Attracting an online audience with digitised collections

Rijksmuseum
Amsterdam

Background

The aim of the Rijksmuseum is to open its collection to a wide audience via their website. The Rijksmuseum started digitizing its collection in 2006. In 2010 the moment was there to start a project to actually build a new website where the digitized collection is accessible for the whole world.

The vision of the directors is that in the digital world we live in today, it is impossible to stop the constant distribution of images. It's better to join this development by delivering good quality images of the collection. The more the images are seen in the world, the bigger the chance that people will actually want to see the collection in real life. The conviction of the Rijksmuseum is that seeing the actual piece of art will never be beaten by a good quality image.

Objectives

- Digitize the whole collection of the Rijksmuseum (over 1 million objects)
- Make the first 125.000 objects available for the online audience in October 2012 (6 months before the grand reopening of the Rijksmuseum)
- Deliver high quality images (+/- 3 MB) free to use for everyone. Images of professional quality (500 MB) are available on request at cost price
- Make the collection online accessible to the whole world
- Let others add their knowledge to the database of the Rijksmuseum (Wikipedia style) to enlarge the information of the collection
- Make the collection "social" in terms of ability to share images with friends via Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest, make your collection and give your opinion
- Make the images easy downloadable so people can make their own canvas, wallpaper or other products with the images of the collection
- Inspire people not only to make their own collection but also to make new art, objects or products inspired by the collection

Target audience

- Digital creatives
- Students
- Professionals
- International audience with an interest in art and (Dutch) history

Process

- Digitizing of the collection
- Define digital vision and strategy
- Briefing agency
- Concept development
- Building phase
- Testing
- Launch

Outcomes

The response to the launch of Rijksstudio was extremely positive. The fact that good quality images are free accessible to a broad audience is a new and bold move for a museum. The positive outcome is that other museums are following this example.

The number of people who make their own online collection (their own Rijksstudio) is growing every day. Now people who are not able to come to Amsterdam still have the possibility to explore and enjoy the collection of the Rijksmuseum. The launch of Rijksstudio has contributed seriously to the image of the Rijksmuseum as an innovative and leading institution.

Key requirements

- Commitment from the directors
- Project structure with clear tasks and responsibilities for all project members
- Reasonable budget to implement the whole project
- Give the project team the freedom to explore and initiate new ideas

You can visit the Rijksstudio at www.rijksmuseum.nl/rijksstudio