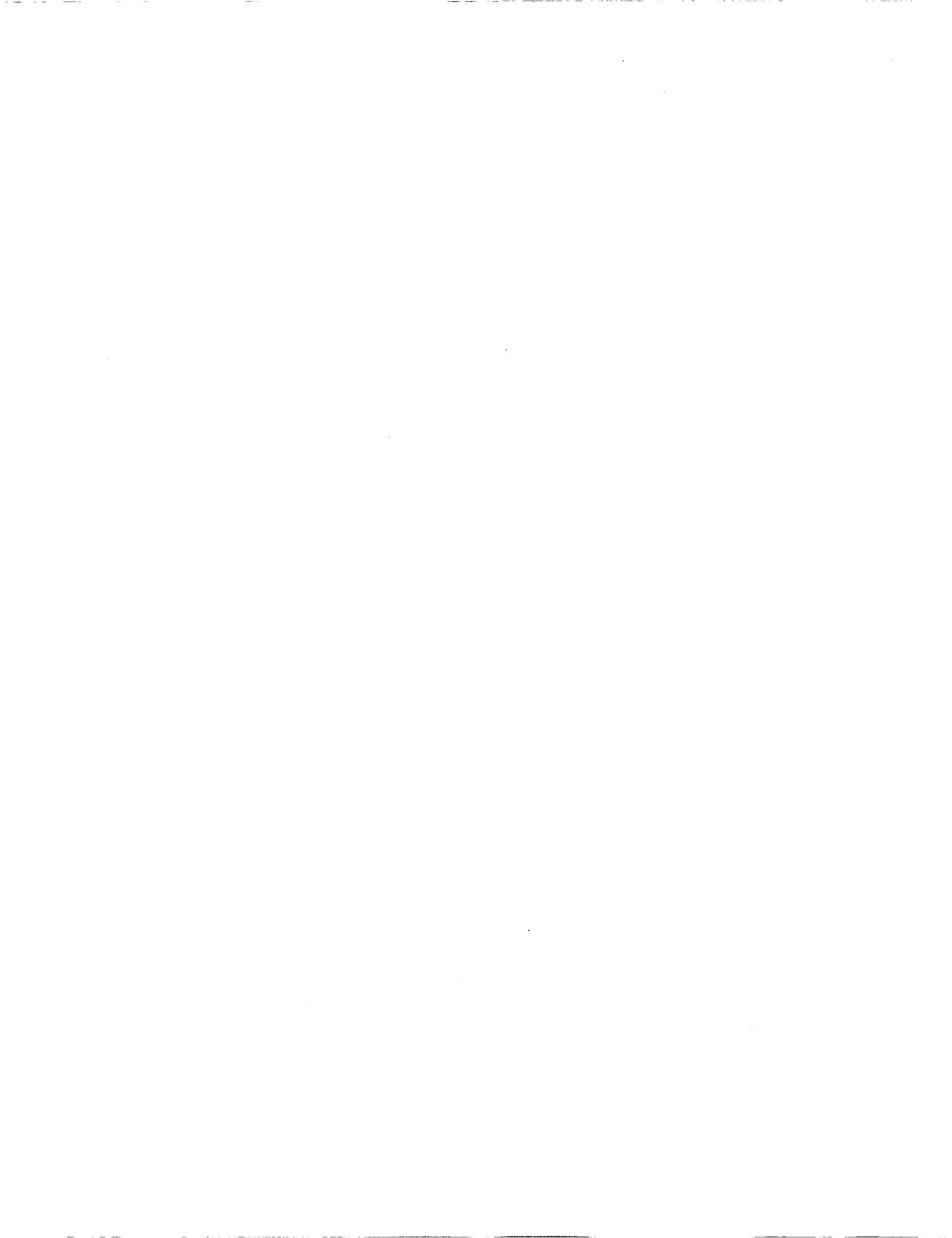


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Playing the Cultural Field

The Role of Outsourcing and Cultural Intermediaries in Art Museum Development

Ann Danilevich

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Communication Studies

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts (Media Studies) at
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Abstract

Playing the Cultural Field

The Role of Outsourcing and Cultural Intermediaries in Art Museum Development

Ann Danilevich

This thesis explores the role of outsourcing in current museum developments through the case studies of the multinational companies Acoustiguide (a subsidiary of the Espro Acoustiguide Group) and Lord Cultural Resources in their chosen field of operation—museums, galleries and other cultural and heritage organizations. It examines their business operations against the backdrop of global museum transformations through an analysis of each company's economic, industrial, and discursive formations, and points to global flows of cultural exchange, as defined by Appadurai (1996), in an international field of cultural production. Bourdieu's concept of cultural intermediaries and field theory are central to this analysis. To meet the demands of the 21st century's increasingly global and technologically advanced world museums must balance traditional and contemporary roles. As a result, they have adopted and adapted certain organizational restructuring practices from the corporate sector. The relationship between these companies and museums is an exchange, with each ultimately influencing the development of the other.

Keywords: cultural production; cultural intermediaries; museum; non-profit; outsourcing; globalization; technology; audio guide; Acoustiguide; Espro Acoustiguide Group, Lord Cultural Resources, global consultancy; interpretation.

For my parents

Acknowledgements

The ideas explored in this thesis germinated when I attended the blockbuster exhibition “Andy Warhol/Supernova: Stars, Deaths and Disasters 1962-1964” in the fall of 2006 at the Art Gallery of Ontario. This exhibition led me into further inquiry of blockbuster exhibitions, corporate sponsorship, museum branding, audio interpretation, museum transformations, and finally the companies Acoustiguide and Lord Cultural Resources—of whom I had only loosely heard of during my undergraduate years at the University of Toronto. This thesis has solidified my love for art and museums. It has opened my eyes to an incredible cultural industry, both in Canada and abroad, of which I would love to be a part. That being said, I would like to thank Charles Acland, my supervisor, whose insightful comments, encouragement, and “corporate speak” alerts challenged me and propelled this thesis forward. I am also extremely grateful to Monika Kin Gagnon, my second reader, who has encouraged, guided, and provided me with fantastic research opportunities throughout my entire MA career. Thank you to Haidee Wasson my third reader for her astute observations and enthusiasm. Thank you to all the wonderful professors I have had here at Concordia, each of whom contributed a part to the learning process that culminated in this thesis. I’d like to also thank the Department of Communication Studies and the Faculty of Arts and Science for their financial assistance. A thank you is also due to Alison Syme, Lisa Steele, Kim Tomczak, Mark Cheetham, and Jens Wollesen of the University of Toronto, who have inspired me to pursue graduate studies. Thank you to all of my interviewees, Brian Porter, Jane Burton, Barry Lord,

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Introduction

A museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment (ICOM and ICTP, quoted in Boylan 2002).

A museum is first and foremost a social and cultural institution. It is also a vehicle of communication. Through interpretation of objects and ideas a museum promotes understanding of the social world. As society evolves, so do the values and expectations for museums, which have always needed to respond to the changing social world around them (see Merritt 2005). In the last quarter century, particularly in the last decade, we have witnessed many rapid changes across cultural and media industries, of which museums are a part. We have seen national institutional and cultural boundaries dissolve due to the rapid proliferation of information and communication technologies (ICTs); the rise of multinational media conglomerates; the increased movement of workers across national borders; and, a globalization of popular culture tastes (see Appadurai 1996). These global developments are changing the way that nations and their institutions are organized, the way they operate, and the products they produce, be it films, shoes, or cultural experiences. Culture and cultural products flow over national borders with increasing ease.

Museums are perched in the midst of these massive cultural changes. We are currently witnessing a globalization of museums, where they are (a) becoming more

interconnected with the public and each other through the adoption of the latest ICTs; (b) following the examples of business organizations by streamlining internal operations; (c) applying aspects of marketing and PR culture, particularly branding; (d) physically expanding beyond their national borders through touring international exhibitions or even more so by building satellite museums; and (e) trying to appeal to as wide a public as possible, or multiple heterogeneous publics. As a result, it has been argued that museums are increasingly being run like corporations (Fraser 2003; Haacke 1999; Krauss 1990; McNicholas 2004), and are being transformed into “multi-use cultural centre[s] (for entertainment, consumption, education, information, representation),” (Prior 2003; also see Rectanus 2002) echoing the process of corporate horizontal concentration in political economic theory (Mosco 2004).

There have been multiple academic studies devoted to certain aspects of these transformations. However, I have not come across many explorations of the relationships between museums and cultural companies to whom work is outsourced or contracted out to (see Ball and Earl 2002 for the only study of outsourcing in cultural organizations that I came across). How do these relationships affect the way museums operate and evolve as organizations? What is happening inside the museum? What practices gleaned from these relationships are adopted, which are adapted, and how? Similarly, although there have been multiple studies of cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh 2002; Hartley 2005; Lampel et al 2000 and 2006; Rifkin 2005), there have not been studies of museums and their operations from a cultural industries perspective. How does a museum develop its interpretive products for the public? What and who are involved in their production? What are some of the reasons

new museums are created (or existing ones are “transformed”) and how does this process occur? Why are museums re-branding? What actors are involved in such processes? If we look closely at the changes occurring in art museums today, we can discover that the impetus for both interpretive production and organizational change in museums may at times stem from third-party involvement through the corporate practice of outsourcing.

As a result we are witnessing the rise of small and often multinational companies that work to mediate between other cultural producers and the public. Such companies increasingly provide a wide range of services for museums and other cultural institutions, and as such can affect the development of our museums. Because their operations are largely unseen to the public, their presence is absent from discussions of museum development in academia. Two examples of such companies are the Espro Acoustiguide Group (mostly widely known as Acoustiguide, and this is the name I will be using for the company throughout this thesis, although it is currently the North and South American subsidiary of the group) and Lord Cultural Resources.

Acoustiguide is in the market of interpretation systems, the most well-known of which is the museum audio guide, while Lord Cultural Resources is a planning and consulting firm. In order for these companies to operate, their services must be enlisted by museums or other cultural institutions. Their business is thus directly tied to museum operations, and more specifically museums contracting work to them. The developments museums undergo, structurally and substantively, can therefore influence the types of products these companies offer as they adapt to the changing

needs of museums. Conversely, the creative/intellectual products and services these companies offer can also affect museums, particularly in times of fluctuation.

Currently outsourcing in museums is not only being used for technological expertise, but also for creative services, such as audio guide scripts, exhibition design, marketing campaigns, branding, and for management services, such as strategic and business planning. Despite the proliferation of outsourcing at many large, key institutions, I have not come across many (or any) academic studies of companies such as Acoustiguide and Lord Cultural Resources or their smaller local counterparts. How does such outsourcing fit with the scheme of museum “corporatization” and museum transformation? How is it carried out pragmatically and for what reasons?

This thesis explores Acoustiguide and Lord Cultural Resources in their chosen field of operation—museums, galleries and other cultural and heritage organizations. It examines their operations against the backdrop of global museum transformations that are relevant to their business through an analysis of each company’s economic, industrial, and discursive formations. Using a case-study approach this thesis elucidates the link between museums and their choices to outsource work to these multinational companies and exposes the interconnected flows of cultural exchange. I hope that this exploratory study will contribute an understanding of the multiple actors, industries, and processes involved in the transformation of museums world-wide.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Media Studies is a relatively new field on the academic circuit, and it combines the approaches of multiple disciplines. This thesis specifically engages with and borrows analytical tools from a number of disciplines including cultural studies, communication and media studies, museum studies, and sociology. Most prominent to this thesis is cultural studies. “Cultural studies may be loosely defined as the multi-disciplinary study of culture across various social strata, where culture refers to arts, knowledge, beliefs, customs, practices, and norms of social interactions” (Babe 2009, 4). There have been many exemplary studies of culture, many of which centred around processes of globalization and global artistic and media collisions, including those by Stuart Hall (1993; 1997), who has made ample contributions to our understanding of media and political processes, and Raymond Williams (1977;1995), whose work built on Marxist ideas of class-relations and were applied to the study of arts and culture, spawning concepts like that of “cultural hegemony.” Homi Bhabha’s (1993; 1994) work has brought an influential post-colonial perspective to tensions and between central and periphery cultures and production practices, and Arjun Appadurai (1996) has articulated a theory of global cultural flows, which has been invaluable to any study involving the process of globalization. More central to this thesis, Pierre Bourdieu (1984; 1993) continues to influence cultural studies through his comprehensive and fluid system of relational fields of power and descriptions of symbolic advantage through various forms of capital. Despite there being many excellent models of cultural analysis to frame my study, it is the sociological analysis of Pierre Bourdieu, as well cultural and media theorists, sociologists, and

organizational theorists who build on his work that provides the dominant theoretical framework for my own analysis. In his text *Distinction* (1984) Bourdieu introduced the concept of cultural intermediaries. It refers to an occupational category of individuals who mediate between cultural producers and the public. This concept is salient in the analysis of the relationship between art museums and companies like Acoustiguide and Lord Cultural Resources to describe the intermediary work involved between the company and the museum during the outsourcing or contractual relationship. Furthermore, the discipline of museum studies is a necessary addition to such an analysis as it deals directly with the institution this thesis is concentrated on. Lastly, in my opinion no cultural analysis is complete without some discussion of the financial and political aspects of cultural production, for which political economy is well suited. My theoretical underpinnings are discussed in greater depth in a literature review of which Chapter 1 consists.

This thesis employs three qualitative methodologies: textual research, discourse analysis, and semi-structured interviews. Overall, qualitative research is concerned with descriptive detail; it emphasises context and process, studying how patterns unfold over time using textual rather than numerical data (Bryman 2004). Because I am interested in a particular phenomenon (the outsourcing of work to multinational companies by museums) from several intersecting vantage-points (cultural production, corporatization of museums, globalization and internationalization of media and culture industries, etc.), I chose to undertake an *instrumental, collective case-study* approach to my research (Stake 1994). In this approach multiple case studies are used to provide insight into a particular issue or

phenomenon. As previously mentioned, I have chosen to examine two companies whose primary business involves contracts with museums: Acoustiguide and Lord Cultural Resources. I have chosen a form of *embedded analysis* (Yin 1989 cited in Creswell 1998) to examine specific aspects of each case. The business practice of Acoustiguide is explored in the context of museum decisions to outsource audio guide production rather than producing it in-house. In contrast, the work of Lord Cultural Resources is examined in the context of the globalization and standardization of museum operations. One company is engaged with a single aspect of a museum's production and the other with multiple aspects simultaneously, yet both operate internationally and both are intertwined in the museum's field of cultural production. The case studies are thus chosen to compliment each other, to provide a more in depth overview of companies of this type. The case studies rely on multiple sources of information (documents, reports, articles, multi-media material, website content, interviews, and observation), the gathered and analyzed findings of which are then contextualized within the larger theoretical framework of the field of cultural production and museum studies (Creswell 1998).

Mirroring my methodology, the data for this thesis came from a variety of sources. It was gathered through (a) published works and multi-media material, (b) conducting interviews with key individuals, and (c) informal observations while visiting museums and attending industry conferences. Textual and multi-media data was gathered through searching academic databases and public search engines on the internet, and through library searching. The data consisted of the following:

1. *Academic readings* of museum and their institutional changes, cultural industries, and global culture and industry flows. These are primarily examined in the literature review portion of my thesis, but they are also dispersed throughout subsequent chapters to support my observations and understanding of primary and secondary data.
2. *Newspaper and multi-media coverage* of any mention of the two case study companies this thesis is concerned with (Acoustiguide and Lord Cultural Resources) or some portion of their business, as well as general information on institutional changes in museums. Multi-media coverage included a made-for-TV documentary, videos available for streaming on YouTube, and podcasts available on museum and conference proceedings websites.
3. *Industry material (trade publications, reports and studies, conference papers and presentations)* are used in conjunction with academic and popular news coverage as a source of data on the two case study companies and institutional changes in museums.
4. *Primary corporate data* produced by the two case study companies, such as website content, downloadable reports, memos and presentations, published texts, and produced audio content.

The approach for interviews with key individuals was initiated through e-mail communication, with the exception of one face-to-face introduction at a conference. A total of four interviews were conducted between May and August 2008. The key

personnel were those in high ranking positions at each of the case study companies and at large museums:

Kathryn Glass, Vice President, North and South America at Acoustiguide Inc.

Barry Lord, Co-President at Lord Cultural Resources

Brian Porter, Senior Director of New Media at the Royal Ontario Museum,
Ontario Canada

Jane Burton, Creative Director and Head of Content, Tate Media, the Tate,
UK

The interviewees were made aware of the nature of the study and signed consent forms (see Appendix A). Where a physical or electronic signature could not be obtained, the interviewees consented to the terms of the study in an e-mail. The interviews were semi-structured, firstly, to facilitate a more conversational style of dialogue, which can provide greater breadth of information and make the interviewee more comfortable, and secondly to make sure that the pivotal questions were covered (Fontana and Frey 2005; Bryman 2004). I had an interview guide with a list of questions to be covered, but I did not stick to the order of the questions and left opportunity for free-flow informative diversions. This style of interviewing allowed for greater flexibility. Questions for interviewees were determined after researching each company and writing the literature review. All questions were open-ended (see Appendix B for sample interview questions). The interviews took between half hour and an hour and were conducted in person or over the phone. When possible the interviews were recorded and then transcribed. When recording was not possible notes were typed on my computer during the interview; they were then made into full

sentences and enhanced further with supplementary notes immediately following the interview conversation to allow for the greatest information retention and accuracy. During transcription, sections of each interview dealing with the same theme were grouped together to facilitate simpler access to the information at a later state of analysis. These interviews were crucial to supplement information about company or institutional structure and operations that is accessible on websites or through other publications.

The third method of data gathering was observation, which was conducted on an informal level. It consisted of visits to large museums over the course of the research and writing phases on my thesis (March 2008-April 2009) to observe how these institutions functioned from the perspective of a visitor, and in two instances from the perspective of a museum employee (see Appendix C for list of museums). Observation was also conducted while attending a number of industry conferences from April 2008-March 2009 (see Appendix C for list of conferences). The informal observations I have made during those experiences enabled me to gain a more inclusive perspective of how the museum, as an institution and an industry, functions. It was through such observations that I came to gain a more comprehensive view of museums and their challenges, as well as the various types of third-party companies they employ. Attending industry conferences also facilitated access to key museum personnel, with whom I was able to have informal conversations about my thesis topic, in addition to the two individuals whom I interviewed. Although what I have learned through observation is not quoted directly, the knowledge I gained informed my analysis.

Academic literature supplemented with newspaper coverage, was utilized in a literature review to gain an understanding of the theoretical background of institutional changes in museums, their audiences, of cultural industries, and cultural production in order to lay the groundwork and define key terms for the case studies to be explored in the remainder of the thesis. In the case study chapters I applied subsequently collated data to analyze the discourse, industry and political-economic dimensions of the two companies. A cultural industries approach was used throughout the thesis to analyze museums, their relationship with the two case study companies, and the museum transformations we are witnessing as a result of such relationships.

Chapter breakdown

Chapter 1 is a literature review of the theoretical framework of this thesis. It positions my research within current studies on museums and cultural industries and introduces key concepts and terminology. It begins with a discussion of art museums' role in society and the social meaning they produce. This is followed by an in-depth breakdown and analysis of current museum "corporatization" practices. In the second part of the chapter an analysis of cultural industries and cultural intermediaries is presented beginning with the theories of Pierre Bourdieu and ending with how theorists such as David Hesmondhalgh, John Hartley, Joseph Lampel and Keith Negus, to name a few, have built upon his initial concepts and theories.

Chapter 2 presents a case study of Acoustiguide as it relates to museum outsourcing and in-house production of interpretation material, most notably the audio tour. It begins with a description of audio guide use in museums and how it has

changed in the last quarter century. Following this, the business and market of Acoustiguide is discussed.

Chapter 3 presents a case study of Lord Cultural Resources as it relates to organizational change and globalization in museums. The chapter begins with an example of the globalization of museums, which leads into a discussion of museums' use of consultancy services. The business and market profile of Lord Cultural Resources is then presented, with specific reference to the practice and evolution of Lord Cultural Resources.

The conclusion contends that Bourdieu's field model is still applicable, albeit with some minor modifications, when discussing relations between actors in an international field dominated by cultural flows. It explains the relationship between museums and the business practice of Acousiguide and Lord Cultural Resources from a Bourdieusian perspective. It argues that the shifting positions, dispositions and inter-relations between museums and these companies in national and international space affect the way museums, as organizations, continue to evolve.

Chapter 1

Art Museums and Cultural Industries: A Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to position my research within current studies on museums and cultural industries, as well as to introduce key concepts and terminology that will allow me to analyze Acoustiguide and Lord Cultural Resources. The first part of this chapter looks at how museums have developed during the last two decades and their struggle to balance historical and contemporary roles, with focus on recent adoption of corporate practices. The second part of this chapter will examine cultural and creative industries, cultural intermediaries and the role of globalization in relation to museums and cultural production.

Art Museums, Society and Meaning Production

From its inception the public art museum was a peculiar space, locked in a tug of war between catering to educated elite audiences and the “uncultured” masses. In *The Birth of the Museum*, Tony Bennett describes the fashioning of the ideal citizen by way of museum attendance. The museum, a space once reserved for the elite alone, was re-envisioned as “...an exemplary space in which the rough and raucous might learn to civilize themselves by modelling their conduct on the middle-class codes of behaviour to which museum attendance would expose them” (Bennett 1995, 28). The museum was envisioned to serve a socializing and pedagogical function. Some, however, feared that opening up the museum to the masses, and catering to them, amounted to a “democratic fallacy,” a dumbing down of content (Robertson

1972; Van der Hagg 1972; also see Rentschler 2007 cited in Cole 2008 for cautions against “dumbing down”). Nevertheless, museums’ roles had shifted from being institutions of collection and preservation attended by an educated elite, to include those of drawing in diverse audiences, as well as educating these audiences (Bennett 1995; McClellan 2003; Prior 2003; Zolberg 1994). Art museums were being called upon to popularize art—to draw in diverse audiences, some of whom have little understanding of art, while at the same time still catering to the art educated elite (Zolberg 1994). The more popular art museums got, the more their values were questioned by academics and museum professionals alike (McClellan 2008).

