

Keynote 2: The Future is Mobile

Allegra Burnette, Creative Director of Digital, MoMA

Allegra is the Creative Director of Digital Media at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, overseeing the design and production for the museum's website, MoMA.org, as well as mobile devices, interpretive kiosks and digital displays. Online projects include two complete site redesigns, creating the online collection and audience-specific sites for teachers, teens, and kids, overseeing an ongoing series of award-winning exhibition sites, and extending the reach of MoMA's content through iTunes U, YouTube, mobile apps, and elsewhere. Offline projects include lobby display screens and the launch of MoMA.guide, a series of interactive kiosks.

Prior to working at MoMA, Allegra created and ran a media department at the renowned museum exhibition design firm Ralph Appelbaum Associates. She has an MFA in museum exhibition planning and design from the University of the Arts, where she has also taught graduate courses in museum media. She is included in the recently published book, *Mobile Apps for Museums: The AAM Guide to Planning and Strategy*, currently teaches in the online graduate program for Museum Studies at Johns Hopkins University, and also serves on the board of the Museum Computer Network.

In this keynote presentation Allegra talked about how MoMA is integrating mobile into the communications mix to engage audiences in deeper ways with their work. She outlined the expanding appetite for mobile content and provided insights into their comprehensive mobile website (<http://www.moma.org/explore/mobile/index>), apps for iPhone, iPod Touch and Android, and how these are being integrated with other digital tools and traditional marketing techniques to reach out to new audiences.

The Future is Mobile

MoMA is located in mid-town Manhattan, New York. It's been around for over 80 years and was significantly expanded in 2004. There are now over 170,000 works of art as well as 4 million film stills. We also recently started a curatorial department dedicated to media and performance art. There is also an affiliate contemporary arts centre in Queens, New York.

MoMA was set up as an educational institution and the mission statement still reflects this origin.

'Central to The Museum of Modern Art's mission is the encouragement of an ever-deeper understanding and enjoyment of modern and contemporary art by the diverse local, national, and international audiences that it serves.'

In the last fiscal year there were 2.8 million visitors to the museum but we had several times that number through the website (moma.org) and the retail site

(momastore.org). There is also an overlap of people visiting both the website and the museum. While traditionally museum websites might have been about driving people to the museum we've now reached beyond that point and it's as much about an online visit as it is about driving people to go to the museum. Then when we add in our social media networks it expands even further.

There is a difference between US and international audiences. International visitors are coming to the museum more through Facebook than through the website, which

	MoMA.org	Museum	Facebook
United States	60%	40%	30%
International	40%	60%	70%

is used more by US visitors.

However, US Facebook users are only 20% of all Facebook users and MoMA is in a tourist

destination so we do have a large number of international visitors.

The website is as much about browsing the collection as it is about visiting the museum.

The digital media department (which is what I'm in) is in the IT section. Although I come from an IT background it seemed odd to me that it was in IT rather than communications. However, I appreciate it now because we are working across all areas, not just beholden to one.

We cover all public facing technology including things like the lobby screens, kiosks in the museum as well as the website.

There are nine people in the department (including me) and one additional person who works across both IT and Communications who is in charge of social media.

Using audio

Today's topic is about the future of mobile but we need to start by going back in time. Going back to 2004 when the Museum reopened we had a PDA handheld project called 'Building a new MoMA'. It was a digital guide based on the history and architecture of the museum. The tour was mostly based in the non-gallery spaces because these were still being developed when it was being set up and because it was about the building itself.

The PDA tour was available for free for three months, with the request to users to provide feedback about the experience. 190 people filled out the questionnaires. We wanted to get a sense of how people were going to use the space. It was an experiment and an opportunity to learn from our visitors. There was a predominantly positive feedback (though these were people who wanted to take the PDA and share their thoughts so it was a self-selecting group) but we had a feeling that it wasn't the long term answer as it was quite costly. It was also done in conjunction with IBM and by the time the project was completed the specific technology used was no longer available.

So, it was decided to create something which could work across several devices and channels. There was also a big change that was about to happen with the audio programme.

Beginning in July 2005 we started to offer audio programmes to the public for free, courtesy of a grant from Bloomberg so we could start to offer this for free online without it being in conflict with the revenue source for the museum. The usage went from 5% to 40% when it was \$5 dollars to use it to about 40% which has remained stable at that level. That means there are about 1 million users a year.

It was also possible to use it through a number of channels such as through iTunes.

We also began experimenting with mobile phone tours, mostly for outdoor installations because we were still wary of people using phones in the galleries.

Other mobile based experiments included a website for the 'Take your time' exhibition which is about the experience of engaging with art. Nokia cell phones were modified and carried on a lanyard round peoples' necks. It would take photographs every few seconds and then automatically uploaded them to Flickr. Every evening we then chose some of the best ones and embedded them into the website.

