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Lessons for Structuring Complex Asynchronous Tutorials from the Layouts of Museums

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Agenda

- Theoretical foundation
- Rationale
- Methodology
- Lessons learned (combination of observations and their implications)

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For a copy of the slides, visit
http://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/view/creators/Carliner=3ASaul=3A=3A.html

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Rationale

			Course		
Unit I?		Unit 2?		Unit 3?	Unit 4?

- Central issue:
  - Learners can take units of self-study courses in whatever order they want.
  - But how can we structure these courses to help learners make good choices?
- Separate issue from sequencing instruction for optimal learning, based on prerequisite objectives and learning strategy
- Similar to the challenge of structuring websites and repositories so users can easily find content
- Urgency in considering access growing as interest in informal learning—and learner control over access—expands

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Maybe We Can Learn Something from Others Who Face the Same Challenge.

Museums!

- Institutions of free-choice learning.
- Choices among:
  - Exhibitions to visit
  - Segments of exhibitions to see
  - Objects to view within segments

Museo de La Nacion. Lima, Peru.
Viewed at
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum_of_the_Nation. Visited
October 18, 2010.

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Theoretical Foundation

Analogy studies from the field of design and architecture

Studying for a Ph.D. is like running a marathon.

"Sometimes the best advice comes from a non-competitor" (Training Director's Forum 1999.)

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Methodology

- Visited 150+plus museums in the U.S., Turkey, Thailand, Spain, Peru, Israel, France, Germany, Canada, and Australia
- Noted the key features of access to exhibitions
- Identified the practical challenges each institution faced in structuring access to exhibitions
- Inductively classified floor plans

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Lesson 1: Most museum buildings required retro-fitting

El Prado Museum
Viewed at http://www.museodelprado.es/mas-prado/la-institucion//.
Visited October 23, 2010.

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What I observed in museums

Some museums were built as they exist now, such as:
- Getty Museum (Los Angeles)
- Grammy Museum (Los Angeles)
- Musee de Quai Branly (Paris)

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More observations

Some buildings that were designed for other uses have become museums (unrelated to the original purpose of the building).

Museum	Original Purpose
LACMA West (Los Angeles)	Department store
Musee des Arts et Metiers (Paris)	Priory
Tate Modern (London)	Power station

Additional observations

Some museums expanded to display more objects, create traffic flow issues, correct traffic flow issues, or a combination of these.

- El Prado (Spain)
- High Museum (Atlanta)
- LACMA (Los Angeles)
- Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto)

Lessons for structuring complex asynchronous tutorials

- Unlike 10 years ago, many online courses and curricula are not new.
- Like retrofitted museums, revised online courses and curricula may have to work around existing obstacles
- Like expanded museums, revising online courses and curricula may create unanticipated "traffic control" issues

Lesson 2: Some museums make entering easier than others do.

Entrance to the
Metropolitan Museum of Art
Viewed at http://www.metmuseum.org/visit/general_information/.
Visited October 23, 2010.

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What I observed in museums

Admissions barrier (all museums)
- In plain sight
- Off to the side
- Combo:
  - Greeted by an information desk
  - Admissions desk to the side

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Lessons for structuring complex asynchronous tutorials

What's your "admission barrier?"
- Splash page?
- Home page with
  - Single level menu?
  - Two-level menu?
  - Three-level menu?
- Required section explaining "how to take this course"

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Lesson 3: Provide access to key spots from the main entrance.

Floor plan of the Field Museum
Viewed at http://www.fieldmuseum.org/plan_visit/mainfloor_plans.htm.
Visited October 23, 2010.

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What I observed in museums

- Exhibition:
  - "Start" of the main exhibition
  - Or
  - Hallway with access to most of the exhibitions
- Gift shop
- Café (restaurant)
- Auditorium and educational facilities
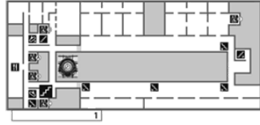
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Lessons for structuring complex asynchronous tutorials

- Revenue generating spaces generally receive the most prominent locations
- But to interest learners in related content, some designers follow the lead of museums and place "blockbuster" content at the ends of "hallways"

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Lesson 4: Some museums offered a totally "free choice" structure

Floor plan of the Musee d'Orsay
Viewed at http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/tools/plan-salle.html
Visited October 18, 2010.

Visitors enter a central gallery and have easy access to all of the permanent exhibitions from the entry way

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I observed this pattern in these museums

- Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto)
- Canadian Museum of Nature (Ottawa)
- Hagia Sofia (Istanbul)
- Musikinstrumenten-Museum (Berlin)
- Musee d'Orsay (Paris)
- Musee de la Civilization du Quebec (Quebec City)

- Musee Nationale des Beaux Arts du Quebec (Quebec City
- Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto)
- Pera Museum (Istanbul)
- Museu d'Historia de Catalunya (Barcelona)
- Museo de Historia de Valencia
- Poble Espanyol (Barcelona)

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- Idealized structure, although it might not be ideal for all courses (especially ones with prerequisities)
- Seems to work for:
  – Complex courses serving several audiences
  – Portals meeting several learning needs
  – Self-service learning, intended to address an immediate skill deficiency

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Lesson 5: Some museums forced visitors through a linear structure

Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Familia
Viewed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sagrada_Familia
Visited October 18, 2010.

Visitors must go through an exhibition in a prescribed order—and only in that prescribed order.