The debate of the art museum’s role—who it should serve and how—is still going strong, although there is widespread opinion that it serves multiple publics and as such has multiple roles: education, collection preservation, scholarship, etc. The art museum tends to see itself as responsible to more than one audience, more than one public. Some of the strategies museums have employed to expand their appeal to multiple audiences are: increasing education initiatives, including expanding audio interpretation programs, moving educational content online to appeal to a more tech savvy generation of visitors, and developing content for specialty/niche audiences (Morganteen 2006; Parry 2006). Having more spectacular blockbusters in their exhibition programming, which is often achieved by seeking out new corporate sponsorship initiatives (Alexander 1996; McNicholas 2004), is a common way to attract to more diverse publics. Re-branding “transformations,” which include “starchitecture” (buildings designed by world-renowned architects), expanding retail operations and adding fine dining venues, as well as the utilization of the museum

space for mixers and special events, are other routes by which museums entice audiences to visit (Rectanus 2002; Prior 2003). Yet, as Andrew McClellan points out, “[w]ithin the art world, opinion is divided over the relative importance of traditional functions—collecting and scholarship—and the expansion of the museum through new programming, amenities (shops, restaurants, etc.), and outreach initiatives” (2008, 1). Is the museum a place for entertainment or learning? Can it be both?

Nick Prior explains that the art museum “can’t turn itself into a successful ‘distraction machine’—providing diversion in a world already saturated with entertainment—without, it seems, threatening the aura of its grand traditions and the presence of a culturally elevated audience” (2003, 51). However, he sees a way around this through “double coding,” by which a museum becomes both a temple of contemplation and entertainment complex, so to speak. He states,

The museum might have mutated to cater for a more fickle audience hankering after spectacle, but in many way it has done so by combining elements of tradition with consumer populism, drawing on, whilst transforming, cultural modernity. Indeed, the most astute and dynamic directors of artistic institutions are those who understand and exploit the dualistic nature of museums, tapping into and enlarging the rich vein of meanings possible in contemporary culture (Prior 2003, 52).

The debate about whether “popularizing” changes are good or bad for the museum is often framed as conservatism vs. democracy, old vs. new, which over-simplifies the issue (Witcomb 2003, 53-4). Andrea Witcomb points out that, “The debate over the direction of museums covers a lot of terrain—the impact of tourism on museums and

heritage sites, the changing structures of museum staffing, the diminishing importance of objects in exhibitions, the rise of 'interactive' media oriented displays, the loss of curatorial authority and questions of access, cultural diversity and representation" (2003, 54). It is clear that the museum is undergoing organizational changes, where content, its presentation, and internal operations are being transformed. These changes are often described under the term museum commercialization or corporatization. Many of these changes are imperative for the survival of the museums in lieu of decreasing government funding (Cole 2008), while others are driven by more general changes in consumer society and audience expectations.

As art museums are made to compete for attendance with entertainment venues, it is not surprising that they would turn to a corporate model in order to streamline internal operations and maximize output, thereby luring more people into the museum (Prior 2003; Fraser 2003; Kraus 1990). In a still often quoted article, Rosalind Kraus states that the new museum will have more in common with Disneyland, than with its older counterparts (1990). Likewise, many artists and art professionals have protested that the art museum is increasingly being run like a corporation, and as such selling out culture to the highest bidder (Fraser 2003; Haacke 1999). The term "Disneyfication" is still being used to describe museum transformations. Des Griffin, director of the Australian Museum, contends that museums are accused of "Disneyfication" especially if they are at the forefront of adopting and incorporating new technologies (2008). Kathleen Brown, a former museum consultant with the firm Lord Cultural Resources, noted that, "There are

pieces of the Disney experience that are clearly resonating with people, and we need to figure out which ones to pick up” (quoted in Dobrynski 1997), thus asserting that not all aspects of a “Disney” experience are inherently unworthy of high culture.

McClellan rightly points out, “[t]o say that museums, movies, and malls now compete as alternative forms of recreation is not to say they are the same thing” (2008, 7).

There is also no reason to assume that education and entertainment are mutually exclusive. Griffin contends that there are positive things to be learned and adopted from corporate models. What he is critical about, however, is the adoption of practices that drive short-term profit, but which may not be sustainable for the museum in the future. Museum corporatization encompasses a number of practices and processes such as “the expansion of museum shops, the rise of blockbuster exhibitions and corporate sponsorship, and the influx of marketing and fund-raising personnel” (McClellan 2008, 193), but I also add technological innovation and organizational restructuring, including different forms of management.

Blockbuster Exhibitions and their Sponsors

One noticeable commercialization practice is the regular hosting of large blockbuster exhibitions, which are generally accompanied by a corporate sponsor. A couple of examples would include the “Andy Warhol / Supernova: Stars, Deaths and Disasters, 1962–1964” exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario July 8 to October 22, 2006, which was sponsored by RBC Dexia Investor Services; and, the British Museum’s “The First Emperor: China’s Terracotta Army,” which ran September 13, 2007 to April 6, 2008 and was sponsored by Morgan Stanley. It takes a great deal of

funds to put up a special exhibition, particularly one that includes works on loan from other institutions or private collectors. Initially supported through individual philanthropy and the state, art museums are increasingly turning to private sources of funding, particularly when it comes to large exhibitions (Fox 2001; Rectanus 2002; Lidström 2004). Victor J. Danilov notes that, “Corporate underwriting may make an otherwise unaffordable exhibit financially feasible” (1988, 203). However, corporations may not fund all types of exhibitions. Corporations tend to fund travelling and blockbuster exhibitions, which are accessible and attract a wide audience (Alexander 1996). They tend not to sponsor scholarly, controversial, or modern/contemporary exhibitions, although there are always exceptions (Alexander 1996; Haacke 1991; Schiller 1991 and 1989). This may lead to internal self-censorship on the part of the museum, since certain types of exhibitions are more likely to receive funding, and this is a common argument against corporate sponsorship in museums. It is important to remember, however, that museums have exhibition portfolios, just as they have portfolios for various funders (individual philanthropists, foundations, corporations) and can match funders to exhibitions; more scholarly exhibitions still receive funding, albeit from different sources (Alexander 1996). Most “blockbusters,” however, have a corporate sponsor.

It is good for a corporation’s image to be a sponsor of the arts (Schiller 1989, 92-93). Corporations have been known to sponsor art events in order to steer their public image in a positive light when faced with criticism over their environmental practices, product hazards, or other social policies (Fox 2001; Haacke 1999; Rectanus 2002; Schiller 1989). Phillip Morris is one example of a corporation that has adopted

this strategy (Ibid.). Alain-Dominique Perrin, a social researcher who was asked by the French Minister of Culture to conduct a study of corporate sponsorship of the arts, found that, “In order to *neutralize* critics from consumer or environmental organizations, a business tries to create for itself a positive image [emphasis mine]” (Haacke 1999, 49-50). Mark W. Rectanus builds on this when he speaks of corporate “image transfer,” which “links the positive image values of the cultural institution with the corporation” (Rectanus 2002). “Image transfer” from the art museum to the corporation is employed to strengthen certain values a corporation wants to place emphasis on: creativity, innovation, traditionalism, etc. But this is not necessarily done to mask dubious business practices or policies; most often it is used as a form of marketing to enhance the corporation’s customer base (Danilov 1988). Research on art museum attendance indicates that a majority of people who visit an art museum have a high educational level and come from the middle and upper classes (Heilbrun and Gray 1993; DiMaggio et al 1978).

The corporate sponsorship of blockbusters can have a positive effect on museums in that it allows the museum to vigorously advertise their upcoming exhibition, because sponsors usually allocate funds particularly for advertising purposes. This, in theory, results in higher museum attendance. As museums are seen to serve diverse publics, blockbusters, as well as special events, often accomplish the goal of getting different types of people into the museum. The idea is that once people are in the museum, not only will they spend some money in the gift shop to remember their experience, but hopefully they will find their visit enjoyable enough to come back to the museum and perhaps see the permanent collection. Because blockbusters

often offer a never-before-seen experience, atypically large cover fees are charged. Yet despite the fact that blockbusters do attract a wider audience to the museum and generate revenue, some argue that museums are relying too much on blockbusters for their source of income (Griffin 2008). Blockbusters also require a large exhibition space, with climate control if the work on display is of particular rarity or age. Some museums are thus forced to expand to make room for blockbusters, the income from which they are dependant on.

Venue Expansion

Over the last decade there have been considerable expansions of existing museums, as well as the construction of new museums worldwide. On the home front in Toronto alone three major museums have undergone dramatic reconstructions—the ROM, AGO and Gardiner Museum. The MoMA's impressive new building opened doors in 2004. The Tate Modern, which opened in 2000, is building an additional extension to make even more room for blockbusters, cafes, and the ever-expanding collection. In China 1000 new museums are to be built in the next ten years (Wang 2007) and in the United Arab Emirates an entire cultural island, which includes four major museums, is being developed with partnerships from the Guggenheim and the Louvre (Fattah 2007). By enveloping museum collections in impressive architecture, the art museum building becomes a *destination* that is sometimes a more powerful crowd-puller than the art inside—a “prime time” tourist attraction, the most canonical example of which is Frank Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao.

Museums are being engrossed in the larger culture of tourism (Foley and McPherson 2000). The visitor becomes the consumer of the museum as part of a leisurely tourist experience. “The post-modern museum,” write Foley and McPherson, “may be less concerned with the power of objects and more with image and consumer satisfaction...[G]overnmental pressure has been to accentuate the ‘pleasure’ and economic development potential of museums in heritage and tourism” (Ibid. 167-8). Yet this process is not a new phenomenon and has been ongoing for at least half a century. One of the reasons benches inside exhibition halls, gift shops, cafes, restaurants and other amenities were introduced into the museum is to make the museum experience more pleasurable and the public more comfortable (Mead 1970, cited in McClellan 2003, 32 and 2008). A comfortable public will spend more time and money inside the museum. Although gift shops, cafes and other amenities are not new to museums, in the last decade they became more luxurious. From my childhood memory of museum attendance it seems that even benches inside exhibition halls have evolved; modernist leather and chrome have come to replace simple wood structures. Although many large museums still have a café or cafeteria for those looking for a quick bite, four star restaurants are becoming standard in large institutions. Gift shops have also expanded to not only include postcards, catalogues, and art prints of the museums’ holdings or special exhibition material, but also art magazines, books on art, culture and theory, as well as various knick knacks and decorative items. It is almost possible to spend the day at an art museum without actually seeing any art.

Because of the retail additions to museum operations some are comparing museums to shopping malls (McClellan 2008; van den Bosch 2005). Annette van den Bosch writes that, “Like shopping malls, museums are seeking to attract a broad range of visitors who will stay as long as possible, and who are less interested in originality, or art itself, than in the additional opportunities for consumption and interaction” (2005, 82). Although van den Bosch makes a valid point about museums wanting to keep visitors inside as long as possible and give them more opportunities to interact, arguably first and foremost they want them there to view the museum’s content. Many museums put in extra effort to make sure the visitor is confronted with the museum’s objects right when they walk in the door, regardless of whether they came to see a blockbuster or the permanent collection. The Royal Ontario Museum, for example, is using an “in market” approach to digitally advertise “must-see star pieces” to the visitors of the museum at the ticket sales booth, as well as by placing artefacts in the entrance hall, thereby putting attention on the museum’s collection (Porter 2008b). From the perspective of William Thorsell, the ROM’s Director and CEO, the museum is no longer a mausoleum, but a “new agora”—a city square, a place of encounters, where people meet art, people meet people, and ancient culture meets the contemporary (Thorsell 2007). This signifies a much more dynamic process of audience development, or “double coding” in institutions, than critics of this aspect of museum corporatization suggest. As Glenn Lowry, then MoMA director, stated in 1996: “No Museum, except maybe the Getty, has an endowment big enough to be free of the marketplace, so all museums have to retail products, solicit corporations, franchise themselves, seek members” (quoted in McClellan 2008, 223).

It is also important to note that art museums do not exist in a cultural bubble, but bring about economic growth for their region and gentrification for their neighbourhood (McClellan 2008). The addition of a new art museum to a city or the reconstruction of an existing museum, not only helps put the city in the international spotlight, but it also has beneficial economic impacts comparable to those of new airports and factories (van den Bosch 2005, 82). The most evident example of how a museum can boost a local economy is the Spanish city of Bilbao, which thanks to the Guggenheim was able to revitalize an entire city and transform itself from a place few have heard of to a place where many want to go. It is important to note, however, that the introduction of the Guggenheim Museum was only one part, albeit perhaps the most significant one, in the plan to revitalize the city economically (Fraser 2008, 147). Andrea Fraser writes: “The Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa became the centrepiece of a plan to turn Bilbao around: to rescue its image, revive its economy, and transform it into a global city, at least into an internationally competitive city in the areas of culture and advanced services” (Ibid.). The museum was not built solely for cultural reasons.

The Bilbao project was so successful that many cities internationally are learning the value of injecting “world class” modern or contemporary art into their midst, whether in the form of museums, fairs or biennales. Until recent economic upheavals, the international art market was steadily growing. Ever hungry collectors were looking at new “emerging” markets for contemporary art, from China and Russia, and the Middle East (Unica 2008; Wallace 2008). Christie’s art sales increased 7.7% in the first half of 2008, with the highest prices paid for modern and

impressionist work, but total sales for the year overall fell by 11% due to the recession (Crow 2008; Christie's 2009). Sotheby's had the best contemporary art sale in its history in 2008 (Unica 2008). This year, however, brought contemporary art sales to an unforeseen low; 87% lower than the record-breaking contemporary sale of 2008 (Pollock and Boroff 2009). Although the recession has affected art market sales, we are yet to see its long-term affects on museums and their programming.

The internationalization of the art market has an effect on how museums operate and what art they are expected to show. Annette van den Bosch observed that:

The international art market and its influence on art practice since the 1960s have led to a rapid turnover of styles and the institutionalization of art galleries and museums....Perpetual re-invention is also one of the markers of globalization, creating ever-new products and markets, while basic relations of power remain unchanged....The main problem for the art museum is the homogenisation of practices, collections, and attitudes to audience through the internationalization of the art market (2005, 85.)

However, homogenization is not a conclusion all agree with. As Arjun Appadurai puts it, "The central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization" (1996, 32). As museum practice takes cue from corporate models and becomes more institutionalized, museums around the globe may look and act alike, and thus be accused of homogenization. However, it is important to consider that although "global" museum brands like the Guggenheim may indeed be alike in operations and content, the

standardization of museums' operational practices, does not necessarily lead to a standardization of content.

Technology in the Museum

One significant transformation that museums around the world are going through is the incorporation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) into their everyday operations. As with other issues concerning the museum, the appropriate use of ICTs, although inevitable and necessary (if only for the maintenance of the museum website) creates additional debates over access and democratization vs traditional museum responsibilities (Witcomb 2003; Perry 2008). The word "access" has a different meaning when it refers to a museum's webpage, than it does when it refers to physical content of the museum. The type of website a museum has (whether it uses Flash or HTML programming, if there is content that is accessed only through streaming, etc.) can affect its ability to reach certain populations, as many people still do not have high speed internet connections. Depending on the region the museum serves, local residents may not be able to adequately access the site. Museums have to learn to adapt to the online world if they are to continue to cultivate audiences and live up to their expectations, and they are doing just that. Many museums are particularly interested in Web 2.0 technology and are actively using it to engage with audiences. As many people, especially the younger generation, spend a significant time online, maintaining a presence on Web 2.0 sites like Facebook, YouTube, and Flickr, can give the museum access to these sometimes hard-to-reach publics. The Brooklyn Museum, for example, has an active

Facebook group as well as a YouTube channel (see Bernstein 2008), and it is not the only museum to utilize social media. According to Andrea Witcomb, “The use of media within the museum connects it with global flows of ideas and information, preventing meanings produced within the museum from remaining enclosed within it” (2003, 103). Often Internet initiatives, like social media, are employed to get people into the museum physically, yet by offering archives and access to collections online to those who may never visit the museum in person, the museum can be seen as serving its traditional research function while expanding its reach.

Des Griffin states that, “Through the use of the latest IT, the accumulated knowledge of museums has become more accessible to visitors and the general public alike” (2008, 46). The incorporation of electronic technologies inside the physical museum results in content being mediated, as the visitor’s attention is divided between the object on display and a digital device (PDA, iPod, a video monitor, etc), which can be seen as threatening objects’ authority to construct meaning (Witcomb 2003, 103-4). Ross Perry has observed that the computer reduces things to representation, to the immaterial, and museums are still seen as liminal spaces—places of contemplation and transformation away from the daily grind (of which technology is a part). It took time for museums to begin to enter into the dialectic of technology and society, and they are still adapting to it (Perry 2008). Digital technology also allows for the customization of content and of visitor experiences, for the construction of various interpretation narratives and learning scenarios. For example, new generation PDA audio guides can be designed to layer information thereby giving the visitor choice in how much he/she wants to know about a

particular object (Belford 2006). Lucy Bullivant observes that, “By encouraging content to be customized, and art to be mediated, museums have precipitated new paradigms of informal learning and reinforced the widespread value of their public spaces as places to freely explore the personal significance of cultural value” (Bullivant 2006). With a similarly positive outlook on ICT use in museums, Perry had said that we are beginning to see digitization disappearing *into* the museum, and soon we will talk of exhibitions, not virtual exhibitions, of collections, not digital collections, etc. (Perry 2008). Of course this is just one end of the spectrum, many museum professionals and academics are still uneasy about the *intrusion* of digital media and electronics into the museum space.

Museum Management and Organization

In the last decade there has been a noticeable shift towards “greater professionalism in arts management, including an increase in the incorporation of business practices” (McNicholas 2004). The nature of museum directorship is changing, as new directors are being recruited from business, rather than arts, backgrounds with the expectation that they will raise significant capital for the museum (see Griffin 2008). In some instances curators are no longer solely responsible for conducting research and putting on exhibitions, but they are expected to be “facilitators” of interaction between art and public (although arguably this is more common in contemporary art museums and exhibitions) (Bullivant 2006; Witcomb 2003, 1-2). Human resource management, marketing of exhibitions and visitor research are prevalent in museums. In the last five years or so, departments of

interpretation, which often overlap the duties of public programming and education departments with media and technology are becoming more common in museums, particularly in the UK. The inevitable addition of digital technologies and the need to engage audiences on that level has also resulted in museums adding new media departments and professionals (Porter 2008). Museums are being re-structured to meet today's demands, and the model for restructuring tends to come from the corporate sector (Griffin 2008).

The imposition of a corporate model onto the museum has been met with resistance by leftist critics and some museum professionals, who see it as a rigid structure that devalues curators and generally turns the museum into an entertainment complex (Krauss 1990; Fraser 2003; Haacke 1999). However, although many museums are adopting business models when it comes to their operations, it is important to state that it is not a unilateral business model (Griffin 2008). Reflecting on the criticisms of the corporatization of museums Griffin notes that, “[It] is not business per se which has provided inappropriate lessons in recent times, but that the wrong lessons have been applied” (Ibid., 44). Although collecting and presenting collections may be unique to museums (and libraries), in many ways they are similar to other organizations. He is sceptical about the outsourcing of functions such as IT management and exhibition design and sees it as a potential “loss of control over activities that turn out to be important, after all, in the long term” (Ibid., 47).

Museums, first and foremost, are concerned with communication; they communicate meaning through a variety of objects on display, through educative texts, their architectural structure, and their identity (Silverstone 1988). Exhibitions,

texts, and architecture are types of rhetoric and are symbols of the institution to which they belong (Silverstone 1988; Ferguson 1996). Roger Silverstone notes that, “museums compete with, contradict, and reinforce the images, ideas, words and classifications which the mass media generates daily” (1988, 232). The way museums navigate through their different modes of representation is of great importance, as are the agents that can lead the museum to make decisions about these concerns. Furthermore, museums are embedded in the processes of modernization and globalization, and need to continually classify, interpret, and re-interpret collections and temporary exhibitions to make them relevant to society today thereby asserting their power as meaning makers (Fyfe 1996). As meaning makers, museums mediate between the art and public by creating an interpretation of their content. Through the museum the public makes meaning out of the art, artefacts, and concepts they encounter. The act of mediation is further subdivided within the museum, where wall text, catalogues, audio tours, podcasts, banners, and digital media compete with the art object of attention. The act of outsourcing adds a further layer of mediation to museum content; the museum no longer becomes the single mediator between the art and public.

Outsourcing is a business practice that refers to having a necessary function performed by an individual or company that is not part of the museums’ payroll staff. It is a practice that is particularly common when it comes to staff lacking technological expertise, but it is not necessarily limited to technology. As museums are adapting to the 21st century, the skill-sets and knowledge base for the performance of certain functions is changing. In order to meet new demands museums need to hire

or train in-house staff, a task that not only requires economic investment for salary purposes, but could require further investments in electronic media, such as the addition of digital editing studios, etc. Alternatively, the museum could employ a third party to do particular jobs as they come up and thus outsource the work. There are many necessary functions that can be outsourced by a museum; these include audio guide creation, web design, management consulting, feasibility studies, visitor research, interpretive planning, and exhibition design, etc. The increasing demand for such services from museums and other cultural institutions has created a market for “third-party solution” vendors (a term I appropriated from Brian Porter) as well as cultural consulting and planning firms. In addition, the process of globalization has created a competitive *global* market for the museum field (Fraser 2008). As a result we are witnessing the rise of multinational companies that provide a wide range of intermediary services to museums and other cultural institutions. As such, these companies are implicated in the substantive output of the museum and the field of cultural production of which museums are a part.

