

The Rubin Museum of Art

Jeff Edelstein
Museum Informatics
LIS-697-09
May 2012

1. Introduction

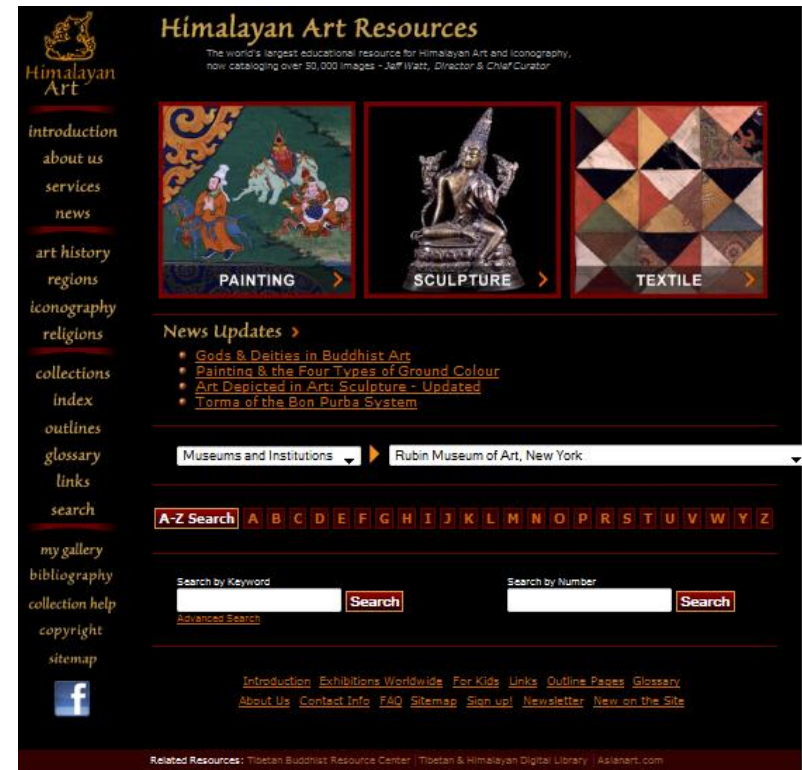
- Opened in 2004 based on private collection of Donald and Shelley Rubin
- Dedicated to the collection, display, and preservation of art of the Himalayas
- Located at 7th Avenue at 17th Street (former Barney's Department Store)
- Has quickly joined the ranks of major NYC cultural institutions



(Fuzzy exterior images courtesy Wikimedia Commons)

2. Information Resources

- Database: collection database *not* accessible via website (but permanent collection objects *are* included on the Himalayan Art Resources [HAR] site: www.himalayanart.org)
- Metadata on HAR site seems inconsistent; search results are not necessarily complete
- Wikis: RMA site does not use wikis.
- Wikipedia entry: Existing entry was brief, but covered the basics; main section was “History”; I added “Exhibits”



3. Information Management

- Site Usability

- HTML Validator: 30 errors, though many were same few errors repeated
- Performance testing (webpagetest.org):
 - New York: load time under 3 sec. Slowest part involved a java script and an image within that script, which seems to be the changing background image
 - Jiangsu, China, and Singapore: failed when sessions timed out
 - Frankfurt: slow to load (almost 7 sec)

- Accessibility

- Lynx: some missing alt tags on images; some instances of “click here”
- achecker.ca: 46 problems found, 38 of which were contrast problems at bottom of home page

- Personalization: No

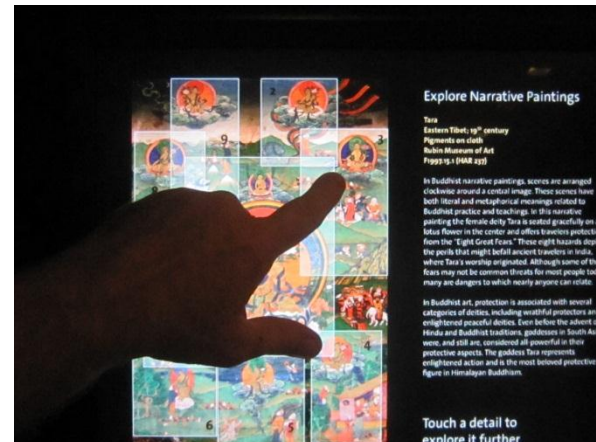
4. Interactions: Website

- Homepage
 - Aesthetically attractive, but doesn't include explanation of what they are
 - Horizontally divided structure might lead people to miss bottom half; you have to scroll down
- Navigation confusing
 - What you expect under main heads isn't always what's there; where to find what you *are* looking for not always clear (e.g., HAR)
 - Material is repeated in Exhibitions/Education; user-friendly yet confusing
 - Page structures not always parallel—intro text vs subheads (e.g., About Us vs. Exhibitions)
 - Education: you click down, down, down (e.g., [ExploreArt](#)—separate site from 2007)