In this way, the visitor experience became part of the website. It contextualised the other content such as artist interviews, images of the works and other resources. The personal experience is difficult to represent online so we were pleased with the result.



The next mobile goal was to give people access to the audio programme without them having to pick up another device. New browser based wifi devices could be used in the galleries because we'd wired them for wifi so we could offer audio to people in a device which they already had.

This meant that in 2008 we launched MoMA wifi including tours in different languages and a variety of ways of browsing.

The other big milestone was the re-design and re-structuring of the website in 2009. It was converted from a site that had been a largely flat html site to a dynamic one with a multi-media database which we created to manage and distribute all of our audio and video content.

There was also a new more visually based online collection database and a dynamic calendar of exhibitions and films, as well as a calendar of daily events.

The work that was carried out leading up to and during the redesign enabled us to centralise our content and then separate it out from these front end displays. What

this meant was that we are now in the position of being able to distribute this content in different ways, whether through the kiosks, the website or the mobile devices.

The year of mobile

In the autumn of 2010 we launched an iPhone app, an Android app, a mobile version of the website and an iPad app.

We started with the iPhone app and wanted this and the Android version to be our base mobile app.

It has a calendar of events and exhibitions and visiting information including the ability to buy tickets. The audio programme was ported over from the previous wifi project as well as access to the complete online collection which includes 40,000 works of art.

Bringing all this together in this app format goes beyond the standard tour programme format. We also added *MoMA snaps* so that people could take pictures including the art and the label next to it. For a long time, we didn't allow photography but now we do – though only in the collections. MoMA snaps is location based so if you are in the museum it brands it as MoMA and so you can send it as an e-card or something similar.

We did some user testing and we had a 'duh moment'. Almost at the last moment we added art terms and it turned out that this was one of the things people liked best:

'I don't have an arts background, so having the terms in the app is wonderful!'

'My favorite feature was the 'Art Terms' section. I often wish I had this at my fingertips when visiting a museum, particularly when I read about the media an artist used. The definitions are excellent, and appreciate the visual examples from the collection.'

It made sense: you're in a museum, you have a mobile format, they want to look up content on the fly based on what they are looking at. We also asked people on Facebook and Twitter what they would like on the app and this was a very helpful exercise in helping us to tweak the structure. I would recommend it but it's best to do it when you've reached a certain stage.

[Allegra then showed a video which was made to promote the app]

The video especially promoted the fact that it was free. It all also aimed to show the different ways it could be used, making a marketing video which didn't seem like marketing.

The other ways that it was promoted included a press release, a pr newswire release which included video and audio which got picked up in all sorts of news channels. It was also promoted on MoMA's social media channels.

All this resulted in a lot of buzz around the app in outreach and pr. It was featured on iTunes which led it to be featured as a top free iPhone app.

One of the comments that we had when we were doing testing was that it was like 'having MoMA in her pocket'. So this was the sort of language we used when talking about the app. It also helped to distinguish us from other museum apps that were out there which were more exhibitions focused.

Development of the apps

At this point we were also developing our mobile site. The iPhone and Android apps are actually a lot of browser based content within a native shell. So the advantages are that it's easier to update and change it but it does require an internet connection.

Both apps were designed and developed by the same internal team of two people working with one consultant each. In the case of the Android app the consultant came and gave us a series of classes on Android development so that we could do more ourselves. The mobile version of the site was done entirely inhouse.

One of the reasons why we started with the iPhone was that is was our number one audience. iPad has also become important recently overtaking Android, so the top devices for usage of the MoMA apps are now

1. iPhone
2. iPad
3. Android

So far we have had approximately 600k downloads of the **iPhone** app and 100k downloads of the **Android** app. 10% of visitors to MoMA.org are on a mobile device (but this figure is on the way up) and 1.6 million visits to online content come through iPhone and Android apps. The audience is not just using it once but are using it to plan visits and access content.

Many find use it easier to use the digested content than to try and find it in a big website.

The number of downloads is important but it's also about engagement and the access of the content over time.

There is a difference in traffic trends between the website and the apps. The website goes down at the weekend and up again in the week when people are back at work whereas the apps go up at the weekend when people are planning their leisure time.

There are significant differences between countries. So the iPhone app is very popular in Japan and South Korea for example whereas the website is more important for people from the UK and Canada.



**MoMA on your
handheld device—
view the website
and download
free apps at
MoMA.org/mobile.**

One of our big challenges has been to promote the apps within the museum itself. We have therefore taken trouble to work on signage inside including above the printed information guides.

Another challenge is that as more and more elements get added we need to inform people about these and we do this by having a single page where it's all consolidated.

The iPad app

We developed an iPad app for the abstract expressionists exhibition in which we aimed to be a bit more experimental about what we could do. A cross-departmental team created the content and we worked with an external consultant. The exhibition itself was brought together from MoMA's collection but it had the status of a special exhibition and so had some extra resources attached to it.