Cultural Industries and Cultural Intermediaries

In his work sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has studied what he called “the field of cultural production.” The field of cultural production encompasses the interactions of individuals within the field and structural relationships between social positions of groups or institutions that are “invisible, or visible only through their effects” (Bourdieu 1993, 29). A *field* in Bourdieu’s theory is “a structured space of positions, in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of

different kinds of resources or ‘capital’” (John B. Thomson, editor of Bourdieu’s *Language of Symbolic Power*, quoted in Hesmondhalgh 2006, 212). “By identifying key fields within a particular social space, Bourdieu is able to theorize interconnections between different areas of endeavour, and the degree to which they are *autonomous* from each other,” writes David Hesmondhalgh (2006, 212). Much of Bourdieu’s work revolved around art and literature institutions. When it comes to art, “the field of cultural production is the space of social relations and positions in which artists, critics and other cultural agents determine and legitimize art” (Fyfe 1996). Works of art and culture that are found in museums are symbolic objects that come into being through a process of consecration; this process involves a variety of meaning makers, individuals and institutions who create the value for these works. Furthermore, once the works of art are in the museum the way individuals view these works is conditional upon visual literacy—or “cultural competence”—which is acquired through formal education, upbringing or both (Bourdieu 1993). In his work Bourdieu was able to identify forces that influence individuals’ enjoyment and understanding of art, which was previously believed by many to be something that is inherent in the works of art themselves, not something that was taught. While analyzing the artwork as a symbolic good, Bourdieu showed how its value is intertwined with economics, yet not directly shaped by the economic system. Rather it is shaped by its opposition to the economic system, by the relationships specific artists, dealers, and critics have to economics, and—this is most important—to each other (Bourdieu 1993).

Bourdieu has produced “a most comprehensive and elegant system” for studying culture and its effects (Mander 1987, 427). He is a major figure in the sociology of culture and his work has a lot to offer to those studying the cultural industries (Ibid., 436). Mander writes, “His is interpretive social science at its best: he utilizes rigorous statistical measures which meet the criteria for success in ongoing positive social science research; he supplements his empirical data gathering with both a philosophy of sociology and a philosophy of social relations” (Ibid.). Bourdieu’s approach enables the study of various interconnected actors, institutions and ideas. This approach lends itself well to the analysis of the relationship between museums, their complex knowledge production and internal organization structure, and companies, with their own sets of knowledge production and goals, which are tied to museum goals, yet are also autonomous to them.

David Hesmondhalgh asserts, and I agree, that a great strength in Bourdieu’s theory is his emphasis on interconnectedness of the field of cultural production and other fields such as the political, economic, educational and intellectual (2006). He does, however, see limitations with Bourdieu’s theory when it comes to analyzing contemporary media production, particularly large scale cultural production (Hesmondhalgh 2006, 216-17). Bourdieu’s conception of the formation of the market for symbolic goods as being established in the 19th century seems to suggest that the same market conditions exist today, “[b]ut this ignores profound transformations in the field of cultural production in the 20th century, in particular the growth and expansion of the cultural industries—central to which are media industries” (Hesmondhalgh 2006, 219). In my opinion, however, Bourdieu’s field theory serves

as a solid foundation for a study of the cultural production of symbolic goods, including contemporary media production. One of its drawbacks is the theory's national focus. Although analyzing field relations as they relate to national social space is of merit, today cultural fields of production are much more global or more accurately international.

In the sociological tradition other theorists have taken the production of culture approach to studying arts and culture organizations (see for example Peterson 1976). The production of culture perspective, as articulated by Peterson, focuses on "the processes by which elements of culture are fabricated in those milieu where symbol-system production is most self-consciously the centre of activity... the term 'production' is meant in its generic sense to refer to the processes of creation, manufacture, marketing, distribution, exhibiting, inculcation, evaluation and consumption" (1976, 10). It is important to understand how cultural products are produced and become available to various publics. In their "production of culture" analysis DiMaggio and Hirsch draw on the organizational perspective to discuss the way works of art are produced, however they point out that this perspective is useful in analyzing other culture-producing realms (1976, 74-5). They propose three organizational approaches for analysis of cultural production. The first is focused around individual "roles, functions, and careers," a perspective that looks at product creation, financing, promotion, distribution, and consumption of cultural products. The second approach is inter-organizational; it emphasises industries and processes, such as product innovation and control, internalization-externalization (in-house vs. outsourcing), product appraisal, market size and unit costs, industry structure, and

competition. The third approach is the total systems approach, which looks at the interrelations between various culture-producing institutions, such as communications media, conglomerates, and societal contexts for production and distribution. This multilayered micro-macro approach can be extremely fruitful when analyzing contemporary cultural production, and it can be adapted to include theories from other disciplines, such as the incorporation of political economy when looking at inter-organizational or total-system structures.

Because cultural organizations are concerned not only with generating profit, but also with the production of symbolic goods or “creative products” there has been much debate on how to categorize such organizations and how to approach their study (Hesmondhalgh 2002; Hartley 2005). For Hesmondhalgh, cultural industries are “those institutions (mainly profit-making companies, but also state organizations and non-profit organizations) which are most directly involved in the production of social meaning” (2002, 11). The term “cultural industries” is the combination of “culture,” or symbolic human activity, and “industry,” a system of production, distribution, and marketing (Lampel et al, 2006, 6). “Bringing culture and industry together therefore gives rise to cultural industries: systems of production, distribution, and marketing that deliver symbolic products to customers, where each cultural industry is made up of firms that specialize in the production, distribution, and marketing of specific cultural products, and is sustained by consumer demand for these products” (ibid). The definition of “cultural” industries presupposes that they are involved in the production of symbols, that is, of meaning making.

John Hartley, however, would term these same industries as “creative” rather than cultural. He states that, “[t]he idea of creative industries seeks to describe the conceptual and practical convergence of the creative arts (individual talent) with cultural industries (mass scale), in the context of new media technologies (ICTs) within a new knowledge economy, for the use of newly interactive citizen-consumers” (2005, 5). The term “Creative Industries,” writes Hartley, “focuse[s] on the twin truths that (1) the core of ‘culture’ [i]s still creativity, but (2) creativity [i]s produced, deployed, consumed, and enjoyed quite differently in post-industrial societies from the way it used to be in the time of the earl of Shaftsbury” (2005, 18). Stuart Cunningham agrees with Hartley and asserts that the term “Creative Industries” is more useful than that of “Cultural,” “Content,” “Copyright,” or “Entertainment” Industries. This is because the term “[a] mainstreams the economic value of the arts and media...[b] brings together in a provisional convergence a range of sectors which have not typically been linked to each other...[c] [shifts focus from] the culturally specific non-commercial to the globalized and commercial, where *generically creative*, rather than *culturally specific*, content drives advances” (Cunningham 2005, 284, emphasis his). However, it can be argued that creativity is a part of many industries including those of manufacturing and business services. It is creativity that can drive innovation and change in multiple industries, and as such it is not exclusive to those involved with arts, culture, media and meaning production (see Wood 2002 for a discussion of consultancies role in business innovations through the transfer of new “creative” ideas).

In forming a cohesive analysis it is important to agree on a definitive term to use throughout the study. In my view those studying the “creative” and “cultural” industries are in essence referring to the same industries. However, a difference between the applications of the terms is apparent on the level of analysis and the processes studied. Although globalization and adaptation of new technologies are important to both perspectives, researchers discussing “creative” industries put greater emphasis on the individual creator and the creative process in production (Hartley 2005; Cunningham 2005), while those favouring the term “cultural” industries place greater emphasis on the production of meaning and cultural change (Hesmondhalgh 2002; Lampel et al 2006). In addition, as I previously mentioned, I do not see “creativity” as being exclusive to a single industry. As the process I am interested in is the change or transformation of museums—which are cultural institutions—and the field they operate in—which is cultural—I favour the term “cultural” industries. For the purpose of my study, I will therefore refer to the cultural industries when discussing the work of that Acoustiguide , Lord Cultural Resources, and art museums.

As the division of labour in cultural industries is complex, there are many approaches one can take in analyzing the work cultural industries do and how they do it. While studying cultural industries Hesmondhalgh observed that these industries are increasingly incorporated into national economies as primary industries of growth; they have changed in ownership and organization through processes such as conglomeration, vertical integration, horizontal concentration, and multi-sector and multimedia integration. They circulate products internationally, place greater

emphasis on understanding audiences for their products, and grow their business through advertising and marketing (Hesmondhalgh 2002). To study cultural industries Hesmondhalgh suggests the combination of political economy (European cultural-industries tradition), the sociology of culture, and cultural studies perspectives. He sees the European cultural industries tradition being superior to the Schiller-McChesney tradition of political economy because: “The cultural industries approach’s emphasis on problems and contradictions, on the partial and incomplete process of commodifying culture, provides a more accurate picture of cultural production...Schiller, McChesney and others rarely comment on how such issues of market structure affect the *organization* of cultural production and the making of texts on an ordinary, everyday level” (2002, 33-34, emphasis his). Likewise, Lampel et al, contend that there have been many approaches to analyzing cultural industries, those from organizational theory, cultural studies, and sociology (2006, 6). Even in purely sociological traditions such as DiMaggio and Hirsch’s (1976), the processes they advocate to study in the inter-organizational and total systems approaches can be covered and expanded upon through political economic analysis. What most research into the work of cultural industries suggests is that multidisciplinary analyses combining elements from sociology, cultural studies and political economy provides a thorough picture of the organization and production practices of these industries, as well as their interconnectedness to other fields of production.

The process of internationalization and globalization is also extremely important to consider when discussing cultural industries, particularly companies that operate multinationally. In order to stay competitive during national recessions of the

early 1980s and mid 1990s companies turned to internationalizing their operations (Hesmondhalgh 2002, 85). “Internationalism in the cultural industries has helped lead a much greater complexity of international flows of culture, but it has also meant the increasing global presence of vast corporations” (Ibid.,10). The field of cultural production is now more complex than ever. In his often cited text “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,” Arjun Appadurai discusses five global cultural flows, which contribute to the process of globalization: these are ethnoscapas, or the migration of people; technoscapas, or the high speed transfer and fluidity of technology; financescapas, or the movement of capital; mediascapas, or the ability to “produce and disseminate information”; and, ideoscapas, which can loosely be described as the transfer of imagery and ideology. or the representation of that ideology (Appadurai 1996). The convergence and divergence of these flows across the globe create deterritorialization, as people, technology, money, ideas, and images are no longer necessarily rooted in one place. “Deterritorialization creates new markers for film companies, art impresarios, and travel agencies,” writes Appadurai (1996, 38). However these “global” markets can clash with “local” interests by altering modes of production, both cultural and economic. These new markets exude an effect on consumer tastes and make the idea of “locality” more fluid (van den Bosch 2005, 86). The local becomes affected by global cultural flows, as the internationalization of cultural businesses, internationalizes cultural texts (Hesmondhalgh 2002). The internationalization of cultural industries, under the guise of globalization, has been named by some social critics as a form of cultural imperialism and hegemony, while others have seen the process of globalization as

increasing the interconnectedness of different nations, where cultural differentiation takes form (ibid. 174-6; van den Bosch 2005; Appadurai 1996). When analyzing cultural business that are complacent in meaning production within cultural institutions like museums, it is important to consider the convergence and divergence of cultural flows within those businesses and how these flows influence museum practice and output. Appadurai's articulation of global cultural flows provides an entry point to discussing how globalization within cultural industries affects their production methods and the consumption of their services. A discussion of the international transfer of ideas is impossible to ignore in an analysis of the cultural industries of today. Where Bourdieu, who was one of the first to offer us a comprehensive system for the study of culture and its industry, was able to limit his analysis to one nation—France—such an analysis today would not prove complete. The spread of ICTs in particular has enabled cultural flows to travel across borders quicker than ever and spawned intermediary actors in the field of cultural production, that simply did not exist in the same way (or existed in a limited capacity) at the time of Bourdieu's writing.

Although Bourdieu did not write from an international context of cultural production, he did consider agents involved in the mediation of certain cultural output and coined the term “cultural intermediaries” to describe them. When discussing the practice of companies like Acoustiguide and Lord Cultural Resources, who mediate the production of culture, the concept of “cultural intermediaries,” which since its inception has been built upon, is fruitful. The concept of cultural intermediaries is “a theoretical and analytical category and a descriptive label for an occupational entity,”

which was first described by Bourdieu in his text *Distinction* (Negus 2002). It refers to service of creative/intellectual work, “involving presentation and representation ... providing symbolic goods and services” (Bourdieu 1984, quoted in Negus 2002). Expanding on Bourdieu’s ideas Keith Negus points out that cultural intermediaries, as intellectual/creative workers, come to occupy the space in-between consumers and creative artists; this often involves the use of “advertising imagery, marketing and promotional techniques”—or symbolic production, to use Bourdieu’s phrase (Negus 2002). The cultural intermediary “mediates” between the producer and consumer. Other uses of the term refer to cultural facilitators, entrepreneurs and consultants who mediate between producers and policy makers, but more generally it refers to those who produce symbolic goods (see discussion in Hesmondhalgh 2006, 227).

When it comes to museums, outsourced third-party work, and the public, the third party is the provider of cultural intermediary services. Hesmondhalgh, however, sees problems with the term:

...The confusing array of uses to which the term has been put makes it a very poor starting point for an enquiry into the relationships between media and cultural production and consumption. We need a better specification of the division of labour involved in mediating production and consumption in culture-making organizations than that offered by Bourdieu and by those who have adopted the term ‘cultural intermediaries’ from him in these many different ways (2006, 227).

In his own work Hesmondhalgh asserts, the basis for studying new media production and its division of labour involves combining organizational sociology, sociology of

culture and critical political economy (ibid). David Wright also acknowledges the overuse of the term (2005, 109). He sees the work cultural intermediaries do being similar what has sometimes been described as the “knowledge” and “service” classes, however the term is generally applied to only those involved in the cultural industries (ibid). Wright asserts that consuming culture is regarded as different than consuming other types of commodities (Ibid.,106). It is also important to note that the term “cultural intermediary” is used to describe specific *individuals* involved in an occupational category, such as graphic designers (Soar 2000) or club promoters (McRobbie 2002). The term does not refer to companies, but it can describe the type of work a cultural company does, if it offers an array of services that would be performed by its employees. Furthermore, through the specific reference to *the cultural*, the term acknowledges that people who work in such companies gravitate towards them precisely because of the types of products and services these companies specialize in. Although there are some valid criticisms laid against the term, I do think that “cultural intermediary” is an astute umbrella term to describe the type of work that is performed by individuals who mediate between producers and consumers, or consumers and a cultural institution, such as a museum. However, I wish to emphasise that this term implicitly refers to the work of companies where individuals involved in the mediation of culture are found. The term can therefore describe companies whose employees act as cultural intermediaries, and whose main business rests on these “intermediary” cultural relationships between producers and consumers.

This chapter has provided a review of the key concepts in museum studies and examined the study of the cultural industries and cultural intermediaries, as built upon the research of Pierre Bourdieu. It looked at the way museums produce meaning and the diverse publics they strive to serve. Our changing society has increased the speed and scale of museum development. New technologies are being actively utilized by museums to reach new audiences and to formulate new partnerships. These changes are concomitant with the corporatization of museum practices, referring to structural, organizational and programming changes, including the globalization of museums through satellite sites and global online presence. Central to these developments is the ongoing debate of the museum's purpose—education and conservation versus entertainment and cultural tourism. Museums are part of the cultural industries; they are involved in the production of meaning. Bourdieu contended that understanding and enjoyment of art is not inherent in the works themselves. Thus a person's enjoyment and understanding of work at the museum is predicated on their artistic or cultural competence, which is learned. Furthermore, what is presented as art at the museum, and how it is presented, is also predicated on a complex system of value creation involving multiple actors, such as dealers and critics, and institutions such as museums, galleries, biennales, the art market, and cultural intermediaries. Inside the cultural industries we find private companies that provide products and services to museums. Such companies act as cultural intermediaries. Their services mediate between the museum's production and the public. The content we find inside museums is therefore sometimes produced by third parties. The following chapter will apply the concepts from this chapter in a case study of the audio and multi-media

interpretation company Acoustiguide, which produces educational audio interpretation for museums. Why do museums provide audio tours? Who do these tours serve and how? Why do they outsource audio production to third-parties? What is the future of audio production in museums and what is the role of cultural intermediaries, like Acoustiguide, in this future? These are some of the questions explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

Audio Interpretation Production in Museums

A Case Study of Acoustiguide

The year is 1999. You are walking into the Brooklyn Museum of Art to see “Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection,” an exhibition that caused some controversy at its world premier at the London Academy of Art earlier that year, as well as in New York (Fraser 2003). Perhaps unfamiliar with the artists, or perhaps out of sheer curiosity, you take an audio guide tour to lead you through the exhibition. Pausing in front of large fish tank containing a pickled shark, you put the Acoustiguide wand to your ear, press the button on your device corresponding to the number on the wall and begin to listen. Deep menacing music plays for a few seconds, then, David Bowie begins to speak to you, while the music continues to play in the background, its intonations increasing and decreasing after each phrase:

Life, death, fear: a few of the vital human concerns you’ll encounter in this exhibition. Here they are embodied by fourteen feet of shark, all muscle and tiny eyes and rows of jagged teeth, the brainchild of Damien Hirst, among the most controversial of contemporary artists. The creature swims not in water but in hundreds of gallons of formaldehyde solution. First placed in this tank in 1991, it’s now so perfectly preserved it could last without refrigeration for 30 days—a pickled killer, a reminder that even the most powerful die.

[The music stops]

“I access people’s worst fears,” Hirst has said. “I like the idea of a thing to describe a feeling.” The label does not identify the creature. For the record, it’s a tiger shark. What it does give us is a resonant title: *The Physical Impossibility Of Death In The Mind Of Someone Living* (Espro Acoustiguide Group 2008a).

The audio guide has provided some key facts about the artwork, some of which, we are informed, are not contained on the gallery wall label. Who is the work by, what is it made of, when was it made, and what does it mean, are all questions that are answered in the audio tour. We hear not directly from the artist, although he is quoted talking about his work, but from David Bowie—an influential celebrity figure. Furthermore, the music that accompanies Bowie’s voice creates a feeling of suspense, thus leading us to want to hear more about this work and not moving on to the next work in the exhibition too quickly. The tour is attempting to provide an exclusive experience for the listener, to give an inside glimpse of what the artwork is really about. The delivery of the tour—a celebrity narrator, quotations from a controversial artist, ambient sound—make the tour entertaining, while the content of the tour is educational—it reveals information about the artwork and the artist who produced it.

Now fast forward a decade. It is 2009. You are still in New York. You are about to enter the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). You have an iPhone. Having an iPhone may not seem like a relevant device to have in a museum and you may at first be inclined to switch it off, but you should know better. The new MoMA building has WiFi, which allows you to access their audio programs on your own device free of charge. You could also download their audio programs onto an iPod or other MP3

player prior to visiting the museum, and create a customized tour for yourself. And, if you do not have an MP3 player or phone with wireless capability you could always take a more traditional Acoustiguide audio guide (see Photo 1) (MoMA 2009). In addition to multiple devices on which you can listen to an audio tour, you also have different types of tours to choose from. Take Piet Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie Woogie* for example; there are three possible audio sequences that you can listen to: a modern voices tour, a modern kids tour, and a visual descriptions tour. This is a very different experience than the one you would have had ten years ago.

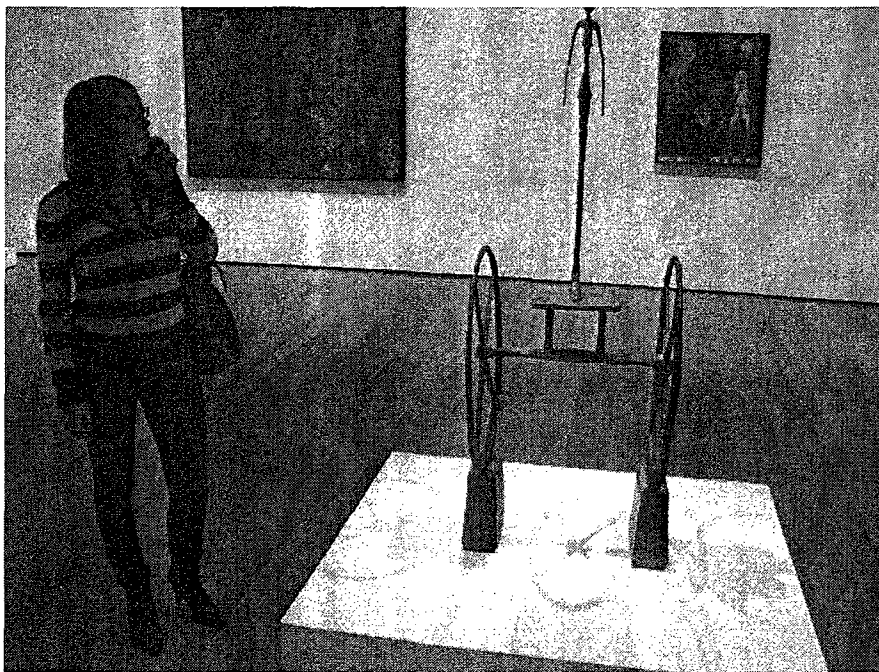


Photo 1 I listen to the Acoustiguide description of Alberto Geocometti's *The Chariot* (1950) at the MoMA. Device used is the Opus Flip.

Information consumption trends have trickled down to the museum in a way that paying attention to them is unavoidable: first is instant access to information, to which people have become accustomed through the world wide web (neatly

summarized as access to whatever, whenever, wherever; audio content is thus being made available across many technological platforms and can be instantly accessed using a variety of devices (Proctor 2008; Gyroscope 2006). Peter Samis, Director of New Media and Technology at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, spoke to this trend when he said, “Visitors want to know about an artwork when they are standing in front of it. If they leave the gallery, you’ve lost them” (quoted in Gyroscope 2006). Second, customization of information (consumer products as well as informational products are increasingly filtered and customized to individual tastes); a single work of art at the MoMA, for example, can have as many as three different types of audio content available for visitors to choose to listen to. Likewise, specific audio content can be personally chosen and downloaded to an MP3 player or PDA at home before a trip to the museum, thus resulting in a customized audio tour. Third, new communication networks, whereby people are involved in creating their own content, altering others’ content and are generally more interconnected through social networking tools; many museums are incorporating user-generated content (UGC) into their educational and outreach initiatives (Gyroscope 2006; Proctor 2007 and 2008).