4. Interactions: On-site

- Standard audioguide
 - Easy to use
 - Flexible
- Resource areas
 - Touchscreens
 - Limited number of items and options doesn't overwhelm users

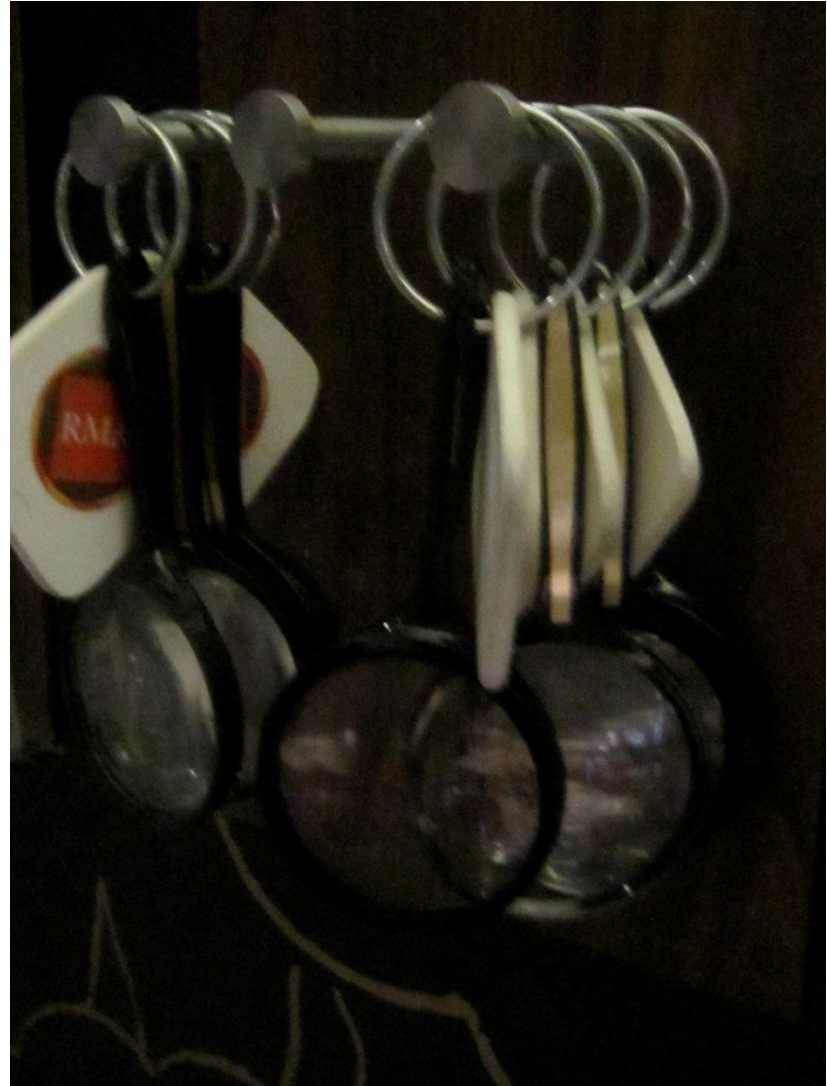


Touch a detail to explore it further

Touch a detail to explore it further

4. Interactions: On-site (cont.)

- Favorite use of technology



5. Behavior (Social Media)

- Participating in most available forums
- Almost 11,000 “likes” on Facebook
- Regularly posting
 - Mostly event advertising
 - Virtually no back-and-forth engagement
- Shop has unusual items, but no e-commerce (yet)



6. Collaboration

A. Affiliations:

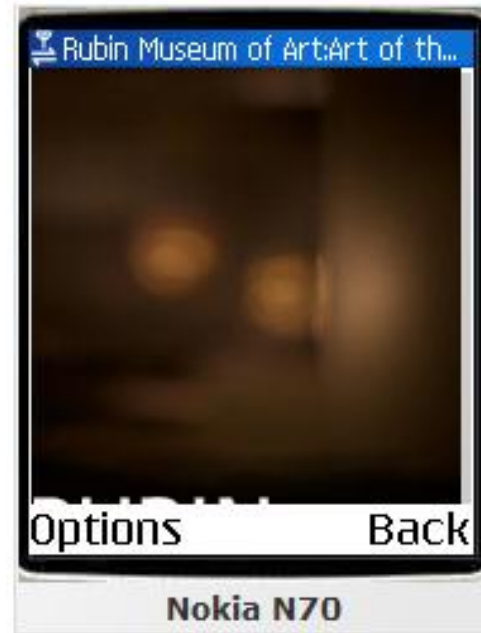
- Accredited member of AAM
- Member of Tibetan Mongolian Museum Society
 - Along with Ashmolean, Brooklyn, LACMA, Asia Society, MFA Boston
- Recently began participating in Google Art Project
- “Affiliated” with Himalayan Art Resource and Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (both also funded by the Rubins)