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Some museums are linear by design

- Choco-Story (Paris)
- Museo de la Inquisicion (Lima, Peru)
- Museo de Traje (Madrid)
- National Aquarium (Baltimore)
- Story of Berlin
- Sydney Wildlife Center

Gallery at the Story of Berlin
Viewed at http://www.story-of-berlin.de/en/openinghours.
Visited October 23, 2010.

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Some museums are linear for lack of other options

- Chateau de Versailles
- La Pedrera (Barcelona)
- Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Familia (Barcelona)

La Pedrera
Viewed at http://www.cursos.org/cee/eng/ba06.
Visited October 23, 2010.

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Lessons for structuring complex asynchronous tutorials

Although frowned upon, this structure has useful applications

- Introduce users to a topic they likely know little or nothing about
- Promote compliance of one sort or another
- Take advantage of high interest in one issue to have users to read about another one
- Introductory components of blended programs

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## Lesson 6: Most museums followed plans between the two extremes

Floor Plan of the Australian Museum
Viewed at http://australianmuseum.net.au/Uploads/Documents/2653/ Australian%20Museum%20Guide%20Map%20-%20English.pdf. Visited October 23, 2010.

Provides visitors with some (limited) flexibility in how they choose exhibitions.

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Some resulted from tension between architecture and designers' intentions
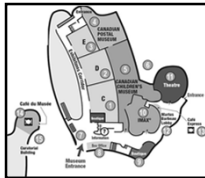
Floor Plan of the Canadian Museum of Civilization
Viewed at http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/plan-your-visit/ planning-your-visit/what-to-see-and-do/level-2. Visited October 18, 2010.

- Central hallway for choosing a floor
- But exhibitions within floors are somewhat linear

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Some floor plans inadvertently favor a side

Courtyard of the Getty Museum
Viewed at http://www.getty.edu/visit/see_do/architecture.html. Visited October 18, 2010.

- Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art (Istanbul) (guides traffic in a linear fashion even though free choice is feasible)
- Getty Museum (Los Angeles) (favors pavillions closer to the entrance)

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Some floor plans allow free choice, but use other cues to direct visitors

- Deutsches Historiches Museum (Berlin)
- Musee de Quai Branly (Paris)
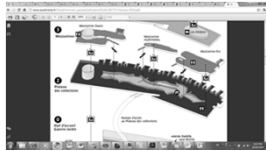
Floor Plan of the Musee de Quai Branly
Viewed at
http://www.quaibranly.fr/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/plans/PLAN_REC
TO-francais-2010.pdf
Visited October 18, 2010.

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Some buildings limit options for free choice

Floor Plan of the Walter's Art Museum
Viewed at
http://thewalters.org/visit_plan_museum/planavisit_museumma
p.aspx
Visited October 18, 2010.

- El Prado (Madrid)
- Musee des Arts Decoratifs (Paris)
- Musee des Arts et Metiers (Paris)
- Textile Museum of Canada (Toronto)
- Walter's Art Museum (Baltimore)

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Some museums offer free choice of exhibits but linear paths through exhibits

- Topkapi Palace (Istanbul)
- Musee d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaisme (Paris)
- Museo Nacional (Lima, Peru)

Floor Plan of the Topkapi Palace
Viewed at http://www.ee.bilkent.edu.tr/~history/topkapi.html
Visited October 18, 2010.

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Some museums have unintentionally confusing floor plans

- Kunstgewerbemuseum (Museum of Applied Art) (Berlin)
- MUVIM (Valencia)

Kunstgewerbemuseum
Viewed at
http://www.smb.museum/smb/standorte/index.php?lang=de&p=2&objID=37&n=8
Visited October 18, 2010.

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Lessons for structuring complex asynchronous tutorials

- Probably the most realistic and prevalent structure
- Advantages:
  - Provides flexibility to adapt the structure of the course to the audiences and needs it addresses
  - Allows expansion of courses and curricula
  - Simplifies revision
- Disadvantages
  - Promotes "mission creep" of courses and curricula
  - Can result in incomprehensible structures

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Lesson 7. Some methods for recommending a path are more diplomatic than others

Deutsches Historisches Museum
Viewed at
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutsches_Historisc
hes_Museum.
Visited October 23, 2010.

Museu d'Historia de Valencia
Viewed at http://www.mhv.com.es/cas/index.php
Visited October 23, 2010.

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- Forced structures irritate learners
- Sequence numbers suggest a recommended order
- Bullets imply learners can go through the course or curriculum in any order

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Lesson 8. Paths in second and third languages are often truncated

El Prado Museum
Viewed at http://www.museodelprado.es/mas-prado/la-institucion//.
Visited October 23, 2010.

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What I observed in museums

- Some museums offered fully bi-lingual labels
  - **Note**: Bi-lingual did not always include English.
- Some museums offered partially bi-lingual labels:
  - Some varied across exhibits
  - Some varied within exhibits
- Some museums provided documentation upon request in other languages
- The decision seems motivated by language politics and finances

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Lessons for structuring complex asynchronous tutorials

- Instructional design focuses more on addressing diversity thank addressing language
- How you support different languages and cultures:
  - Limits or expands intellectual access to the content
  - Limits or expands relationships with visitors
- Some choices:
  - Extent of translation
  - Extent of localization
  - Use of limited English
  - Decision not to address certain segments

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These lessons suggest a broader issue.

What guidance do instructional systems design (ISD) processes offer for addressing the challenges of structuring complex, asynchronous tutorials and curricula?

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Let's discuss this further.

For a copy of the slides, visit
http://spectrum.library.concordia.ca
/view/creators/Carliner=3ASaul=
3A=3A.html