The world of audio tours in particular has undergone a massive transformation. An audio guide is now standard at many large museums despite the fact that there is an average take up rate of 5% for the permanent collection and 25% for special exhibitions (Proctor 2008). Although these figures may suggest that audio programs should perhaps not be a core educational experience in a museum, considering their costs, this line of thinking can be offset by looking at recent studies

suggesting that visitor enjoyment of the art museum experience is increased when they take an audio tour (see Hart and Getty 2005 and 2007; EmcArts and Whitney 2008). Visitor *enjoyment* in these studies is connected with visitors' *understanding* of the exhibition and *learning* more than they would have without taking the guide.¹ This suggests that perhaps there are other factors in the decision not to take an audio tour. Perhaps the tour is not marketed well (Proctor 2008b). Perhaps visitors do not want to try someone new, maybe being concerned about looking like they lack artistic competence. Furthermore, although a minority of visitors currently use audio interpretation programs, podcast downloads are steadily increasing (EmcArts and Whitney 2008; Pew 2008; Morganteen 2006). Studies revealing that audio tours enhance visitor experience, as well as those that document an increased rate of podcast downloads, offer an optimistic view of the future of audio tour take-up. So what does a tour bring to the museum environment? How and why did museums begin to have audio tours? How have audio tours evolved and what has driven their evolution? How does an audio tour fit in with the other forms of interpretive content and symbolic production at a museum? What is the current place of the audio tour within museum programming? This chapter seeks to answer these questions by first looking at the applications of audio tours in art museums, and by tracing and analyzing the evolution of one of the largest audio guide companies, Acoustiguide Inc, as it negotiates its relationship as audio and interpretation guide provider with

¹ Many of such studies are conducted using Likert scale type questionnaires. Enjoyment levels, for example, can be rated on a scale of 1 to 5 or from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Using a Likert scale can be limiting if one wants to know exactly how enjoyment is defined for visitors, how it is increased through the use of the guide, etc. In addition to Likert scale questions, visitors can be asked supplemental open ended questions to find out exactly what aspects of the experience they found enjoyable, what they would like to have improved, etc. Many surveys now combine both types of questions.

museums, as more museums move towards in-house approaches to production. It also situates *Acoustiguide* within the framework of the cultural industries modes of production.

Why Provide an Audio Tour?

The audio tour is an interesting case of the intersection of the more traditional museum purpose, education, and its symbiotic counterpart, entertainment. The museum audio tour is first and foremost an interpretation device used to inform visitors about particular museum objects or concepts related to those objects. Although museums have experimented with audio as early 1904, when phonographs were sometimes used to contextualize exhibitions (see Griffiths 2008, 235-6), what we know audio tours to be today began to be popular in large museums at about the same time as blockbuster exhibitions. Writing in 1983, Kay Kritzwiser noted that “Blockbuster exhibitions with traffic flow problems have convinced museums of the value of the cassette [which was the audio guide technology used at the time],” (Kritzwiser 1983, E8). Arguably one of the first modern blockbusters, defined as a show for profit drawing in a large array of people, was in 1963; it featured the Mona Lisa at the National Gallery in Washington (Mclellan 2008, 211). However, the blockbuster show that solidified the economic value of large, crowd drawing, often foreign loan driven exhibitions for the museum, was the late 1970s traveling King Tut exhibition, “Treasures of Tutankhamun,” at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1978, which travelled to six other museums over a period of two years (Thornton 1978; Display Ad 171, 1978; Danilov 1988). The show was based on the Met’s collection of

“treasures” from King Tutankhamun’s tomb, discovered by archeologist Howard Carter and sold to the museum by Lord Carnarvon in 1926 and drew an average of a million people in each location (Danilov 1988; Rains 1988). Since then there have been multiple crowd-drawing King Tut exhibitions—part of a Tut craze that continues to this day, with another traveling King Tut exhibition due to open at the Art Gallery of Ontario this November. Blockbusters tend to attract large and diverse audiences with different levels of interest in and knowledge of the works in the exhibition. Judith John, president of the Canadian branch of the audio guide company Acoustiguide in the early 1980s (a branch that no longer exists), stated that, “For a show like Tut and Van Gogh and Black and now Silk Roads [an exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum held in 1983], museums realize the need for more information for viewers than the docent tours can provide,” (quoted in Kritzwiser 1983; E8).

Audio guides are meant to offer accessible information to visitors who would like to learn more about particular exhibitions or collections, but who may be disinclined to take a docent tour or learn about an exhibition from a museum catalogue. However, with current snazzy audio tour handheld devices such as iPods and multimedia PDAs some visitors take a tour simply out of technological curiosity (Hart and Getty 2007; EmcArts and Whitney 2008). Audio tours are also seen as a vehicle to enhance visitors’ enjoyment of and engagement with the artwork (Hart and Getty 2005). In a visitor survey conducted by the Getty Museum, visitors indicated that their enjoyment of the art they saw was enhanced through the use of the audio guide (Hart and Getty 2007). Another visitor study conducted by EmcArts Inc in

association with the Whitney Museum of American Art had similar results, with a vast majority of visitors stating that their experience of artwork was enhanced by the audio tour they took, because they learned more about the work (EmcArts and Whitney 2008). Audio tours are thus part of a museum's educational mandate, and are currently ubiquitously available in large and medium-sized museums.

In addition to fulfilling an educational mandate, museums have expressed other reasons for providing audio tours, particularly in the past five years, as more technological advances in hand-held audio guides were made. According to a study conducted by Gyroscope Inc. and the Science Museums of Virginia:

Museums report multiple reasons for implementing handheld projects. The Getty Museum, for example, wanted to support more in-depth interaction with the works of art, to improve wayfinding, to offer visitors a more personalized experience, and to help visitors make better use of pre-visit planning (as part of the [Getty] project, visitors can go on-line in advance, select works of art they are particularly interested in seeing, and have a personalized handheld-based tour ready for them when they arrive at the museum). Other museums cite the ability to easily update content or to record user activity (including what they viewed and for how long) as benefits to these projects (2006, 5).

Museums are thinking about visitors and their needs when deciding to provide an audio tour and when deciding what type of tour to provide, as there is currently a lot of choice in technological platforms. Audio tours have been continually updated in response to visitor studies, pilot projects, critiques, and wider societal changes such as changes in consumer tastes and the evolution of technology, in hopes of both

increasing the take-up rate for guides and in order to improve on the guides already in use (see Honeysett 2008 for an example from the Getty Museum). In that way museums are catering to their audiences in much the same way that other businesses are. They are finding out what their visitors want and they are giving it to them; likewise, they are attempting to provide more engaging ways of providing visitors with the information they deem important, as they are still holding on to traditional museum values and striving to offer experiences that educate the visitor, that involve him/her in the museum collection.

The modern era of audio guides, technologically speaking, began with a consumer item—the walkman (Proctor 2008a). During that time the content of audio tours was linear, meaning that the visitor had to walk a path set out by an exhibition curator and listen to audio stops on that path only. The guide was determining the visitor's path through the museum space. There were three substantial critiques raised to these types of guides by art and culture critics. Firstly, in these guides the visitor had no control over which audio stops he/she wanted to hear or how much or what type of information would be given about a specific art work (Up Your Ears 1995). Fast forwarding was difficult and took attention away from the artwork. Secondly, crowding could be a problem, particularly in large exhibitions (Costello 2000). If all visitors were following the same path, large pools of people were created around audio stops, thereby making it difficult to see the artwork both for audio guide users and the rest of the museum's visitors. Thirdly, often times the guides were wrought with dense art historical language, with some stops sounding like museum labels read out loud. Some newspaper articles poked fun of audio tours for that particular reason

(see Acoustiguide 1992, 4). The former critiques were able to be addressed through technological solutions.

The next notable technological advancement was the shift from analog to digital devices, like portable CD players (another consumer item) and specialty wand-like guides designed by audio guide companies, which allowed for the creation of non-linear, randomly accessible audio sequences (EmcArts and Whitney 2008; Proctor 2008a). Random access allowed for a different mode of content creation, which responded to the critiques cited above; it allowed visitors to determine their own path through the museum space, to skip over some audio stops, or to repeat others. This gave visitors more choice in what they wanted to hear about and when. The verbose nature of the audio tour language took longer to address, and some would argue is an on-going battle. When creating an audio guide, “museum professionals sometimes want less fizz and more scholarship, while the audio ‘creatives’ want to avoid loading up on dense jargon,” which can be intimidating or confusing for the general public (Puente 2002). This can cause some tension in the creation process, as curators generally need to approve audio scripts prior to production (Costello 2000). However, after a period of time museums increasingly began to create audio content that was more accessible and entertaining. This shift in content creation also parallels the increased presence of New Media and Interpretation departments and the professionalization of both museum interpretation and new media practices.

Upon visitor feedback, celebrity narration, quotes from and interviews with artists, comments by critics, curators and other professionals, unscripted

conversations, as well as ambient sound and music were gradually introduced to make audio tours more entertaining, more enjoyable. Making content changes that strayed away from traditional ways of receiving information was a double-edged sword for museums. On the one hand, the public enjoyed the content (and visitor studies confirm that they still do—see EmcArts and Whitney 2008 for a contemporary study), yet such guides were dubbed “museuotainment” by art and culture critics who accused the museum of pandering to spectacle hankering audiences (Monk 2006; von Hahn 2006). Critiques of content also centred on the notion that the guides told visitors what to think and as such did not help to develop visual literacy museum education programs should (Goodes 1991; Baker 2000). Some went as far as to refer to the guide as “that chattering box that members of the ‘general public’ strap on for enlightenment,” (Goodes 1991; von Hahn 2006)—the democratization vs. traditional museum responsibilities debate all over again. Yet, museum professionals and academics agree that there are multiple publics in a museum, and as such there are multiple publics for audio guides.

Increasingly needing visitors for financial sustainability, whether due to decreased governmental funding, the need to attract corporate sponsorship or to simply acquire more funds for programming, museums need to appeal to as wide an audience as possible and not risk alienating publics with little art historical background, some of whom want their educational experience to be entertaining as well. As a result, visitor research became paramount. Museums, often conduct surveys to assess visitor experience and learn what works and what does not, sometimes through the aid of audio guide and market research companies (Porter

2008a), and other times on their own (Elliott et al. 2009). Incorporating more open-ended content on audio guides, as well as interviews and non-scripted conversations with artists talking about their work was done in response to visitor surveys, emerging art education practices and critiques. Sandy Goldberg, a writer from the audio guide company Antenna, stated “We don’t try to tell them [the visitors] things, we try to show them things; we try to teach people how to get their own information and to trust their own eyes” (quoted in Puente 2002). As Goldberg’s words suggest the industry standard was shifting towards being more inclusive and open to trying to create visual literacy in visitors by making them feel actively involved in the learning process. Critics of passive information consumption such as Communications professor, David Gilbert even went so far as to create alternative audio guides with more interactive audio recordings as part of a class project (see Kennedy 2005 and Beizer 2005). In an interview David Gilbert stated, “we go to museums because we expect those who are more knowledgeable...to educate us, (but we) don’t want to be discoursed to, we want to be invited into the conversation” (quoted in Beizer 2005). Museums took note. As technology changed it permitted the creation of interactive content, and museums are increasingly inviting audiences “into the conversation.”

The technological solution, through which the content solution was made possible, involved the layering of different levels of information on a single interpretation device. Layering information enables the device to contain different perspectives about a single artwork simultaneously. Multi-media PDA guides’ layering of information was heralded by some as visitors becoming their own curators (Griffin 2005). Multi-media guides can include video interviews with artists and

curators, images of other works by the artist, as well as interactive games or questionnaires that get visitors involved in making their own opinions about the art they are seeing. Describing an audio guide stop in one of the first multi-media tours at the Tate Modern, which included a video showing artist Niki de Saint Phalle producing one of her shooting paintings, as well as a short questionnaire for the viewer asking them if their view of the artwork was altered by the video they have just seen, Nancy Procter, then with the audio guide company Antenna, recalled that subsequent audience studies revealed that what visitors liked best about that stop was not the incorporation of the technology (the video), but being asked what they thought in the end; they liked the interaction, the dialogue (Procter 2008a). However, not everyone responded positively to the multitude of information offered on the guides, some visitors and critics found the amount of information overwhelming, distracting, and the guides difficult to use (see for example Hunter-Tilney 2006; Honeysett 2008; Gyroscope 2008).

The introduction of new portable consumer technological products such as the iPod and PDA marked an important shift in audio guide production and had potent ramifications for museums and the audio and interpretation systems industry. It allowed for the creation of audio content for downloadable consumption (i.e. online consumption or uploading content to an MP3 player or PDA), due to the separation between content and hardware, mirroring the shift from HTML to XML in cyberspace. These accessible and increasingly prolific consumer devices could be loaded with audio content, which meant that audio content could be produced independently and transported onto pre-existing consumer hardware. Content also

became easier to produce. This had a number of effects. First, museums could begin to produce audio content in-house without necessarily investing in an in-house production studio. Second, content could be moved across technological platforms and produced for multiple platforms simultaneously. Third, as podcasts do not require the museum to keep audio hardware on hand, more funding could be allocated towards the production of diverse programming for specialty, niche audiences; for example those wishing to hear more about the conservation techniques of an artwork (Morganteen 2006). Fourth, new companies emerged that offered more cost-effective, consumer hardware with specialty interfaces (interface design), which could free museums from continuing to renew costly contracts with audio guide vendors. Last, feeling the pressure, audio guide vendors expanded their business model by getting into the business of content creation that is separate from hardware, by increasingly developing “value-added” services for existing hardware, and by expanding to new customers and markets, for example, corporate trade shows.

Audio guides are currently produced in a number of ways. One common method of production is to outsource the entire project to an outside company (a vendor) that specializes in audio guide and interpretation production. The company provides the technological hardware and works with the museum staff to create the content or audio script. Another method is to outsource part of the project and to produce the rest in-house. Either content production or technological platform production can be outsourced, with the latter being a more common choice. A third option is to produce the entire guide in-house. More museums are choosing to go with the latter two options, making it harder for audio guide vendors to get new contracts.

What is it that vendors offer and what do they lack? Why are museums increasingly exploring alternate routes to audio content production? To answer that it is fruitful to look at the evolution of the very first audio guide company: Acoustiguide.

Acoustiguide Business and Market Profile

Acoustiguide was founded in 1957, the same year as the very first audio tour (Fisher 1995; Copage 1999). Oscar-winner Valentine Burton, actor and composer, invented the audio guide after walking through an exhibition with its curator (Ibid.). Burton found the personalized walk-through with an expert to be stimulating and he wanted others to have this kind of experience—“to make the gallery talk by a professional/curator/director more widely available to the public” (Glass 2008b)—and so he decided to go back to that same exhibition and record the curator explaining the featured art works on a reel-to-reel tape. That same year Burton founded Acoustiguide (later to be spelled Acoustiguide), based in New York (Copage 1999). The first audio tour produced by Acoustiguide was of Hyde Park, former home to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and it was narrated by Eleanor Roosevelt (Espro Acoustiguide Group 2007). A century later, Acoustiguide (now part of the Espro Acoustiguide Group) is operating internationally and has over 450 clients in 20 different countries (Hardman & Co. 2007).

For over a quarter century Acoustiguide was the only audio tour company on the market. Their first audio tours were produced on clunky reel-to-reel recorders, which visitors had to strap over their shoulder. In the 1980s newcomer Antenna Tours introduced tours on CD players, and was the first company to offer significant

competition to Acoustiguide (Copage 1999). In the 1990s, as technologies changed and guides became cheaper to develop and manufacture, other companies appeared on the scene. At the same time the market for audio tours, in their traditional form, was expanding to include productions for historic sites such as castles and battlefields, as well as other attractions like botanical gardens and zoos (Applied Investors Management 1996). In the 1990s one of Acoustiguide's international competitors was Espro Information Technologies, an Israeli company founded in 1992; Espro pioneered the random access guide, which allowed museum visitors to follow their own path through the museum without being directed by the guide (Hardman & Co. 2007). In 1998 competition stiffened as Antenna Tours merged with London's Arts Communications & Technology, a small company that also developed a high memory random access guide that held more content and had high sound quality, creating Acoustiguide's biggest rival to date Antenna Audio.² In response to increasing competition, Acoustiguide developed guides that worked with MP3 technology, which allowed for random access, and had improved sound quality (Costello 2000). These guides looked like large cell phones and were easier for visitors to carry (Ibid.). In 2005 Acoustiguide was acquired by Espro Information Technologies to create The Espro Acoustiguide Group (Hardman & Co. 2007; Kennermer and Stub 2005). In order to raise capital to buy Acoustiguide, Espro Information Technologies went public on the PLUS market, then called the Ofex market, an alternative stock market in London, UK (Espro Information Technologies 2008b). The merge pooled resources from both companies and created "the world's

² In 2006 Antenna Audio was bought by Discovery Communications, which also owns the Discovery Channel, TLC and Animal Planet.

largest stock market quoted company in the audio guide market by market share, geographical spread, annual revenues, number of customers and range of products” (Kennemer 2005). Until August 4, 2008 the company was publicly traded on the PLUS Market (under EST). It withdrew from the market on that date due to its limited trading volume, which was not providing enough profit for shareholders, and is now once again a private company (Espro Information Technologies 2008b).

Compared to twenty years ago, when Antenna Audio was arguably the only company that posed a significant threat to Acoustiguide’s business (Sullivan 2000), today’s interpretation/audio guide systems market offers a lot more competition. Acoustiguide has to compete not only with other international firms of the same size, but with small, local firms that can offer museums more innovative or cost effective options (Bleford 2006), as well in-house museum experts (something that I will discuss later in the chapter). In 2005, Ubiquity Interactive, a firm that specializes in mobile media and content development, came up with one of the first multimedia PDA platform guides for the Canadian Museum of Anthropology. The guide, named VUEguide, allowed for the layering of multimedia content to create levels of information (Griffin 2005). This was prior to Acoustiguide’s introduction of the Opus system, which is able to do the same. Another new competitor is Flick Software Inc., small firm from Kanata, Ontario, which allows museums to reuse existing audio content and adapt it to any consumer PDA platform, thus freeing the museum from having to go into long term hardware leasing and maintenance contracts with large vendors such as Acoustiguide (Bleford 2006). Of course in order to do so, the museum would have to be the sole owner of the content, something that Acoustiguide

charges more for and tries to avoid (Glass 2008a; Burton 2008). To keep their platforms (devices) and interfaces desirable in light of increased market competition, Acoustiguide entered into a number of partnerships with specialized technology firms to design specialty PDA device interfaces; Acer Group, which develops PDA technology and creative content; EyeGaze, a company specializing in deaf communications and accessibility; and Hewlett-Packard, for the development of user selected content for on demand printing inside museums (Espro Information Technologies 2007). Forming partnerships allows Acoustiguide to offer more choices of services to museums in order to deter them from going with a smaller firm that may not have the same resources readily available.

Acoustiguide revenues come predominantly from two business models: “an option model, where Espro [Acoustiguide] employees on site rent out the audio guides to visitors directly; and an inclusive model, in which a museum will cover the cost of Espro [Acoustiguide]’s guides in the admission charge for each visitor whether they decide to use one or not” (*Investors Chronicle* 2007). Most of the company’s revenue comes from long term contracts with museum and heritage sites (Hardman & Co. 2007). In 2000 it cost between \$15 000- \$45 000 US to produce one hour of new content (Sullivan 2000), and this price did not include the use of hardware. Single short term contracts generally cost \$100,000-\$500,000, but can go a lot higher (Hardman & Co. 2007). Renting and maintaining technological hardware, something that is generally included in long-term contracts with museums, is another important source of income for the company. As podcasting proliferates—both in museums and in the tourism industry—Acoustiguide is beginning to produce more

creative content that is not tied to a specific technology (Glass 2008a), such as the Chicago Blues and Chicago Kids downloadable audio tours for the city of Chicago. The company is also repackaging pre-recorded content for what they refer to as “the downloadable tours market,” and see it as a good source of future revenue (Espro Information Technologies 2008a).

The structure of the Espro Acoustiguide Group is divided into multiple subsidiaries. This is a necessary structure if a company wants to operate internationally (Hardman & Co. 2007). With headquarters now in Kfar Saba, Israel, the company maintains offices in New York, Washington D.C., London, UK, Edinburgh, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, Salzburg, Prague, Milan, Madrid, Porto, St. Petersburg, Russia, Istanbul, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Taipei, Shanghai, New Delhi, and Sydney (Espro Acoustiguide 2009). In gathering information about how the company is structured internally I was able to speak with Kathryn Glass, Vice President of North and South America at Acoustiguide, Inc. The internal structuring of Acoustiguide that I refer to below is that of Acoustiguide, Inc., the North and South American subsidiary of Espro Acoustiguide Group, yet it is similar in structure to the other subsidiaries. Acoustiguide, Inc. is divided into four departments: the Administrative Department, which encompasses finance, human resources, and shipping; the Creative Department, which includes the creative director, executive producers, project managers and production studio staff; the Sales and Marketing Department, which is responsible for new business development and account management; and, the Operations Department, which helps clients with the products once they are delivered on-site. “The Operations Team,” Glass explains, “is

responsible for setting up the technology, and hiring and training the staff, or training the museum's staff to distribute the tours, and for managing the equipment" (Glass 2008a). The entire Espro Acoustiguide Group employs approximately 90 full-time staff internationally (Hardman & Co. 2007). Approximately 20% of employees work on content creation, another 20% on sale and marketing, and 30% in "technology and operational functions" of which 6% is dedicated to research and development (ibid). Although figures were not readily available for the remaining 30% of staff, we can deduce that they are employed in management, administrative, finance and human resource capacities. At Acoustiguide Inc, creative talent, such as writers and producers, are rarely full-time staff; they work on a freelance basis, and are often recruited from public radio or other streams of journalism (Glass 2008a and b). Freelancers are not included in the company's full-time employee records. However, it is likely that there are more freelancers working on creative content than full-time staff.

The products and services Acoustiguide offers museums are (1) creative audio production, (2) creative platform or interface development, (3) use of their pre-existing technological hardware platforms, (4) additional "value-added" services that can be incorporated directly into specific technological hardware, and (5) on-site services such as, project management, marketing support and staff training. The production of an audio guide involves a number of steps and processes (see Figure 1 for a visual look at what goes into audio guide production decisions from a museum's perspective).