B. Discussion Forums:

- Almost no presence; nothing *from* museum staff
- One exchange on Museum-L re an object possibly from Tibet or Bhutan

7. Future of Museum IT

- No mobile apps yet
- Website tests poorly on ready.mobi and dotMobi Emulator
- One QR code per exhibit floor; provides link to website



ready.mobi

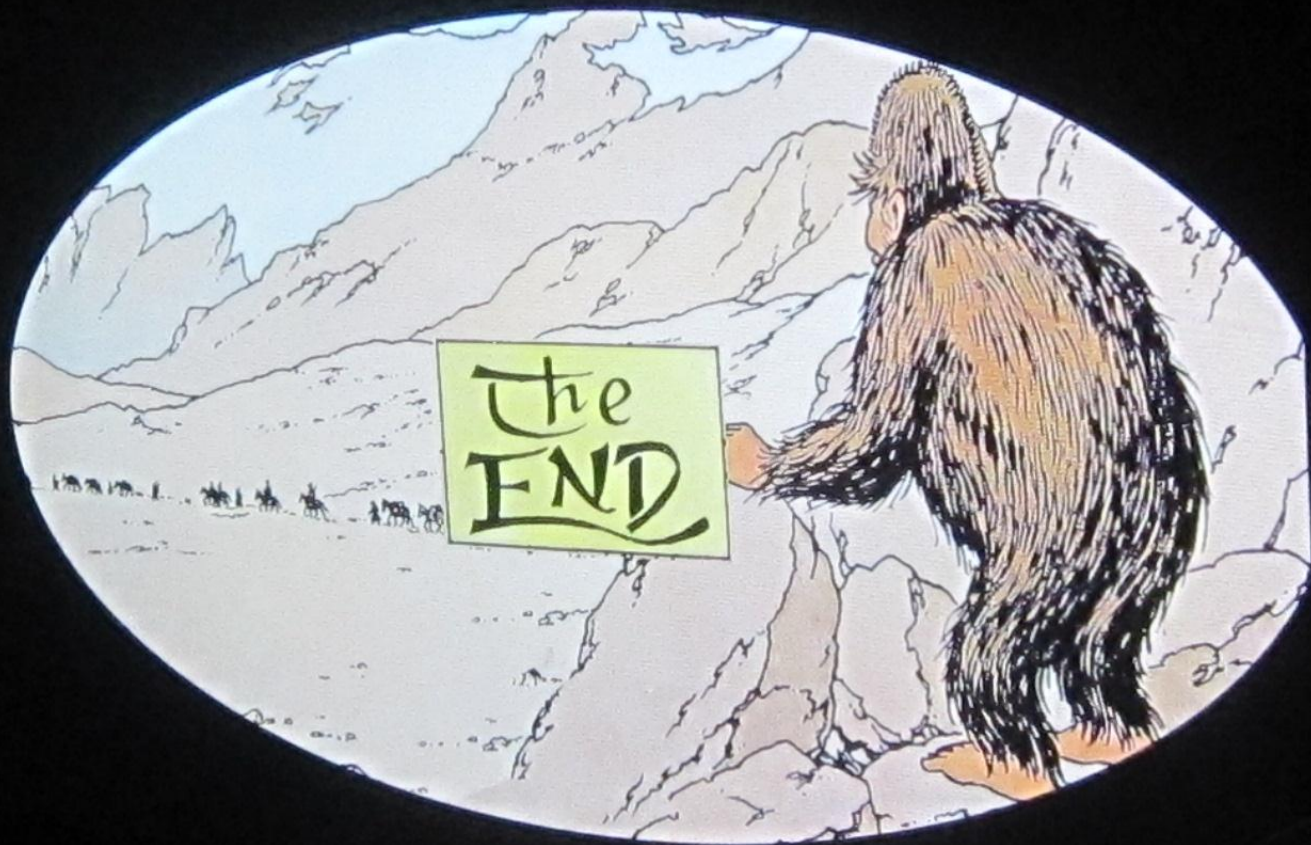


dotMobi Emulator

Project Plan: Usability of On-Site IT

- Attempting to contact museum staff
- Research usability frameworks; select/adapt appropriate model
- Revisit museum and observe visitors using technology
- Possible post-IT use interviews with visitors





The
END