[Allegra showed a video which demonstrated the different approach to the marketing of this event. It involved a cat browsing the app on the iPad]

Everyone has to have a cat video on the internet though we were surprised to find we were still in a job after that.

The funding for this app came through the marketing department because they wanted to use it for outreach. They wanted to see how far the marketing dollar could go using this and they also wanted to let people know about the crucial place of MoMA in the history of abstract expressionism in New York. The app was therefore provided for free.



We were also intending that it would be used off site as well as in the museum and this was reflected in the way we promoted it – showing people in places at home, in the park – in none gallery spaces in a similar way to the way that Apple promotes it.

It also meant we could do things like use a map of New York and show the locations of where artists worked and lived and the bars where they hung out.

We also repeated some of the ideas from the other apps such as sections on techniques, art terms etc. The education department created online courses which were very successful.

If you shared the work through the Twitter it took the link back to the website rather than the app, as we couldn't assume that the people they were sharing it with were using handheld devices.

The comments about the app have been overwhelmingly positive. What's been nicest is that people have said they have been inspired to come to the museum or wishing they were able to but were too far away.

This particular exhibition was a good example of a fully integrated digital landscape: the app, social media, website (that promoted the app), ticketing packages that were promoted online, online store had products, online courses ... We wouldn't do this full package every time but it shows how things can work together.

There is a challenge around continuing to sell publications in an online world so we developed an app that enabled you to buy selections from publications (as pdfs) to encourage people to buy the full thing. We don't yet have all the answers about how to strike this balance yet.

New ideas

Talk to me was a design exhibition which just finished, in November (2011). The exhibition was about peoples' engagement with the art object. Its ideas were a little bit more cutting edge, which we wanted to reflect in the website. Each object had a QR code and a hashtag. So it was possible to tweet immediately about it. QR codes were also in the exhibition [as design objects] so it seemed natural to include it. The codes were integrated into the design of the labels. The publication also had a QR code in it so that it would bring up other images.

There was also an optimised mobile version of the website because we wanted people to use the QR codes to bring up the images, stories etc – combining the online with the print.

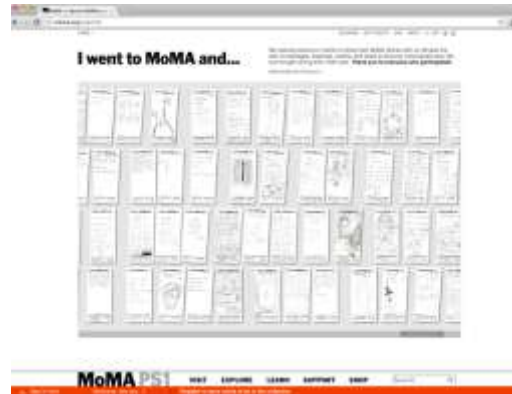
For the Diego Rivera exhibition of murals [opened November 2011] we produced a bi-lingual site for the first time and we are also doing a mobile version of the website. The exhibition is about 8 of the murals that Diego Rivera did at MoMA. There's lots of information in the murals and we wanted to give people some explanation. One of the murals has been annotated with bullet points which can be linked to the real places in Manhattan which they represented. The mobile comes into its own because it's in a small gallery and there isn't much space for extra information.

Again there are videos about techniques and processes which we have learned are very popular.



I went to MoMA and ...

This project came out of all the surveys we do but the marketing department wanted to get much closer to the heart of what people thought. So they produced cards which had the words 'I went to MoMA and ...' and the participants had to fill in the next bit alongside their names and a date. The response was so great that it was decided to make a site completely based around the cards.



The marketing department devised a blog around some of themes that came out. For example, love was a theme, as many people connected their visit to the museum with first dates, anniversaries, breaking up etc.

Final thoughts and recommendations

- Social media needs to be closely allied with the mobile strategy. The Smithsonian has made crowd-sourcing part of their mobile strategy.
- The themes that we choose need to be true to ourselves. We should be doing the projects that we want to do.
- Be honest about the content and keep thinking about what's happening in the art world in general.
- Finding a voice and being human is important so that our messages don't get lost in all the technology. Who is the person behind the social media?
- Advocate internally – a theme which has emerged already today
- Use it as a channel for listening
- The mobile strategy is tied into our overall strategy – how digital media works together overall
- Think about how the content is created, managed and distributed so that you don't have to produce something five times over.
- Mobile strategy is constantly evolving. This is a world which is fast and fluid and we have to acknowledge that and move with it.
- If you do nothing else do a mobile version of your website. It's critical.
- Plan for ongoing development. What do you need to keep going?
- We have been trying to go beyond the standard tour format. However, there is still a question over for free versus paid for apps and content.

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 Flickr.com/themuseumofmodernart Flickr.com/groups/themuseumofmodernart
 Youtube.com/MoMAvideos