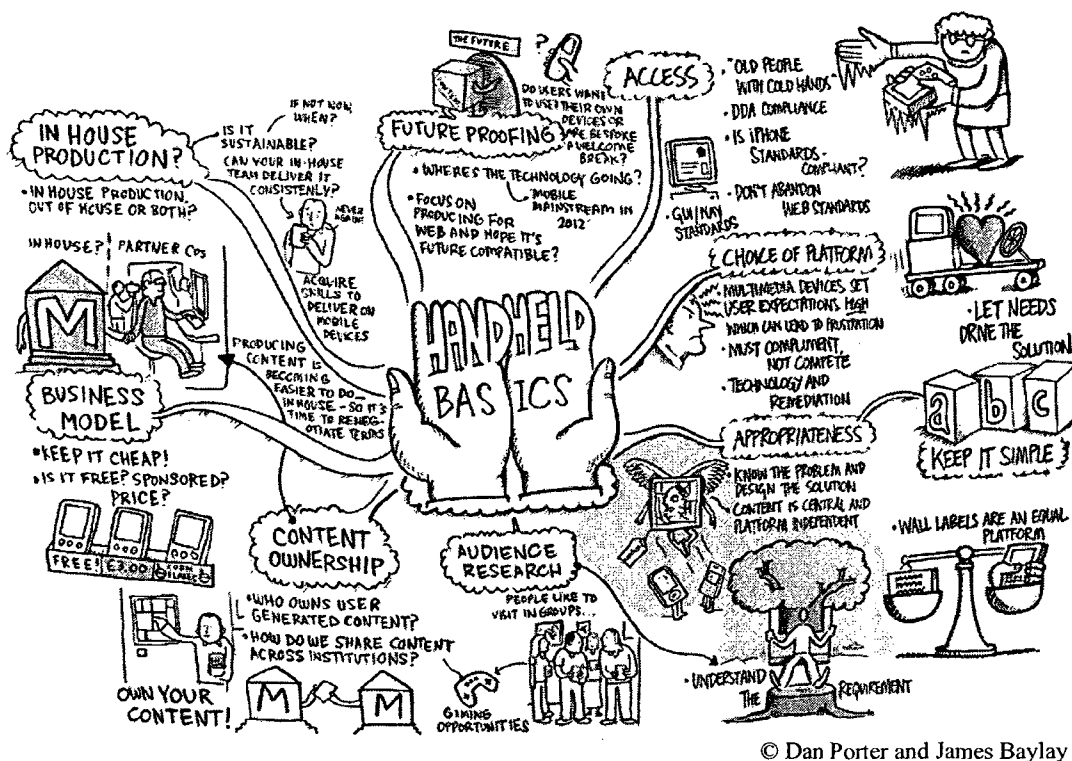


Illustration 1 Handheld Basics Mind Map. Reprinted with permission from copyright holders.

The Mind Map presented in Illustration 1 was created live at a workshop a day in advance of the Tate's Handheld Conference: From Audiotours to iPhones on September 5, 2008. It showcases the various elements that are considered by museums when choosing to produce an audio tour, and is thus a salient visual document to lead us into a discussion of audio tour production and everything it involves. When a new project begins at Acoustiguide, the object of study is first defined by Acoustiguide staff and museum professionals—what are the goals of the audio guide and who is the audience? How many audio stops will there be? What type of programming should it include? (Glass 2008a and 2008b; and Espro

Acoustiguide 2007b). These decisions are often based on evaluative visitor studies conducted by museums (Glass 2008a; See Hart and Getty 2005 and 2007 for example of such as study). When specific visitor studies are not available, such decisions come out of discussions between Acoustiguide and curatorial, and/or education departments in museums; Acoustiguide sometimes performs its own visitor research and may suggest options to the museum based on these studies, as well as those conducted at other museums (Glass 2008a). They may suggest using more unscripted narration in the tour, for example, as it has been shown that visitors enjoy its conversational style.

The type of technological platform for the guide also needs to be agreed upon. Acoustiguide has multiple platforms to choose from (see Table 1). Should the guide be linear, random access or both? Should it be able to log visitor data? Should it be multi-media or will a simpler guide do? As Nancy Proctor has clarified, when it comes to designing audio tours it is important to keep things simple, and to put emphasis on the story and not the technology (Proctor 2008a). The technological platform needs to be simple to operate, as it is the content that is the most important. If the museum chooses a multi-media guide, the interface for that guide will need to be specially designed to meet the requirements of the tour, as well as any additional content museums wish to include. This is done directly by Acoustiguide or is sub-contracted to specialty interface design firms that Acoustiguide has strategic partnerships with, such as Ubiquity Interactive. Furthermore, the additional uses for the audio need to be agreed upon. Will the audio content produced for a single technological platform or will it be used across other platforms such as the museum website or be available for downloading on iTunes? These decisions often involve

discussions on rights ownership and can drive production prices up, which is something I will discuss later on.

Once the scope of the project is clarified, Acoustiguide works with writers and producers to create audio stops and interpretive material for objects. They consult with museums curators and educators on the audio material they produce. Although basic information about artworks and texts such as a catalogue may be provided to Acoustiguide, their creative writers may do subsequent research and construct the scripts themselves. Acoustiguide often employs freelancers from public radio and journalism streams to write the audio text (Glass 2008a). This is due to their experience in writing accessible *audio* content, which is different from writing an accessible wall label or catalogue essay. The text needs to be entertaining to the ear. Once the scripts are approved, audio production begins. The scripts are recorded, and then music, ambient sound or special effects are often added to the guide, as it has had a positive response from visitors (Ibid.). Indeed many museums are increasingly incorporating music into their exhibition programming. For example, the recent Warhol exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Art had music of the time period playing in its exhibition rooms, as did their subsequent John Lennon and Yoko Ono Bed-In exhibition. Companies such as Acoustiguide tend to keep on top of such industry trends and can advise museums to utilize them. Once the audio content is fully developed, it is uploaded to the technological platform and made available to the museum (Glass 2008a).

Currently Acoustiguide offers seven types of audio guide hardware technologies for their clients to choose from (see Table 1). However, the company

also develops new technological platforms or specialized interfaces for consumer platforms, on a project-project basis. The information for the customized service is more difficult to find on the company website, perhaps signifying that it is not something that they are actively pushing, as the leasing or purchasing pre-developed technologies would likely prove more profitable for the company.

Product	Type of tour	Content type	Storage	Storage in hours of audio	Date launched
MyGuide/ Inform	Free and preset tours	Audio only	16 Mb	4 hours	1992
Denon	Free and preset tours	Audio only	128 Mb	9 hours	1998
exSite Classic	Free, preset and group tours	Audio only	2 Gb	569 hours	2000
AG 2000	Free, preset and group tours	Audio only	170 Mb	54 hours	2000
AG 2020	Free, preset and group tours	Audio only	1 Gb	318 hours	2005
exSite Premium	Free, preset and group tours	Audio and MyCollection	2 Gb	568 hours	2005
Group Guide, Guide U	Group tours	Audio only			2000-6
Opus	Free and preset tours	Multimedia	2 Gb	568 hours	2007

Table 1 The product specifications of the Espro Acoustiguide Group (adapted from Hardman & Co. 2007)

In addition to their audio guide systems, Acoustiguide has other products for museums that work in conjunction with these systems, and are marketed as “value added” services to create additional revenue for the museum or work to enhance visitor experiences. These are the MyCollection system, the Positioning and Orientation technology, and visitor research collection options. MyCollection, which was developed in partnership with Hewlett-Packard is “a service that lets visitors bookmark and download select objects during their museum visit and print-on-

demand posters and catalogues customized to their taste,” which can be picked up in the museum’s gift shop (Espro Acoustiguide Group 2007a). A variety of museums have been experimenting with visitor “bookmarking”—the recording of points of interest in an exhibition, akin to bookmarking a webpage on a computer—sometimes sending these bookmarks to specialized webpages (see Proctor 2007 for an example). These initiatives are usually done in an effort to engage audiences and draw them deeper into exhibition content.

The MyCollection system fulfils a similar function, but on a more commercial level. On the one hand, it offers visitors a customized souvenir, which can work to enhance their level of enjoyment of the exhibition and their level of re-call of the experience. On the other hand, it generates profit for the museum. Another service that museums can add to their handheld platforms is a Positioning and Orientation technology, which is a GPS-like system to help visitors navigate large museums by knowing their exact location. The technology was developed in partnership with the company lesswire AG and was due to launch in the Musee d’Orsay in Paris in late 2007. Museums have indicated that one reason for implementing handheld projects is to improve “way-finding” for visitors (Gyroscope 2006, 5). Museums see themselves as becoming more “visitor-centric.”³ Accordingly, many museums conduct visitor research, which they sometimes outsource to market-research companies (Porter 2008a). A number of Acoustiguide devices, such as the Acoustiguide 2000 series, ExSite Premium and the Opus series (see Photo 1, p. 45) can log visitor data. The

³ The term visitor-centric can have a number of applications. It can refer to museums expanding their appeal to multiple types of visitors (children, various ethnic communities, the local general public, students, scholars, and tourists). However, it can also refer to catering to a specific type of visitor, such as a cultural tourist. It therefore becomes important to look at what museums mean when they state that they are becoming “visitor-centric.”

technology in the devices can document visitors' paths, language selection, number of audio stops listened to and duration of listening. This information can then be exported and categorized to help museums develop more appropriate content in the future. If many visitors are continually skipping over certain audio stops, they may be removed in the future. If a language selection is not actively being utilized, then it too may be removed to save on translation costs. Similarly, if visitors only listen to one or two minutes of content on average and the audio stops are significantly longer, they may be shortened in subsequent productions. In addition, visitor surveys on demographics, satisfaction levels and any other relevant topics can also be programmed directly into the ExSite Premium and Opus guides, which can replace separate visitor research studies in some instances.

Acoustiguide in the Cultural Industries

Acoustiguide produces cultural products for various museum, culture, and heritage sites, which influence our understanding of exhibitions, the sites themselves, and thus the social world. Cultural industries include for-profit companies involved in the production of symbolic human activity and social meaning as well as non-profit entities such as museums (Hesmondhalgh 2002, 11; Lampel et al, 2006, 6). The business of Acoustiguide is based on producing symbolic products for profit. What makes Acoustiguide an interesting case is the company's chosen client base—museums—which are also part of the cultural industries and operating in the cultural field of production. Acoustiguide does not produce products directly for the consumer, but for another cultural entity through which the product then reaches the

consumer. A double filtering process of content thus occurs, whereby Acoustiguide's product becomes entangled with the social world view constructs the museum is putting forth. This makes Acoustiguide, as a company, an intermediary between the museum and its visitor. However, as DiMaggio and Hirsch pointed out in 1976, "Cultural production systems are characterized by a constant and pervasive tension between innovation and control" (79). The museums' preoccupation with meaning making and control over its symbolic products can have, and I argue does have, a strong impact on the way Acoustiguide is able to operate, and influences the way the company has evolved and continues to evolve.

When studying the development and evolution of the cultural industry companies David Hesmondhalgh observed changes in ownership and organization, such as conglomeration, vertical and horizontal integration, multi-sector and multi-media integration, circulation of products internationally, placement of greater emphasis on understanding audiences for their products, and growth of industries as a result of advertising and marketing (2002,11). These processes can be observed in the continual evolution of Acoustiguide. The company has expanded through the process of horizontal integration (I am referring here to the acquisition of Acoustiguide by Espro) as well as by forging partnerships with specialty hardware and software providers (Feldman 2007; Griffin 2005; Young 2007). In 2007, the Espro Acoustiguide Group was looking to expand through the process of vertical integration by acquiring IDEA Information Systems Ltd, a company that develops digital archive management systems, and sells them to museums and libraries (Feldman 2007), but in the end the deal was not solidified. It is significant that the Espro Acoustiguide Group

wanted to acquire this company and expand the type of business services it offers.

What this speaks to is perhaps an attempt by the company to expand and offer a range of media services to museums, as an *integrated* company (something that I will look at in Chapter 3).

Organizationally, looking at the evolution of the company's product creation, financing, promotion and distribution, we can see what Jeremy Rifkin observed of the cultural industries, mainly that, "Companies are revolutionizing product designs to reflect the new emphasis on services. Instead of thinking of products as fixed items with set features and a one-time sale value, companies now think of them as 'platforms' for all sorts of upgrades and value-added services...the product becomes the cost of doing business rather than a sale item in and of itself" (2005, 368-9). This allows for a long term relationship to be established with the client, as more services are then going to be sold while the client is still using that product (*ibid*). This is reflected in the way Acoustiguide's products have developed. As we have seen, the initial audio tour product, which consisted of the creation of an audio script and a device on which to play that script, has been built upon to include additional products and services that work in conjunction with the script/tech platform, which are advertised as "value-added" services. In the specific case of Acoustiguide these are the Positioning and Orientation technology, the MyCollection system, visitor research applications, as well as various other interactive experiences, such as bookmarking and interactive games, which can be added to the more advanced multi-media devices. The audio tour thus no longer monopolizes the usage of the technological device. And as we have seen, museums have been known to be interested in

providing audio guides to their visitors due to the some of these other services (Gyroscope 2008).

Likewise, in addition to hardware and content goods Acoustiguide provides services to their clients, which are part of what Acoustiguide VP Kathryn Glass refers to as the “audio package” (Glass 2008a). These include project management, crowd control services, the training of existing staff or hiring staff on behalf of museums, equipment maintenance and installation, marketing support, and visitor research (Espro Acoustiguide 2007a). By providing their museum clients additional services through a packaged approach, Acoustiguide strives to develop and maintain active working relationships with museum personnel, something that can continue with existing contracts and perhaps lead to new contracts in the future. Glass states that, “it’s very typical for people to maintain relationships with museum professionals, and museum professionals move among museums. If you have a relationship with an educator or a curator at one museum, and that person goes to another museum, it’s not uncommon that that person can call you and say ‘look I’m working on another project, would you like to do such and such’” (2008a). Thus, although the process of acquiring large contracts is generally formal and competitive, it is still possible to secure contracts through networking. This suggests that the company is viewed to be an authoritative producer with high cultural capital, as their expertise in audio tour production continues to be sought out and asked for directly.

Maintaining relationships becomes increasingly important in an environment where contract acquisition has become formalized at most museums. Sending out RFPs or “requests for proposals,” a process also referred to as “tending,” is now a

standard procedure in publicly funded museums. Brian Porter, Senior Director of New Media at the Royal Ontario Museum explains:

...any cultural institution that's funded by the government...is going to a full and proper tender, to provide a fair competition in the marketplace. We can't be seen favouring one company or another, so we issue what is called a 'request for proposals.' You define in that what scope of project you are trying to do is. It might be simply a 35-40 minute audio experience based on a new exhibition...you would then send it to vendors for a response and give them a date by which they need to respond and then bids come in from various companies. Then you evaluate the proposals based on a series of points and a framework that allows you to treat each one the same. At the end of the day a committee makes a decision based on things like price, or length of time it takes to complete the project. There are various factors that get weighted. Price is not the only thing that determines the decision (2008a).

The Tate Modern, for example, had an audio guide contract with Acoustiguide. "When our contract with Acoustiguide went up for renewal," Jane Burton, Creative Director and Head of Content, Tate Media at the Tate explained, "we went to the European Tender because it was a very big contract"—European Law dictates that a fair tending process takes place if the value of the contract is over £150,000 (about \$300, 000) (University of Manchester 2007). "Acoustiguide pitched and Antenna pitched, and some other companies. They both did very well, but at the end of the day Antenna's pitch was slightly more creative and more competitive" (Burton 2008a).

Thus although there may be an existing relationship between a vendor, such as Acoustiguide, and a museum, it does not necessarily mean that that relationship will continue once a contract expires.

Looking at the way contracts are negotiated, at the Tate, for example, if there isn't a legal necessity to do a formal process, the process of contracting out work, is "fairly ad-hoc" (Burton 2008a). "Normally it's just going with people we've worked with before or who are recommended or whose work we've seen," states Burton. "It's about the strength of their ideas. We are willing to take risks with people. We often do that...Budget does come into it, but primarily it is believing in their creative abilities if they are a designer or a content producer and that they understand our vision and can work well with us" (Ibid.). There is a high value placed on creativity and creative content, as well as understanding the museum's vision. Understanding the museum's vision is particularly salient, as the content a vendor would produce would become part of the museums' rhetorical output, of what the museum is trying to portray to the public.

As optimal creativity in forms of content production is seen resulting from the right combination of skills (expertise in writing audio texts, for example) and ideas (new approaches to make educational content entertaining and/or inspiring), a networked approach to labour is often present in many companies that are part of the cultural industries (Rifkin 2005). Speaking of the film industry, Rifkin observes that, "by assembling expertise from a number of specialized companies, producers can find exactly the right combination of skills needed to make the specific film project a success" (Rifkin 2005, 363). The division of labour at Acoustiguide, and more

specifically the way the company assembles their product is networked in its approach to production. Acoustiguide has a wide network of writers and producers with whom they maintained relationships for years, who they employ on a project-project basis (Glass 2008b). As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, they contract out scriptwriting to freelancers, primarily chosen from public radio, as they are familiar with producing scripts for audio rather than wall-labels, which museum writers tend to be specialists in. This type of approach allows the company to match the most appropriate talent on a project-project basis, and it also lowers overhead costs. Another example of the networked division of labour at Acoustiguide is the company's partnerships with specialty hardware/software/content companies such as HP, lesswire AG, and Ubiquity Interactive. Increasingly Acoustiguide seems to be forming these types of partnerships rather than developing products through an in-house research and development team. This is likely the result of a more competitive market for audio platforms, as museums have much more choice in technological hardware, as well as content creation. As Rifkin has observed, "the networked approach to organizing commerce...allows the biggest translational companies to rid themselves of physical plants, equipment, and talent by creating strategic partnerships with suppliers to produce content.... companies stay on top by controlling finance and distribution channels while pushing off onto smaller entities the burdens of ownership and management of physical assets" (2005, 364). Although with only 90 full-time employees, Acoustiguide is a small multinational, it nonetheless employs the same tactics as its larger counterparts to control cost and continue to drive innovation forward. Forming partnerships, thus allows Acoustiguide to leverage the

expertise and creativity of other companies for themselves and control cost at the same time.

By contracting out the development of content, both writing and production, Acoustiguide essentially re-sells content to museums. Interestingly, as the cost of skilled freelance work is not high, museums can contract audio scripts or research to freelancers directly (Porter and Baylay 2009b). An important thing to note is that the company's existence is largely dependant on (1) the museum seeing value in and utilizing audio content in their educational programming and (2) outsourcing audio script production, as well as other technical and service aspects surrounding that production, to the company.

Outsourcing and Production Control

Unlike in many other cultural sectors, including libraries and archives, where outsourcing of creative services (media, design), technical, and management work (IT services, data production, facility management) has been increasing, we have, in some ways, seen an opposing trend in museums (Bell and Earl 2002; also see Mosco 2006 for a discussion of the increase of outsourcing within national borders). I see two main reasons for this development. Although libraries, archives, and museums are all knowledge producing institutions that disseminate a form of world understanding, the way they go about it is different. While libraries and archives collect sources of knowledge for lending/consultation thereby providing *access* to knowledge, museums function more like universities in the sense that they not only collect sources of knowledge for access, but they actively disseminate forms of

knowledge through interpretation and academic research. Knowledge producing institutions tend to see all aspects of their operations, including IT, cataloguing and classification of materials, as integral to the function of the organization and thus resist outsourcing (Bell and Earl 2002, 200). Speaking specifically of UK Museums, Bell and Earl state that:

The main areas of outsourcing in museums tend to be the traditional ones of catering and retail sales, where these functions are provided under contract by commercial contractors. *Even these functions have sometimes been brought back in-house, to ensure that they project the same ethos as the rest of the organization.* The other main areas for contracting out have been in the fields of conservation, design and marketing. This is particularly *the case where specialized resources are not available in-house*, and specific jobs are then contracted out. The smaller museums make more use of this facility, as they lack the range of staff....Larger museums will outsource specific jobs only when resources or specialisms in-house will not meet the need. One such case in all museums may be the manufacture of interactive displays (2002, 202, emphasis mine).

The first reason for resisting outsourcing is therefore, seeing the service as essential to the organization, or perhaps seeing it as becoming essential to the organization in the future, and requiring continual specialized knowledge (also see Griffin 2008). Brian Porter of the ROM, for example, prefers developing in-house talent, particularly in the area of media and technology (although the same trend can be observed with regards to interpretation):

For me it's important to have a core group of skill sets, particularly when you are talking technology, when you are talking programming. On the programming side, for example, the type of network and architecture that one develops for say the back of house, it's important that if you will write code and a program and develop scripting for a website that's compatible with the way the site is designed it's much better to be doing that with the guy that's going to be overseeing that for me and other people he has working on his team. For me to contract that out, that's going to present more problems than solutions, because that person on the outside is not going to know how we take a certain approach to API scripts, or to certain other ways of doing things. So it's much better that that person be trained in-house, so the communication is constant and they learn on site, on the premises. That is the strongest reason to have in-house talent (2008a).

This view is shared among many museum professionals working in media and technology. Nancy Proctor of the Smithsonian, who was formally with the audio company Antenna, reiterated Brian Porter's concerns about outsourcing at the Tate Hand Held Conference (September 4-5, 2008):

I would prefer not to outsource programming and other technical development work. For easy and inexpensive on-going maintenance, I'd rather keep the code and the technology in-house, or at most use open source systems which allow the museum to rely on a larger community to support ongoing development at minimum cost. Mobile museum interpretation is a low margin business for vendors, and the constant rate of change in the technology makes

it an unstable market; I'd hate to be stuck with a propriety system once the vendor has gone out of business, or is simply charging through the nose because I'm locked into their technology (Proctor and Alexander 2008).

Large museums with large budgets such as the ROM, Tate, and the Smithsonian are able to develop in-house talent more easily than smaller museums that often lack resources to hire additional staff, be it for research, interpretation, web development, etc. Porter states:

...we have on the website 4, 5 people, in-house. I can't make the case [for outsourcing] unless there is a particular reason to work with a third party; I don't really even go into the budget, unless there is a special thing that needs development ... When you have those skills in house you can tackle anything that comes along. When a department comes with a certain need, you need this done for the website. I have the means, because I have people here to come up with whatever it is they need (2008a).

As museums are stepping into the digital age maintaining an active web presence and specialty programming both for physical museum exhibitions and for online audiences (including the development of audio and video content) becomes increasingly important. The Tate, for example, is experimenting with new mobile technologies such as creating an audio tour for their Klimt exhibition at Tate Liverpool (May 30 – August 31, 2008) on an iPod Touch (Burton 2008a). They have also created a monthly online video magazine called TateShots in addition to numerous podcasts and multimedia content that is already available for users online.

