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Abstract

Over the past few decades, public history institutions have faced many different challenges. Some of these challenges stem from the rise in technology. Previously, if someone wanted to learn more about a subject, a trip to a museum could provide valuable information through heavily researched exhibits. However, as the Internet became easily accessible, all this information was readily available with a simple search. Museums were no longer necessary to find answers to the burning questions of history. To combat this idea, many museums began to take steps to keep their visitor numbers up by incorporating emerging technology into their exhibits; technology that was not readily available to the general public. Historians needed to create narratives and exhibitions that could be boosted by modern technology. With this idea in mind, museums expanded into the fast-growing media of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR). This expansion has led to some great successes and strides in the field of exhibition design, but some roadblocks remain, especially for smaller institutions. To incorporate augmented and virtual reality, museums must consider cost, exhibit caution, and use the technology in a way that works well as an additional piece to an exhibition. Once all these factors have been taken into account, augmented and virtual reality can be an amazing tool for museums. With such a focus on the lengths that AR/VR technology can go, my research hopes to shine a light on some of its greatest accomplishments so far while also bringing to light some concerns and potential downfalls of its incorporation. In the appendix, I have included my capstone project for my Digital Media minor, in which I created a pamphlet on the positives and negatives of incorporating augmented and virtual reality into a museum.

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