that merely preserve and display history and art to dynamic spaces of learning, collective memory, intercultural exchange, and “edutainment” (education + entertainment) for people of all ages and backgrounds, fostering interaction, connection, and engagement (Agbisit, 2021; Dadashov, 2024; Illsley et al, 2024). Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the “post-pandemic era”, the role of new technologies in the museum experience has gained new dynamics (Calvi & Vermeeren, 2023; Giannini & Bowen, 2022). As museums strive to adopt innovative and creative methodologies, personalization has been recognized as a crucial strategy to enhance visitor experiences (Volchek et al., 2020). By tailoring their services and experience to the individual needs, preferences, and interests of their visitors, museums can create a truly memorable and enjoyable tourist experience.

This chapter aims to develop a typology of personalized museum experiences, highlighting how contemporary cultural institutions innovate to enhance visitor engagement. To achieve this, it examines the current landscape of personalized museum practices, with a focus on innovation, engagement, and visitor-centered design through technology. A combined methodological approach — incorporating elements of scoping and narrative literature reviews, exploratory research, and qualitative content analysis — is used to identify and categorize the technologies, tools, and methods employed to meet the evolving needs of both domestic and international audiences. The typology incorporates real-world examples and indications into how museums implement innovative personalization techniques, providing a practical perspective that complements academic research and highlights current technological trends in the museum sector.

The research highlights the growing significance of technology in the future of museums and cultural heritage tourism, offering a comprehensive overview and valuable practical insights into trends and best practices for institutions seeking to engage and inspire their audiences. Museum and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) professionals, tourism practitioners, academics, and students in the fields of tourism management, museum studies, and ICT will deepen their understanding of how museums can use innovative technology to provide personalized, engaging, and memorable experiences that contribute to effective education: cultural, historical, scientific and environmental education, digital and media literacy, informal and lifelong learning, but also aesthetic, social and emotional education.

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