Burton states:

We are trying to be ahead of the curve in serving film content, videos to audiences directly by using broadband. There are so many homes in this country and people are beginning to change their habits in terms of how they view television, for instance. The younger generation spends a lot of time online on YouTube, Facebook, etc., and watching TV online. There is an opportunity there for a gallery like Tate to be the author of our own content and then to deliver that directly to audiences around the world (2008a).

As technology becomes more user friendly, and more museum professionals are become technologically savvy, it becomes easier to create both web and mobile content in-house, even in small museums. There are currently multiple conferences world-wide devoted to cultural institutions and technology, which often feature workshops on creating media and content, such as podcasts or wikis. As Jane Burton noted in her keynote address at the Tate Hand Held Conference of 2008, "...[A]s barriers for entry to the realm of digital production are lowered, museums should seize the opportunity to control their own content, and consider cross-platforming at the outset" (2008b). What her words demonstrate, and what other museum professionals are clearly concerned with is the second hesitation towards outsourcing—*the control of content*.

There are two forms of content control: the control of the creative process of production and control of publication and distribution of the audio experience via copyright licensing. Creative control of audio content is sought by the museum to ensure that production output is consistent with the museums' vision, or in more popular terms, its brand. Roger Silverstone states that "museums are in the business

of communication. They offer ... a display of objects and artefacts which has been designed to educate, inform and entertain” (1996, 231). Similarly Bruce Ferguson notes that museum “exhibitions are publicly sanctioned representation of identity, principally, but not exclusively, of the institutions that present them. They are narratives which use art objects as elements in institutionalized stories that are promoted to an audience” (175). Wall texts, labels, catalogues, and I will add audio scripts and web presence, which complement the art on display are all types of rhetoric and are also examples of the exhibition’s link to its institution (Ibid). It is therefore imperative that any audio or media product promotes not only a particular exhibition, but the values or mission the museum.

In recent years, museums have become increasingly concerned with intellectual property law, which can come into play when acquiring and displaying media art, as it may appropriate copyrighted images from popular culture or run with the aid of computer programs the codes to which are owned by programmers or software developers. Likewise in audio production, copyright ownership has become a battleground between audio content producers and museums for similar reasons. As museums move more of their audio content online, create and display digital video, experiment with social media, and plan for future online outreach or education initiatives, they need to anticipate and plan for copyright ownership of any content that is developed for them. Distributing audio content in a variety of ways such as having the same audio content used as content on a traditional audio device, on a multimedia device, as user downloaded content directly to a PDA using broadband while in the museum, as well as having that content be available for download at

home using iTunes or directly from the museum's site, is referred to as "cross-platform" content distribution. Because of the ways copyright laws are structured in order for the museum to be able to "cross-platform" they would need to be the sole owner of the content or they would require copyright clearance from the other copyright owners, which they would need to pay for. In a discussion about copyright for cross-platform audio content at the Tate Handheld Conference, Nancy Proctor has noted,

...in earlier times in an effort to cut costs often rights were secured for music on narration on the basis of only including that material in an audio guide that is going to be used in very specific context. No chance of anyone else copying it and that did keep prices lower. But it is also now causing problems... we now have to go back and renegotiate, which is the most expensive way to get rights: to renegotiate for more rights (2008b).

By fully owning content museums are able to avoid being locked into the hardware or intellectual rights obligations of audio guide vendors, which frees them to be more innovative and repackage that content to other platforms. Brian Porter states:

More often than not we want to make sure that we do own all the content that is provided to us or created for us. We want to own it because it gives us the ability to use it on the web, use it in other ways, etc. It may be turned into a virtual exhibition ... There are many reasons why we'd want to own the copyright, but having secured copyright is a fundamental issue, generally. Occasionally it can be an issue where price prevents it, but generally, at the

end of the day, we wouldn't want to get into a relationship or an association where we couldn't own [the content] (2008a).

The interests of companies like Acoustiguide can therefore clash with those of the museum when it comes to content ownership, as each party wants as much control over content as possible.

In practice, the content of the audio production is often co-owned, meaning copyright is shared by both Acoustiguide and their museum client (Glass 2008a). However, more museums want to have full copyright of the content—or “work for order”—for which they are charged more (Burton 2008; Porter 2008; the term “work for order” is appropriated from Kathryn Glass 2008). Speaking of maintaining full copyright of content produced for the Tate, Burton states: “I don't think we ever hand over entirely to a third party when we are talking about interpretation or content that is ours. We had a big discussion about that when we went to a tender for our bigger contracts, but we wouldn't give on that. It was something that was absolutely, vitally important that we retain copyright, the intellectual property of any content creation” (2008a). The control of audio production through copyright plays a role in the move towards in-house production, as the museum can be sure that both the creative direction and later distribution of the content is entirely to their benefit. Small museums, that had to rely on outsourcing in order to minimize costs, may not have been able to purchase full copyrights in the past, but with the audio production becoming increasingly simpler to produce in-house and with consumers owning a variety of devices that can easily substitute for a vendor's technology there are more options for in-house production (see for example Alexander 2008).

Tightening control over content has a clear effect on the way companies such as Acoustiguide operate. Large contracts are harder to get, as more museums issue formal RFPs (Glass 2008a). It becomes increasingly challenging to find new clients (Glass 2008b). Acoustiguide has taken a number of steps to ensure their endurance in the market. As the first audio guide production company in the business they were able to leverage their professional expertise and develop an identifiable brand early on. To this day many people refer to any traditional audio guide as an “Acoustiguide.” Large museums continue to use Acoustiguide because of their reputation and endurance in the market, as sometimes things need to be developed quickly and efficiently without the learning curve associated with developing new in-house expertise. They have continued to include additional services as part of the “audio package” to ensure as smooth an experience for the museum as possible. Like many other cultural industry companies, they have internationalized their operations (see Hesmondhalgh 2002, 85). Their global reach and brand identity may prove beneficial in luring new clients in China, India and the Middle East where over a thousand museums are currently under construction. The company has also reached out to new markets, such as corporations to create audio guides for trade shows and other corporate demonstrations.

The internationalization of cultural industries, under the guise of globalization, has been named by some social critics as a form of cultural imperialism and hegemony, while others have seen the process of globalization as increasing the interconnectedness of different nations, where cultural differentiation takes form (Hesmondhalgh 2002; 174-6). In the present case, there is some merit to both

arguments. On the one hand whether producing an audio experience for a museum in India, China, the US or UK, the approach to production is similar. This means that with the exception of language differences, the experience of production is fundamentally the same. On the other hand, as the company maintains offices worldwide, they can connect with a local network of producers, script-writers, etc; differentiation in the type of content is therefore also present. In some countries visiting museums and art museums in particular is not as culturally ingrained as in Europe and North America. Museums in such countries are perhaps more likely to outsource work to outside companies as they may not have a sufficient number of knowledgeable staff or time to carry out these projects in-house. In addition, the institutional roots that strive to control symbolic production in the museum may not be as deep. Museums outside of Europe and North America may have different approaches to accessibility and digitization. New museums thus may not have the foresight to secure sole copyright for the audio interpretations produced, which become profitable for audio guide vendors. This would not necessarily be the case with satellite or *franchise* museums like the Guggenheim, which have brand standards to adhere to. Alternatively, new museums could learn from their predecessors and secure full-copy from the inception of a project; perhaps they will also have the foresight to hire in-house talent specializing in new media and interpretation production. This however remains to be seen, as most of these museums are yet to open. Although I do not examine this in my thesis (as I am focused on art museums), it is also important to note that there are differences between how different types of museums incorporate technology into their operations and programming.

Technology is now regarded as an essential part of museums function, as can be gleaned through the proliferation of IT and New Media departments. New Media departments are created due to museum needs to “go-digital,” to make the museum more accessible to broader audiences, particularly the younger generation who is working, learning and socializing online. Such departments have been increasing in museums in the last decade. The New Media Group at the ROM was created in 2000 and has expanded from the initial one-person operation it was to include multiple programmers, web developers and producers (Porter 2008a). The Tate launched a new department called Tate Media in 2006 through an online partnership with BT. The department is now responsible for the Tate’s broadband channel, online production, on and offline magazine publishing and digital interpretation projects (Tate Online 2006). These are just two examples in the world-wide trend that illustrate museums’ efforts to produce new media in-house for what Nancy Proctor has referred to as a “distributed museum” (2008b). The distributed museum has a physical base, but its content can be distributed globally; it secures copyright for content that can accommodate whatever, whenever, wherever (Ibid.). As previously stated, audio interpretation, online content and services, are viewed to be essential by museums; their production is thus increasingly moved in-house to meet current and future demands. However, this does not mean that there is no place for audio guide and interpretation providers such as Acousitguide. As Burton states, “I think we will always be keen to work with external companies on larger projects and use their expertise. But for a big organization like Tate, as we expand in the amount of content we produce, I think we will do more and more in-house as well” (2008). Whereas

before, audio companies were responsible for all aspects of audio guide production, currently fragmentation of production is occurring—some aspects are outsourced, while others are done in-house. Audio guides are now just one aspect of museums *audio content*, which now also includes video, online, and other multi-media forms. This content is produced on a project by project basis, with different parties coming together for short-term production, something seen across most cultural industries (Rifkin 2005). A change in the production process, both structurally and substantively, signifies a shift in the ways these companies are working and may affect the types of services they will provide museums in the future.

Summary

This chapter explored the nature of audio production in museums through a case study of the company Acoustiguide. It looked at why museums used and continue to use audio as a means of interpretation, and how this form of interpretation has changed from the idea of audio guides to audio content that can be packaged and presented across a variety of online and hand-held platforms. In this field of production, Acoustiguide occupies a position between the museum and the visitor/consumer. Their product is commissioned by the museum and becomes part of its institutional rhetoric. This case study illustrated how a cultural multinational company creates products for museums and how their business practices are shaping museum development, in this case the creation of internal departments to do similar work and museum's tightening of control over their output.

Museums use audio interpretation content in their educational programming, which at times can also be tied to their new media output, such as institutional blogs and other online programming highlights. They are interested in providing access to their educational programming to a wide variety of people, on multiple platforms, for no or little cost. Jenna Fleming of Boston's Museum of Fine Art spoke to this when she said, "the world is changing and our publishing mechanisms are changing tremendously, where we want to put those same multi-media stops [from the audio guides] on the web and podcast them, etc. There a real sense of 'let the content be free' and we are constrained right now by contracts that represented prior needs and prior times" (Fleming 2008). Although museums are undoubtedly tied to the economic system, their values are still shaped in opposition to it, specifically when it comes to education and curatorial programming. Companies such as Acoustiguide, however, are shaped by economics directly, and thus act from a place of economic rather than cultural interests.

Acoustiguide's cultural capital is found in (1) their knowledge of the audio medium, which is rooted in years of experience and brand building, and (2) their perception as *creatives*, as Jane Burton had asserted (see p 72), creativity and strength of ideas often ranks stronger than cost. As we have seen, Acoustiguide's creativity in script writing and production is often the result of sub-contracted freelance employees. What this means is that Acoustiguide is able to use its economic capital to secure more cultural capital through the hiring of freelance creatives in a networked approach to production. Their association with large innovative museums such as the MoMA also adds to their cultural capital through transference of the institution's

cultural capital. The most important thing to stress, however, is that the interests of Acoustiguide, as a company, are not the same as the interests of museums.

Acoustiguide's strictly economic interests are undeniable. This is gleaned by analyzing how the company operates. The fact that for some time the company was publicly traded, and withdrew from the alternative stock market for the sake of shareholder profits, also speaks to this, as does their expansion into the corporate sector to provide trade-show tours, a straying from their carved out cultural niche. Large, long term contracts bring the most revenue for the company (Hardman & Co. 2007), but are generally least advantageous to museums (Proctor 2008; Fleming 2008). Similarly, where museums want to fully own the content produced for them, Acoustiguide would likely prefer co-ownership. At the same time, the company's commitment to economic profit makes them excel in their line of business, producing, in my opinion, effective audio content in a highly structured way, which can be advantageous to museums under time constraints or with limited staff resources. What does this mean for the ongoing relationship between Acoustiguide and museums?

The needs of museums are clearly changing and in order to continue ongoing business relationships, Acoustiguide will likely need to adapt to these changing needs. We have already seen the company begin to produce content that is separate from hardware. Similarly, as they are doing at the MoMA, they are producing for multiple platforms. However, that does not free the museum from long term contracts. At the end of her keynote presentation at the Tate Handheld Conference

Nancy Proctor had added in a “Bonus Slide for Vendors” in order to clarify the current interests of museums to vendors. She said:

What we really *really* want is: (1) to own our content and quite often provide it for free to the public, (2) we want to share with you our and your best practises on building mobile experiences, (3) training—we might also want to bring some of those skills in-house and get training from your experts, (4) we would really love to have a cross platform content management system, (5) some applications from time to time for our mobile experiences, (6) hardware if it supports web standards of content and comes with a guaranteed upgrade path, as we don’t want to be stuck with outdated devices that we can’t fix, (7) A better business model to accommodate all of this, and (8) a partner (Proctor 2008b).

Museums do not want to completely forgo vendor expertise, but they want the nature of the relationship changed to reflect current realities. Museums *are* and will continue to move work in-house as they see it as essential—this is how knowledge producing institutions operate (Ball and Earl 2002). They want audio production training for their staff, which is something that Acoustiguide could begin to provide in addition to the visibility and audio guide administration training they already provide. Museums will continue to push for full content ownership, and this needs to be accommodated. One solution where both Acoustiguide and the museum would be happy is to find a sponsor for the guide to pay for the extra cost associated with extra rights. As long as the company continues to evolve with the changing needs of

museums, it is bound to retain its current cultural and economic capital and continue to be viewed as and hired as a legitimate provider of audio interpretation content.

The following chapter will look at another company that is often hired by museums, Lord Cultural Resources, in a different, yet interrelated context of museum organizational changes and adoption of globalization practices.

Chapter 3

Consultancy and Museum Globalization

A Case Study of Lord Cultural Resources

In 2013 France will no longer be the only place in the world where one can visit the Louvre, one of the world's most iconic museums. The Cultural District of Saadiyat Island (translated as Happiness Island) in Abu Dhabi in the Middle East will have its own Louvre, construction of which broke ground in late May 2009. After paying the French government over one billion dollars for the use of the Louvre's brand name, collection, and staff resources in the guise of advice and training, the Louvre Abu Dhabi is being built by the French "starchitect" Jean Nouvel (Riding 2007; Saadiyat Island 2009). This Louvre "satellite" will be a universal museum—the first of its kind in the Middle East—with art from Europe, Asia, and the Middle East (Whitelaw 2008). In addition to the Louvre, the Cultural District of Saadiyat Island will also be home to a Guggenheim museum of contemporary art, designed by Frank Gehry; a Zayed National Museum designed by Foster + Partners; a performing arts centre designed by the Iraqi-born British architect Zaha Hadid; a Maritime Museum designed by Tadao Ando; and, an extensive exhibition grounds for biennales and other major temporary exhibitions. As their website states, "it will be the only place in the world to house architecture designed by five individual Pritzker Prize winners" (Saadiyat Island 2009). A beach, marina, retreat, golf course, and multiple hotels and are also planned for the Island. Furthermore, New York University will be building a campus there (ibid.).

Saadiyat Island promises to be a “daring cultural Xanadu,” as one reporter had termed it (Fattah 2007). Thought up to be both a tourist attraction and a long-term economic and peace-building initiative for the Middle-East, it is the largest cultural project in the world. An Abu Dhabi tourism official has stated “This is not just about tourism; it also has global cultural dimensions. We believe the best vehicle for crossing borders is art. And this region is in need of such artistic initiatives” (quoted in Fattah 2007). Following in the steps of Bilbao the industry of art museums has gone global (Riding 2007). An influx of high culture is a lucrative venture for governments seeking to put their city on the global map. As noted by van den Bosch, “New architecture performs the same function as big travelling exhibitions and retrospectives of great artists that bring a museum or city into the limelight of the worldwide media” (van den Bosch 2005, 82). There is a trend for baby boomers, in particular, to seek out cultural experiences in lieu of beach destinations (Pachner 2008). Speaking in the context of the development of the cultural district of Saadiyat Island, Barry Lord, co-president of the company Lord Cultural Resources, stated: “Cultural tourists are wealthier, older, more educated, and they spend more” (quoted in Fattah 2007). They also tend to stay longer at their destination, therefore having a larger economic impact on local communities (Pachner 2008).

The “renting” of the Louvre name to Abu Dhabi was met with resistance by a group of Louvre curators, who were joined in their protest by 4,700 citizens horrified at the thought of selling off France’s national museum (Riding 2007). Their pleas against this deal, however, fell on deaf ears. As Riding reports, “the government did not back off. Not only was the payoff dizzying [1.3 billion dollars], but top French

politicians decided it was time to make better use of one of the country's greatest assets. They concluded that if France did not cash in, others would" (2007, 2).

Cultural services and institutions can translate into tangible economic benefits not only for museums themselves, but for communities and governments. It is of course naïve to assume that every community will benefit from a new cultural institution. Despite the success of the Guggenheim in Bilbao in attracting cultural tourists and re-generating the city, research into the economy of Bilbao pre-and post-Guggenheim reveals that in the traditional working-class neighbourhoods unemployment is still rampant, and is on the rise (see case study synopsis in Fraser 2006). But, this is not to suggest that museums cannot revitalize their immediate local communities by their presence. For example, the Brooklyn Museum of Art in its "newly refurbished" state has focused on attracting audiences specifically from Brooklyn and being a cultural hub for the borough (Kennedy and Vogel 2004). Art is being used as a vehicle for change, both economic and social. Speaking of the shifting boundaries of art museums and exhibitions, Riding noted, "While this move is propelled principally by money and image, if the result is to increase appreciation of—and participation in—the creative process, it can only be positive" (2007, 2).

The Saadiyat Island Cultural District is a great example to lead us into further discussion of museum transformation trends and the means by which some of these changes are coming about. The project is iconic in that it represents a number of cross-cultural trends in the global museumscape, most notably: (1) the practice of hiring world-renown architects to design museum buildings; (2) the practice of using high culture to attract further economic investment into a region, both through

cultural tourism and through the creation of a “clean and stable” image for future investors and foreign intellectual workers; (3) an internationalization and standardization of museum building and operation standards; (4) museum branding and the franchising of museum brands; (5) the use of culture as a means of economic development; and, (6) the use of global museum planning and consulting firms as aids in this process of museum creation. The museum planning and consulting firm Lord Cultural Resources has been, and to date continues to be, involved in the planning of Saadiyat Island’s cultural district and its museums (Ross 2007; Pachner 2008). The company has worked on the initial concept for the Louvre Abu Dhabi (in the past it has also been involved in projects at the Louvre in France); it has been also been instrumental in planning and implementation processes of the three other museums in the district by developing strategic and master plans and holding architectural competitions (Ibid).

International planning and consulting firms are one of the key agents in the globalization of museum practice. Such firms help museums transform themselves by giving advice not only on how these museums should be organized structurally but also internally—how they should look and act to achieve their goals—an expertise that is not generally available in scholarly institutions (Vogel 2005). Through a case study of the company Lord Cultural Resources, a small Canada-born firm with wide global reach, this chapter seeks to analyze the role cultural consulting firms play in the current global museumscape.

Why Enlist the Help of Consultants?

There has been a gradual shift in the cultural tourism market, of which museums are a part: the *visitor* has become a *consumer* (Foley and McPherson 2000, emphasis mine). The museum is now concerned not only with its collection preservation and research, but with its image/ brand and consumer satisfaction (Ibid.) In addition, competition for decreasing governmental funding or an influx of corporate sponsorship means that museums “not only have to know who [their] audience is, but how to attract and effectively engage the next generation of support” (Vogel 2005). This can be gleaned from the number of regular visitor research studies undertaken by major museums, by the various grandiose architectural transformations world-wide, carried out to make the museum building into a destination, as well as a general trend to focus on museum marketing and branding. Everything is designed to entice the visitor to not only visit the museum, but to also consume whilst inside the museum’s cafes, restaurants, shops, and special exhibitions, which usually have their own mini-shop at the exit. As Burton and Scott poignantly note, “the model of the public good is slowly giving way to a model of culture as commodity and an industry; museums, once asked the preserve of single narratives, are now being asked to provide—and to market—multiple narratives and multiple experiences for ever hungrier and more fickle leisure customers” (2007, 53). This shift happened gradually, as in the West—particularly in North America—governmental museum subsidies decreased and museums were left to make-up the difference in operating costs on their own. Whereas 25 years ago museums were operating on 80% government subsidies, today these subsidies are dropping to the 50-60% mark (Dexter

Lord quoted in Pachner 2008). Over a third of a museum's operating funds must be self-generated; this goes up to two-thirds for non-collecting institutions (Pachner 2008). Denise Cole of the London Metropolitan Business School notes that, "To be well-intentioned and functioning is no longer considered a sufficient reason for continued government support" (Cole 2008, 178). In order to generate the remainder 40-50% of operating funds museums needed to become more profit-driven, a change that has been met with some hesitation in the museum world (see discussion in Chapter 1). To change their image, attract sponsors and/or new audiences, museums have begun to hire outside cultural consultants and/or specialty marketing firms who have the branding expertise museums can lack (Vogel 2005). Gail Harrity, CEO of the Philadelphia museum, who hired the cultural marketing firm LaPlaca Cohen to design and implement an advertising campaign for their museum's Salvatore Dali exhibition, noted, "It's always been important to have larger and more diverse audiences, but these days you can best achieve these results through innovative marketing efforts" (quoted in Vogel 2005).

Lack of funding, however, is not the only impetus for the changes in the way museums are operating. Alternatively many new museums are being built, some of which are fully or almost fully supported by their governments (at least in the museums' neophyte years), one of the first of such being the Guggenheim in Bilbao (Klebnikov 2001), and one of the more recent examples being the museums being built on Saadiyat Island. These museums serve not only cultural tourists; they have the dual role of being ambassadors of the stability and development of their region. Because art operates in the public sphere it can function as a form of media that

carries messages from the institutions responsible for its presentation to a public audience. A flourishing art scene is taken as a sign of a free and progressive society (Fox 2001). The hosting of biennales and the construction of art museums is part of a larger strategy of putting a city or region on the international map. In an interview Hussain al-Nowais, a prominent Abu Dhabi business man has stated, “people see Abu Dhabi as slow, conservative, and complex.... We will prove to them that Abu Dhabi is the land of opportunity and the land of the future,” (quoted in Whitehall 2008). In the same light Mubarak al Muhairi, Director General of the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority has stated, “When the decision was taken [to build Saadiyat Island], it wasn’t about the financial returns... In 20 years, we will see the results create a generation that is open and really part of the world. We will also communicate the region to the world” (Ibid.). The model of museum as a vehicle of the public good is seemingly still alive.

The strength of museums is their ability to “offer the real thing,” states Ted Silberberg, senior consultant, market and financial planner at Lord (quoted in Herrmann 2006). Echoing an ethos familiar to cultural consultants, Arthur Cohen of the cultural marketing firm LaPlaca Cohen notes, “Art is a code that can and should be broken and museums are not always good at communicating that code to the outside world. It’s a translation process” (quoted Vogel 2005). The challenge then becomes to leverage what the museum has to offer and make it useful and accessible to multiple publics. In a conference presentation titled “Museums as a Linkage of the Human Spirit” at the World Congress on Environmental Design for the New Millennium in Seoul, South Korea, Barry Lord articulated that there are six museum

functions: collecting, documentation and conservation, which have to do with heritage preservation; and study, display and interpretation, which have to do with public programming (2000). The two sets of functions are in tension with one another. It is important to properly manage a museum he said, “so that the museum does successfully communicate not only with the audience of today (by providing its public programs) but also with its visitors and users into the indefinite future” (Ibid.). Museums need not only draw in audiences; they also need to provide those audiences with an enjoyable experience, entice them to consume in the shops and cafes, and hopefully have them to come back again. In addition, they have to care for and conserve precious works for future generations, which can sometimes clash with their need to make objects accessible to audiences (McClellan 2003). This requires a change in traditional museum thinking; it requires entrepreneurial planning. What is not presently working in current operations and why? How should museums go about changing? What should they do first? This is why cultural consulting companies like Lord became sought after by museums and other cultural institutions. A consultant brings “an outside point of view, facilitation skills, and a broad perspective on museum and cultural trends” (Dexter Lord and Market, 2007). Cultural consultants assist existing museums with strategic and business planning, branding, and various other tasks, such as running idea-generating workshops and focus groups with museum staff. When it comes to planning new museums, particularly in places without available expertise of what needs to go into the planning of a museum, consultants become particularly influential. This is why the rest of this chapter

analyzes the practice of one of the biggest cultural consulting firms: Lord Cultural Resources.

Lord Cultural Resources Business and Market Profile

Lord Cultural Resources is in the business of “creating cultural capital,” which they define as “the value created as a result of the maximization of cultural resources, which by definition is the tangible and non-tangible aspects of human expression” (Dexter Lord 2006). The main goal of the company is to help museums adapt to the environment of the 21st century (Lord 2000); they help “to create and re-create museum sites” (*Museum Maestros* 2007). Speaking of the many projects Lord Cultural Resources has been involved with Gail Dexter Lord states, “We’ve been part of a movement to change museums and other cultural institutions to make them more populist, better used, more responsive” (*Museum Maestros* 2007, 2:34-2:48). The company was founded in 1981 by Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord in response to a perceived need for an in depth understanding of what museum planning constituted (Lord 2008). From 1976-81 Barry Lord was working in the Museums Assistance programs for the National Museums of Canada, in Ottawa, at first as a consultant for specialized museum programs, including capital assistance and exhibition assistance and then as Assistant Director for all of the Museum Assistance Programs (Ibid.). Lord states:

When I took over the Capital Assistance program ... it had a great deal of trouble ... Things were running over budget, or buildings were being built, which were obviously too large to be managed, or too small to accommodate

the growth that had happened even since the project was conceived, and all kinds of internal problems, real design malfunctions, in what were really badly built projects, despite the fact that you have good architects and good people with good intentions all around... (Ibid).

Instead of handing out million-dollar project grants for museum developments immediately, on Lord's suggestion smaller \$50,000-\$100,000 grants began to be given for project planning prior to full grants to fund an entire project, to act as a control for the rest of the project. However, what Barry Lord found was that not many people knew what constituted museum planning. Lord states:

There were lots of talented people around: there were designers, engineers, architects, museum professionals, curators, etc, all of them knew a piece of it, but nobody knew how it fit together. So I began to develop a general theory of that, and gradually over those five years, found that I was going to meetings where people were saying 'That was great. Now we see how it all fits together. I wish you've been here a few years ago; you would have saved us a lot of time and money' (2008).

This spawned the idea for the company but also for the book *Planning our Museums*, which documented what Lord and his team learned about museum planning during those four-five years on the job, a project that was proposed by Lord and started within the structure of Ottawa's Museum Assistance Program (later re-published under the title *The Manual of Museum Planning*). Barry Lord ended up leaving the program after continual government cutbacks were jeopardizing programs he spent five years building up (Ibid.). Once the company was started, the program in Ottawa

enlisted the Lords' help to edit the book on museum planning. Gail Dexter Lord, who started her career as an art critic and activist, edited that text. When discussing the beginning of their company in an interview Dexter Lord stated, "Barry knew museums from the inside out, while I knew them from the outside in" (Steed 2004, A18). Meaning that while Lord's expertise at the time stemmed from helping museums make the most of the grants they were given, from making sure the resources they had were well-allocated; Dexter Lord's expertise was based on observation of museum practices while reviewing exhibitions and from seeing how a museums' collections are being used by its publics. Dexter Lord thus became an expert in marketing, branding and visitor research, which as we have seen is a key component of museum planning in the 21st century (Pachner 2008). In the past quarter century the company has expanded dramatically from the two person consulting business it initially was. Having pioneered their business, Lord Cultural Resources is currently the largest museum and cultural planning firm worldwide. It now operates internationally with over 1700 completed assignments in 45 countries (Lord Cultural Resources 2009).

The company is fully owned by Gail Dexter Lord and Barry Lord, with Dexter Lord being a majority shareholder. There are a number of incorporations in other countries, which makes it easier to operate on an international level. Both Lord International and Lord Canada are based in the international headquarters in Toronto and are incorporated in Canada (Lord 2008). Lord Cultural Resources operates in the US via Lord US, which is owned by Lord International. There are also several companies in Europe, whose business structure is based on partnerships, such as

Lordcultura in Spain, and Lordculture and Lordeurop, in France and all of Europe respectively. “Beyond that,” Lord explains, “we have registration in Hong Kong and in Singapore and we now have a partnership in Beijing, which we call SinoLord (although it has a proper and longer name in Chinese), and that’s through a partnership” (Ibid.) Thus Lord has a number of partnerships, as well as the centrally-owned company. In the past two years, Lord International has also established a recruitment company for museum professionals called Lord Cultural Recruitment, in partnership with Lord’s European manager (Ibid). The last aspect of the business is Lord Publishing, which is handled by Altamira Press.

Geographically, Lord Cultural Resources has five offices in Toronto, New York, Paris, Madrid, and Beijing, which is shared with Lord’s Beijing partners, as well as a project office in Manama, Bahrain in the Middle East (Lord 2008). There are also two single-person office outposts in Ottawa and the White Rock, BC (Lord 2009). Since my interview with Barry Lord, the company has re-established an office in San Francisco, which is a single-person outpost, and opened a project office in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia (Lord 2009). The company has between 40-45 full-time staff, as well as a number of interns (Lord 2008.). In addition, many of the projects that Lord undertakes require the formation of partnerships with architects, engineers, and exhibition designers, on a project by project basis (Ibid.). Barry Lord refers to the company as a *micro-multinational*, referencing the fact that they do not have a large number of people, but are spread all over the world (Lord 2008). Dexter Lord and Lord are co-presidents. Two Executive Vice Presidents are in charge of Exhibition Development and Facility Planning respectively. There is also a European manager

and a US manager, who also work as senior consultants. There is a ranking of principals within the company as well: senior consultants are the highest rank, and then there are consultants and at the lower end research consultants (Ibid.). The rates for services vary according to the consultant's rank. There is an hourly rate and a weekly rate. The hourly rate is between \$80 and \$300, with the average being \$150.

Internally, the structure of Lord Cultural Resources is divided into four departments: Facility Planning, Exhibition Development, Management Consultancy, and Recruitment. Facility Planning was the initial driving force of the company, and it still generates the most revenue (Ibid.) The Facility Planning department is responsible for functional programs for buildings, facility strategies, hosting architectural competitions, and as Lord puts it "is generally involved with everything related to museum buildings" (Ibid.). Lord Cultural Resources added the Management Consultancy Department to its roster of services almost immediately after Facility Planning took off. The department works with museums on the business and management side, providing feasibility studies, business plans, master plans, strategic plans, and consultations with boards and staff. After a few years Lord added a Department of Exhibition Development, which expanded from the interpretive planning services they were already offering. The Exhibition Development department plans, designs, and manages exhibition projects from initial concept to opening day, and it is also involved in the circulation of exhibitions (Ibid.). The last department in the parent company is Lord Cultural Recruitment, which was added in late 2007. It is responsible for recruiting museum professionals from various departments—middle level managers, curators, conservators, security staff, etc.—

who are looking for a job or are interested in relocation. “We’re building up [a] database [of possible candidates] and using it to provide recruitment services ... especially when we’re developing new museums in the Middle East or other places where new museums are developing,” states Barry Lord (2008).

Competition for Lord Cultural Resources, particularly for facility planning, stems from architecture firms (Lord 2008). Some firms deal with all types of architecture, but more firms are beginning to specialize in museum and heritage sites and are adding museum planning professionals to their staff: Lundholm Associates Architects (2009) of Toronto, Ontario, At Large (2009), Barker Langam (2009), and Brennan Design LLP (2009) of London, UK are examples of architecture firms that branched out into museum planning and exhibition design. There are, however, other companies on the market that offer similar services to Lord Cultural Resources. Gyroscope Inc of Oakland, California offers museum planning and exhibition design services (Gyroscope 2008). Los Angeles based Economic Research Associates, who have nine additional offices world-wide, offers “real estate, entertainment and leisure, and land use policy and planning,” which includes museum planning (ERA 2008). Sydney-based Museum Planning Services Australia (2009) and International Conservation Services (2009) both offer museum planning and interpretive planning services, with the latter offering heritage conservation services, as well. White Oak Associates (2000) of Marblehead, Massachusetts specializes in museum and theatre planning; and, Gerard Hilferty (2008) and Associate of Athens, Ohio offers interpretive planning, exhibition design, feasibility studies, architectural programming, etc. Specialty design firms such as Bruce Mau Design (2009), based in

Toronto with an office in Chicago, and LaPlaca Cohen (2009), based in New York with an office in Los Angeles, also offer competition in the realm of branding, marketing, communications, strategic planning, audience research, and other special projects. Some of these companies, such as Economic Research Associates exceed Lord in size (although ERA does not exclusively focus on museums and cultural institutions, like Lord does), while others operate on smaller scale, working predominantly with their respective national institutions. Although Lord is the largest firm specializing specifically in museums and cultural institutions, it is not the only firm doing that type of work. It is also not the very first firm of its kind, as Gerard Hilferty and Associates was established in 1971 (Hilferty 2008). Lord Cultural Resources is most definitely the first “international” firm of its kind. The company is well-recognized internationally as experts. Although most contracts for Lord are acquired through a competitive bidding process (see Chapter 2 for an overview of competitive bidding), international recognition has increased the percentage of non-competitive bid contracts (Lord 2008). Lord states, “Gradually more museums come to us and want us directly without a competitive bidding situation. However, the vast majority of our clients of course, even if they know they want us, have to go through a competitive bidding process, because they are public or quasi public institutions or because they are using public funds, so mostly they have to go through some sort of a competitive bidding process” (Ibid). In the past non-competitive bidding has yielded between 5% and 10% of all contracts. Currently that figure is between 15% and 20% (Ibid.).

Speaking about what he believes differentiates Lord Cultural Resources from their competitors Barry Lord asserts,

There is an enormous amount of competition world-wide, although we are the largest firm in our specialization. And, I think we are the only firm that combines everything. The main watch-word we have is precisely *integration*. That is to say, when we get a job, for example in India, where we are doing the development of an historic building into a museum, we've done the facility planning side, we are now doing the exhibition design, but we are also very conscious of and looking at the financial operation, the business planning side of it. So it's very much a joint, integrated service that we provide. A very large number of our competitors usually are not integrated like that (2008, emphasis mine).

Being able to offer a range of integrated services can prove to be an advantage. However more firms are moving in the same direction of *integration* as Lord in the types and range of services they offer. Yet one unique aspect of Lord Cultural Resources, which helps solidify the company's presence internationally, is Lord Publishing. Although other companies, like White Oak Associates, Economic Research Associates, and Gyroscope Inc, Bruce Mau Design and LaPlaca Cohen present at conferences and publish papers to increase their presence and showcase their expertise, as Lord does, Lord Cultural Resources is the only company that has an extensive publishing history, and has seen their manuals become incorporated into the very fabric of the museum profession.

Dexter Lord and Lord began publishing manual texts at roughly the same time they started the company. The first text, titled *Planning our Museums*, was commissioned through the Museum Assistance Program for which Barry Lord had worked in the late 70s. The text fused together everything that Barry Lord and his colleagues had learned about museum planning five years on the job. It was published by the National Museums of Canada in both English and French in 1983, two years after Gail and Barry Lord had started Lord Cultural Resources (Lord 2008). Barry Lord observed, "This was the world's first book on museum planning. The first systematic text on the subject; there were a few bits and pieces, articles that you could sort of construe about the subject matter, but really it wasn't worth publishing a bibliography" (Ibid.). Orders for the book began to come in immediately from all over the world. An Australian running a very similar grant program to the one Lord was Assistant Director of in Canada ordered one hundred copies in order to hand out to museums seeking grants. Lord came to the realization that the problem of museum planning was global and not just Canadian (Ibid). The book put Lord Cultural Resources on the international map. "It was great. It did a whole lot of work for us," Lord said (2008). However, it went out of print in the late in 1980s (Ibid.). By that time Lord Cultural Resources was doing business internationally, including working for the British Government on a study of one hundred British museums focusing on cost management and budget analysis. After that study was complete the British Government decided to publish the results as a book under the government publisher HMSO (Her Majesty's Stationary Office). The book, titled *The Cost of Collecting*,

was published in 1989 and quickly sold out, leading to subsequent editions of the text being re-printed (Lord 2008).

During the late 1980s and early 1990s Margaret Thatcher was driving HMSO into the private sector and they saw a market for books such as *The Cost of Collecting*. HMSO then came to Lord and asked if they had anything else that could be made into a book. Since *Planning Our Museums* was out of print and the demand for it was still high, HMSO republished that text under the title *The Manual of Museum Planning* (which is currently in its 3rd edition) (ibid.). After the successful sales the book achieved once again, Lord Cultural Resources under HMSO began to publish other museum manuals. In 2001 HMSO traded publishing rights for Lord's titles to Altamira Press, which Barry Lord sees as beneficial for the company (Ibid.). Lord Cultural Resources now has five manuals on the market: *The Manual of Museum Planning*, *The Manual of Museum Management*, *The Manual of Museum Exhibitions*, *The Manual of Museum Learning*, and *The Manual of Strategic Planning for Museums*, as well as *The Cost of Collecting*. The manuals and the concepts within them, such as the zoning system of museum space, have become standards in the museum industry. *The Manual of Museum Planning*, *The Manual of Museum Management*, and *The Manual of Museum Exhibitions*, are used as teaching texts in United States and Canadian universities Museum Studies programs and courses (Lord Cultural Resources 2008). *The Manual of Museum Management* is used in Ivy League institutions such as Brown, Columbia, and Harvard, as well as our own Université de Montréal. The use of the Lord manuals as teaching texts familiarizes the next generation of museum professionals with the way Lord sees museums

transforming and with the company itself, making Lord a household name in the industry.

The services offered by Lord Cultural Resources are divided into three categories on their company website: visioning, planning and implementation⁴ (Lord Cultural Resources 2008 and 2009). The company works with existing institutions and is also involved in developing new institutions. It is focused on content, concept, and strategy services and as such offers strictly creative and intellectual work rather than the sale of specific hardware products. “They [the Lords] tell you what shape a museum should be,” states Robert Fulford (quoted in *Museum Maestros* 2007). The range of the scope and integration of the company’s services is perhaps best illustrated by their involvement with the development of new museums, which they see as building understanding, broadening co-operation between people, benefiting entire communities, as well as bringing financial benefits (Dexter Lord 2006; Knezevic 2002). There is a lot of research that goes into planning new museums both structurally and substantively. Speaking of enlisting Lord’s services for the future World Trade Centre Museum in New York, Amy Weiss, Exhibition Developer of the World Trade Centre Memorial Foundation, stated:

⁴ Visiting the company’s site most recently I have noticed that they have updated and re-structured the presentation of the services they offer. Currently the services are divided into seven categories: Strategy and Management, Organizational Development, Facilities and Buildings, Exhibitions, Cultural Development, Recruitment and Training. In the overview for their services the company states, “Our professional services are delivered using our three core competencies,” which are Visioning, Implementation and Planning (see Lord Cultural Resources 2009). With the exception of Training, it is not the services, but their presentation on the website that has changed.

We needed someone like Lord to help to bring a professional view of what is a museum and what is the potential of a museum and the fact that it is more than an exhibition centre, but it's a place that has a curatorial approach to enhance research, it has archives, it has alliances with institutions outside of itself, so that it forwards our understanding and doesn't just reflect what happened that day. (quoted in *Museum Maestros* 2007)

Substantively what Lord Cultural Resources does for potential museums is help convert ideas into public learning institutions (Appelbaum quoted in *Museum Maestros* 2007). Structurally, they guide new museums through the various phases of planning and construction. For example, Lordeurop—the European subsidiary of Lord Cultural Resources—has recently completed an analysis for a future Latvian Contemporary Art Museum, consisting of an operations strategy, a business plan, and technical and economic substantiation. As stated in their presentation of the study, their objectives were to “(1) build a strong cultural concept that stands for national identity; (2) help establish a shared strategic vision with all stakeholders; (3) have a profound understanding of the operational dimension of the future institution, in terms of staffing, operations and business plan; and, (4) suggest a model for the management and running of the institution, in alignment with its specific requirements,” (Lordeurop 2009). A vision and a mission statement were presented as part of the institutional plan, stressing the museum's service to the public, the importance of meaningful interpretation, and multidisciplinary programs “that will enhance urban cultural life in Riga and whole Latvia” (Ibid.). A news release by SIA

Jaunrīgas attīstības uzņēmums, the developer of Andrejsala, a former commercial port district where the Museum will be situated, stated:

In the consultants' view, the success of the museum would largely depend on the content provided in it and on the museum's readiness to carry out a convincing educational and social function, while offering a collection that corresponds with the core concepts and objectives set forth for the LMCA... [Paul] Alezraa pointed out that one should develop a sustainable museum instead of just coming up with something fashionable yet lasting but a few years. The museum's concept ought to be intelligible and demonstrate the institution's physical, intellectual and social accessibility to every member of society (Andrejsala.lv 2009).

If this vision for the project, as developed by Lordeurop, is accepted as authoritative, it then directs its planning, and as such has a strong effect on the direction the economic development of the region.

In their plan for the future Latvian Museum of Contemporary Art, Lordeurop suggested eight areas of focus for the content and programs of the Museum: (1) the collection, which will include a permanent exhibition and visible storage areas; (2) temporary exhibition spaces, one large and one small; (3) a restoration centre, to restore artworks and train staff; (4) "art in process," which includes artist residencies, workshops and meetings with artists for the public; (5) a learning centre, for schools as well as adult continuing education classes; (6) a children's museum, with special family areas and exhibitions; (7) museum 2.0, the museum as it will be represented online; and, (8) general visitor services, such as shops, a restaurant, auditorium,

information desk, etc (Lordeurop 2009). Locations for all of these areas, as well as others reserved for staff only were included in a separate zoning model and facility strategy. Estimated attendance and hours of operation were included in an operations plan. The business plan, another separate element, consisted of projected operating revenues over a period of three years, and included private-public partnership options to cover operating costs of the museum.

The third aspect of Lord's business is implementation, which would include aid in carrying out the plans and vision for a museum, including hosting architectural competitions, assisting clients in negotiations, project management, and training of staff. It may also include playing the role of intermediary between a number of stakeholders, such as a museum architect and a government financing the project; for example "to find a balance between the desire for national identities and architectural vision," as they had to do for the City of Culture in Galicia, Spain with the world-renown architect Peter Eisenman (*Museum Maestros* 2007). Lord Cultural Resources sees museum collections as rooted in the specific history of places and identities, yet these roots can then be made to have a universal appeal (Ibid.). The company predict that future museums will focus on concepts, for example "diaspora" or "human rights" rather than specific collections (Knezevic 2002), which they see as adding an element of universality to a museum. The concept of universality, however, can be seen as going hand in hand with a type of cultural capital the company is involved in creating, something that I will explore in more depth in the following pages.

Consulting in the Cultural Industries

Lord Cultural Resources' business is predominantly focused on providing their museum clients with the service of information. Lord is a consultancy; their involvement with and influence on cultural production is thus predominantly in the form of knowledge or interpretation of information, which their clients regard as authoritative. Consultancy is a unique service in the cultural industries, as it can drive industry change in often unnoticed ways (Wood 2002). Consultancies are a form of what Wood terms knowledge-intensive-services (KIS's), which are private, for-profit companies whose services are oriented towards business and non-business organizations (3). However, Wood writes that such services "exclude knowledge-intensive consumer services such as educational, information or cultural activities" (2002, 3). Although Lord is a consultancy, it is involved with the production of cultural activities, but for organizations and not consumers. Cultural consultancies like Lord, which operate on an international level, influence the direction of museum transformations through client-consultancy exchanges.

Wood writes that the growth of consultancies and their influence reflects commercial changes, such as internationalization and increasing market uncertainty (24). Museums are one of the many organizations that are in need of aid to adapt to societal changes. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, museums are currently in a state of flux, often balancing competing interests. For instance, although most museums seek to expand their audiences, to make their collections and programming accessible, they are sometimes uncertain about how to go about doing that. How can they serve their communities? Should there be more focus on the needs of a certain

immediate community? Some museums seek to become universal attractions—to appeal to cultural tourists across the globe. To achieve changes in the way they are perceived by their desired publics, to better organize their collection or internal structures, etc. museums may need to seek outside experts to advise them on the best route to their desired result (see Vogel 2005 for an example). As Wood notes, “In modern conditions of rapid economic change, organizations must be open and responsive to outside knowledge” (2002, 21). The need for organizational transformations, specialist expertise, and the increasingly widening sources of expertise influence organizations to seek out consultancies that can both present relevant information and interpret it for them (Ibid. 49-52). According to Wood:

Many specialized or occasionally required activities have long been undertaken mainly by KIS firms, including market research and advertising, building design, legal advice and, often as a statutory requirement, accountancy... More radically, consultancies are also involved at the highest technical and management levels of organizations, contributing to strategic planning and comprehensive organizational change, technical development, computer systems innovation, research evaluation, market development, and human resource management (51).

Consultancies are active at the highest levels of management, and those lower on the organizational ladder, such as marketing or education departments.

It is important to note that consultancies are not the dominant factor in promoting change, but they can be a *catalyst* for change (Ibid. 72), meaning that museums need to want to instigate organizational changes prior to hiring a

consultancy, which will then guide the museum towards particular changes.

Consultancies collect up-to-date information about industry trends that they can then apply to the situation of their clients. For example, in their years of practice Lord Cultural Resources have developed a zoning system of museum space, which they document in their *Manual of Museum Planning* and refer to in other manuals such as *The Manual of Museum Management* (1997, 142-4). The system states that the museum space is divided into four zones: (a) public non-collection zone, spaces like restaurants and lobbies; (b) public collection zone, galleries and other exhibition areas; (c) non-public collection zone, collection storage, conservation, curatorial spaces accessible to staff only; and, (d) non-public non-collection zones, offices, etc. The normative distribution of the zones should be approximately as follows: Zone A should constitute 20% of the museum space, Zone B 40%, Zone C 20%, and Zone D 20% for maximizing operating efficiency (Lord and Lord 1997, 143). The collection on display takes the largest slice of a museum's space, which speaks to the commitment museums have to the public to provide access to their collections. Public amenities also take up a significant amount of space, which is a modern development designed for the comfort of the visitors. This system has become a standard in the industry, which showcases the influence of consultancy advice, Lord Cultural Resources in particular. Interestingly, in their plan for the building of the Latvian Contemporary Art Museum, Lordeurop advocated 38% towards the public collection zone, 30% for the public non-collection zone (which was to include a space for the artist in residence), 13% for the non-public collection zone, and 19% for the non-public, non-collection zone (Lordeurop 2009). What this could signify is an increased

importance placed on visitor satisfaction, in lieu of collection development. However, it could also reflect the contextual situation of that specific museum, which, as a new museum, may not have a vast collection.

In their Spring 2009 Newsletter, *Cultural Capital*, Lord Cultural Resources has identified ten top recent innovations in the museum field. It is interesting to note that Bourdieu's term *cultural capital* has been literally adopted by the company. Cultural capital is "knowledge, skill, and other cultural acquisitions," while symbolic capital refers to "accumulated prestige or honour" (Hesmondhalgh 2006, 215). Lord Cultural Resources' own symbolic and cultural capital, accumulated through the publishing of instructional texts, as well as their years in the business working on now well-recognized museums and cultural sites, gives them the ability and/or authority to advise organizations on how to allocate their own resources to create cultural capital. Keeping this in mind, the ten top recent innovations in the museum field, as presented in *Cultural Capital* were: (1) the Internet as a means of disseminating information, including digitization, social media, audio interpretation and virtual tours and as a means of customizing the user experience; (2) visible storage, as a means of democratizing the museum experience by allowing behind-the-scenes access; (3) idea museums, which seek to generate social change in society; (4) the iconic brand, using big names in art, architecture, etc. to attract attention; (5) the emergence of art fairs, biennales and performance festivals as major aggregators for the arts, which aid in attracting further attention of celebrities and other creative people who want to be associated with the artists or performers featured; (6) mixed use venues for culture and urban revitalization, which uses culture for economic

growth; (7) identity politics that include museums being planned to address specific communities; (8) intangible heritage, such as oral history gathering and archiving such stories of place; (9) repatriation of collections, meaning that museum objects can be requested to return to their place of origin; and (10) carbon footprint, which entails becoming more environmentally conscious (Lord Cultural Resources 2009b). Some of the items on that list of innovations are exactly the “corporatization” changes that continue to arouse debates within the museums industry (see Chapter 1). However, these changes are undoubtedly taking place globally and in most cases are being embraced as innovative ways of “double-coding” (Prior 2003) an institution, something that even the most ardent critics can see as a necessity if one wants to change an image, and attract more visitors or sponsors. Developing a museum brand is one of these, it allows the museum to be well-recognized by multiple communities; it makes it visible and better attended (see Cole 2008 for a discussion of museum branding and how it can be used to attract publics). A current and local example of this is the Art Gallery of Ontario, which has re-branded itself with aggressive advertising campaigns and a new Frank Gehry designed building; however, these changes are concurrent with larger exhibition spaces for the permanent collection, new education programming, to which millions have been allocated, and greater emphasis on interpretation of art work for visitors. Biennales, festivals and social events can serve to enhance a museum or local art community. A telling example is the art fair Art Basel Miami. The fair draws many notable people from outside the art community, brings attention to the local art scene, and promotes both contemporary art and economic exchanges in the region. Developing the right change, or message,

in/for an institution, or framing a museum brand in a way that is advantageous to its usability by visitors and sustainability (in financial terms) is the process of harnessing that institution's cultural capital, which is what Lord states they are in the business of creating.

Cultural capital is "an expanded form of capital...based on the possession of specific competences, like economic capital it can be usefully traded" (McRobbie 2005, 137). Lord's business, as they state, stems from the company being able to create cultural capital for the institution with which they are involved. They thus trade their own cultural capital for economic capital, and create cultural capital for others. Let me elucidate this abstract process with an example. Lord Cultural Resources was instrumental in the development of the Museum of African Diaspora (MoAD) in San Francisco, which is located inside the St. Regis Hotel and condominium complex. When the museum was first proposed it was going to be a museum of African American history (*Museum Maestros* 2007). However, there was no African American community in the immediate vicinity of the museum. The museum was also to be hosted inside a hotel, which would have an international clientele. Gail Dexter Lord, of Lord Cultural Resources, then came up with the idea of broadening the concept of African American history to African Diaspora to build on the idea of evolution and migration of human-kind, both ancient and modern (*ibid.*). Dexter Lord states:

MoAD is an interesting example of broadening the perspective of a client
...We had to confront the reality that there is a very small African American population in San Francisco and by and large it doesn't live in the area and the

stories [of San Francisco's African American population] did not happen in the area where this museum is going to be. So I got engaged with the idea of broadening this out. Why don't we make it about the whole world, because it's a part of San Francisco that the whole world comes to (quoted in *Museum Maestros* 2007).

Broadening the idea for the museum created cultural capital for that institution. The museum was re-conceptualized to be based on the concept of everyone being originally from Africa, and on contributions that people from Africa make around the world, something that would appeal to the international visitors of the hotel and the surrounding centres of business—the museum's immediate community—but also to the African American community of San Francisco who would be able to share their stories at the museum.

As stated on their website, "MoAD connects all people through the art, culture and history of the African Diaspora" (MoAD 2009). The museum was also not focused around a collection of objects, but around collections of stories that are digitally recorded, thus engaging with the concept of intangible heritage and the practice of oral history—it is a first voice museum (ibid). Denise Bradley, Past Executive Director of MoAD spoke to this when she said:

I think a 21st century museum is MoAD... We are not a collecting institution, etc, we don't collect objects, but we are a museum of people.... Because humanity's collective origins are out of Africa, we are one universal family. But what so many people don't understand is that so much of our history has been kept from us in terms of that universal connection. What MoAD is

committed to, is to bring some of those ideas to the fore and ... construct and uncover that cultural connectivity, where that point of intersection is...

(quoted in *Museum Maestros* 2007).

By situating the concept for the museum in its immediate environment (a five star hotel and cosmopolitan city), while still retaining the connection to African American heritage of San Francisco (as the stories of the people of San Francisco are collected by the museum), Lord Cultural Resources created a form of cultural capital for that institution. This, however, would not have happened if the ideas presented by Lord were rejected by the developers of the museum.⁵ Lord Cultural Resources was thus needed to be seen as authoritative, in possession of cultural capital themselves, and their suggestions to be accepted to have truth-value.

In this example we can see directly how consultancy knowledge can shape museum transformation. There were many interests at stake in this project, both cultural and economic. For a museum, particularly a new museum, to be sustainable it needs to have a public. It also needs funding, coming from the government or private sector, which is often predicated on attendance and/or cultural contribution to immediate communities. Thus although there can be many ideas for museums, not all of them are possible to carry out due to the constraints I have described. Successful consultancies can harness their knowledge of cultural tourism to appease those with

⁵ Interestingly, the museum also combines at least five of the innovations described in the Lord's newsletter: the internet—"Embracing the newest applications in media technology, MoAD features an interactive theatre and immersive exhibitions. This coupling of art, culture and technology enables MoAD to bring Africa, the African Diaspora and the world community closer together" [MoAD 2009]); the iconic brand; mixed venue use, through the association with the St. Regis; identity politics, which in this case strive to include all of humanity); and, intangible heritage, through the collection of digitized stories. I am unaware if carbon footprint reduction can be added to this list as I could not find information about the building materials of the museum, however, I do not wish to suggest that it was not one the innovations that were part of MoAD.

vested economic interests (both direct and indirect) in the museum and its surrounding neighbourhood, while creating an autonomous cultural institution—they advise how to “double code.” Critics may view this as a selling out of culture.

Bourdieu has stated:

The threats to autonomy result from the increasingly greater inter-penetration between the world of art and the world of money. I am thinking of new forms of sponsorship, new alliances being established between certain economic enterprises ... and cultural producers... the grip or empire of economy over artistic and scientific research is also exercised inside the field itself, through the control of the means of cultural production and distribution, and even of the instances of consecration (quoted in Cook 2000).

Despite these warnings, the reality is that often partnering with commercial developers and other private funders, who may only have secondary interests in the cultural institution their economic capital is creating, is the only way to create the institution in the first place (see Billings 2008 for a discussion). What cultural consultancies can do in such cases is to advise towards an organizational infrastructure that will make the new cultural organization autonomous from the developer in terms of programming.

Consultancy is a process of knowledge and information exchange. According to Tourdoir there are three styles of consultancy: selling, whereby expertise is sold at a price; jobbing, which refers to carrying out a specific project for the client; and sparring, which refers to the way consultant-client interaction shape an outcome, often for sustained periods of time (quoted in Wood 2002, 9). Lord Cultural

Resources is involved in all three styles of consultancy. Wood writes that, “the success of the ‘sparring’ relationship ... is the most significant basis for a distinct consultancy influence on client behaviour” (9). And it is in a “sparring” relationship where Lord can affect the most change in the industry. In this type of relationships is carried out in a space of what Bourdieu termed *positions and dispositions*. The control over the outcome for a project comes through a struggle, which is how Bourdieu’s would term it, or cooperation, which is how the client and consultancy would view it, of ideas or positions. Because the client enlisted the aid of a consultancy, they already believe in the cultural and symbolic capital the consultancy possesses. As more exchange happens between them, trust develops, and clients are more likely to adopt a consultant’s view for doing something in a new way. These forms of exchanges can subsequently affect industry changes, as museums adopt new ways of doing things based on what consultancies suggest or by looking at the examples of other prominent museums, which may have been influenced by consultancies.

For example, a relatively new trend in museology is visible storage—by which more of the museum’s collection is visible to the public. Although it began in the 1970s with Canada’s Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver, it is only in the last decade that visible storage is becoming more widespread, with art museums following suite (Bohlen 2001). Lord Cultural Resources identified visible storage as one of the top ten recent innovations in the museum field (see above) (Lord Cultural Resources 2009b). Visible storage was also one of Lord’s recommendations for the content of the future Latvian Museum of Contemporary Art (Lordeurop 2009).

Visible storage is utilized by museums as a way to give their visitors additional access to their collection, only a small portion of which is generally on display. A museum's collection is a large part of their cultural capital; in many ways it is a museum's very *raison d'être*. Showcasing more of the collection translates into building more cultural capital in the eyes of the public, who can not only see how things are stored behind-the-scenes but actively access it. This can peak general visitors' curiosity, who are often interested at what goes on behind the scenes, as well as provide additional access to the connoisseurs, which can translate into more enjoyable visits for different types of audiences. Becoming visitor-centric is what many museums strive for and it is what many consultancies, such as Lord Cultural Resources, help museums to achieve. Although the example of visible storage is relatively minor in the grand scheme of museum transformations, it nonetheless demonstrates how consultancies can spread new ideas to clients, and as a result how industry trends are adopted internationally.

International spread and recognition is a key component to Lord's success. Looking at the evolution of the company from local to global we can see a trajectory similar to that of other consultancies and cultural industries more broadly. New ICTs were introduced during the 1980s, which helped spur the growth of both industry and consulting services (Wood 2002, 66). Lampel et al. speak to this when they write:

The rise of cultural industries, goes hand in hand with the emergence of new technologies, such as printing, sound recording, photography, film, video and the Internet. These new technologies give advantage to economies of scale in production, distribution, and marketing. As in other sectors, this leads to large

corporate entities whose main business is to create, market, and distribute cultural goods. It also produces new occupations and new skills, and ecology of large and small firms that specialize in creating content and assisting delivery (2006, 7).

In explaining why and how the cultural industries have evolved in the last 20 years, Hesmondhalgh rightly states that it is important not to fall into the traps of technological, economic, and cultural reductionism, but instead consider the interconnections of these processes (Hesmondhalgh 2002, 81-83). Thus although new ICTs clearly played a significant role in aiding the geographical spread of all industries, including cultural industries, it is not the only factor that spurred these industries to “go global,” particularly when we are discussing consulting services. Another factor that contributed to internationalization is perhaps lack of local work on a large scale basis. In order to stay competitive during national recessions of the early 1980s and mid 1990s companies internationalized their operations (Hesmondhalgh 2002, 85). In the late 1980s and early 1990s cultural consulting and museum planning was still a relatively new field and Lord Cultural Resources a young company. Yet, they were already doing business internationally, including a study for the British Government of one hundred British museums focusing on cost management and budget analysis (Lord 2008); with the help of an Ontario government agency called Ontario International Corp., which aids Ontario companies in locating and bidding on large international contracts, Lord had won a contract to develop the master plan for the National Museum of Singapore (Crane 1992). In 1998 there is reference to Lord as “a Singapore company that is part of is part of the worldwide network of Lord

companies founded in 1981” (Narayan 1998). Under the title, “Blueprint for a better museum,” the 1998 article discusses the work Lord did for the National Museum of Singapore: site selection, strategic and exhibition planning, and other functional aspects of construction, such as light and temperature controls that met foreign loan standards (Ibid.). What we see happening is Lord expanding the range of services they offer clients, while at the same time expanding their geographic reach.

Wood writes that “most of the global consultancies originated in management, technical or financial consultancy but now they generally offer comprehensive strategic and management systems advice affecting many aspects of corporate change” (2002, 65). Internationalization and integration of services seems to have risen in parallel, which is the case with Lord. Lord Cultural Resources started out in museum planning, quickly adding on management consultancy, and later added on more services, which allowed them to offer their clients an *integrated approach* (Lord 2008). Barry Lord sees this integrated approach as an advantage in securing contracts and there is some evidence to support that. Speaking of competitive bids in the area of technology development, the ROM’s Brain Porter states:

Most proposals will be judged on some fairly standard clauses, or terms: price is one of them; time, in terms of completion, resources that they can bring to it. For instance, if you are looking at a particular software design, let’s say I am looking for an interface, if I know that company “X” has 3 or 4 flash script people/developers and another company doesn’t have flash developers and would sub-contract flash development, likely what would happen is that I

would look more favourably on the company that employs flash developers if it's some software I need that is going to have to use flash (2008).

Providing more resources to the project in terms of services is clearly advantageous. In the past decade—and more so in the past few years—there has been an increase in museum-building activities in India, China and the Middle East. As more new museums are being built, they need staff to fill a variety of positions. Finding enough trained staff in the home country may be difficult at first. This is why Lord Cultural Resources has ventured into recruitment. Lord Cultural Recruitment was established during the last two years and is based in London, UK. It is another service within the niche of museums and cultural institutions that the consultancy added to their already comprehensive list of services. It is the first museum planning and consulting firm to do so.

In the next few years the company would also like to move into broadcasting to showcase more of what goes on behind the scenes of museums and museum planning, following a made-for-TV documentary on Gail and Barry Lord by CineFocus Canada, entitled *Museum Maestros* (Lord 2008). Lord's integration is thus strategic, in that it serves to build on already established expertise in their niche. According to Lampel et al., a highly integrated firm can reduce the creativity of their individual units due to the need for further coordination between them. However, they state that specialization can balance out a firm's integration and as such endow their products with creative flexibility (2000, 267). This is what Lord has done and it can perhaps add to the continuing success of the firm in its chosen field. Unlike companies that consult and plan for a variety of organizations and industries, such as

Economic Research Associates, Lord has focused exclusively on the realm of culture. As they continue to expand, the company adds services in their already established niche, which compliments and builds on the services they already offer.

In the study of cultural industries it is widely accepted that there is more behind them than the drive for pure profit (Hesmonshalgh 2002; Harley 2005; Lampel et al 2006). Lampel et al. point to this when they state that, “the business of culture can never be simply a business,” as “...cultural products are as much about identity, imagination, and creativity as they are about sales, employment, and profits” (2006, 5). This is evident in Lord and the way Lord sees itself, as the company was built upon the principles of promoting change in the industry, “to make them more populist, better used, more responsive” (*Museum Maestros* 2007) and better planned, which in many cases involved the adoption of certain corporate strategies like branding, marketing, etc. Barry Lord states:

By forming a company, which has become the world’s biggest company in our specialization of museum planning it’s given us a way to shape the culture to actually change the world in a more progressive way. So it’s really about finding the right vehicle to accomplish what we wanted to. And it’s helping people to really understand and appreciate their own culture and to be able to share it with others (quoted in *Museum Maestros* 2007).

Being better used by various publics is only one of the museum’s traditional functions, which also include conservation and scholarship. Museums want to be regarded as presently relevant, to provide access, education and research, but also to continue to conserve artwork’s integrity (as artists may have wanted—would Van

Gogh approve his work to appear on umbrellas and mugs?, perhaps) and historicity (or historical context) for the future (see Chapter 1 for a more thorough discussion of museums traditional and contemporary functions).

Becoming more populist includes focusing on education and interpretation, which helps visitors understand and engage with what they are viewing, but also on visitor comforts and enjoyment through dining areas, shops and attractive displays. Museums are honouring their commitments to scholarship and conservation in traditional and non-traditional areas, such as the ongoing research on the conservation of new media art. At times, however, they need assistance with ways to appeal to diverse publics or strategies to manage all of their increasingly diverse responsibilities and functions (for example of new museum responsibilities see Chapter 2). What Barry Lord means by “progressive” change perhaps is museums’ transformation to become more visitor-centric and less elitist, which is how they can come across to large segments of the population who do not possess the appropriate “cultural competence.” Lord Cultural Resources sees itself as facilitating transformative experience for visitors of art museums, by consulting on and planning for visitor needs. Visitor needs include future visitors, thus the company does not only advise museums to market themselves, have dining venues, etc; conservation of collections and scholarship is just as important, and this is reflected in museum building standards that the company promotes.

Having already demonstrated the way consultancies can influence client decisions to adopt new ways of doing things, it is important to consider the overarching philosophy of companies such as Lord, which informs their work and

drives their suggestions to clients. This is not to suggest that profit is completely irrelevant, but profit is rarely the only impetus for industry changes, particularly in the area of arts and culture. In an interview for the Voices of the Future, conducted by The Centre for Future of Museums—an American Museums Association initiative that helps “museums explore the cultural, political and economic challenges facing society and devise strategies to shape a better tomorrow” (Centre for Future 2009)—Barry Lord articulated one issue that is becoming increasingly important for many museums to consider. He states:

One of the fundamental issues that we carry forward into the 21st century ... over the next 30 or 40 years is the issue of collection ownership—the ownership of artefacts, works of art, and specimens. And the problems that have arisen around that, of course all kinds of claims for return of objects to the places from which they have originated. But ultimately, the long-range solution for that has to be to simply dissolve the fundamental issue of ownership, to have some kind of international, UN-level or whatever, recognition that ownership of these objects is in fact global, that stewardship of them may be in various places; obviously if this museum has the right environmental conditions and the right equipment to take care of certain things, it’s a good place for them to stay; on the other hand they have to be available to go out to other places that are equally able to take care of them while they are there and provide access to them (Voices of the Future 2009).

In response to that, the interviewer noted that this is what we see happening today, but that Europe and North America justifies owning everything by claiming that other

countries do not have adequate conditions to care for these objects (Ibid.). Lord's answer to that was that resources need to be put into both providing the facilities for proper object care, as well as into providing training for people to be able to take care of these objects (Ibid.), which is what Lord Cultural Resources has positioned itself to do. When working on museum projects internationally, the company makes sure new facilities adhere to the stringent standards needed to care for objects, such as rooms with humidity, temperature and light control (see Narayan 1998 for an example). On the one hand this process points to a standardization of museum building facilities, with the knowledge originating predominantly in Europe and North America (and with Lord's case Canada, in particular). This of course may change in the upcoming years. In the view of a consultancy, by instilling these industry standards at new institutions around the world, it enables these institutions to claim access to their own heritage objects currently held at other museums or to be able to bring travelling exhibitions or individual objects of interest; likewise museums that hold artefacts from other countries may initiate the return of these objects once facilities for their long-term care are established. In the same light, through Lord Cultural Recruitment and through training programs they are aiming to set up, the company is working at providing museums with trained staff to be able to take care of the objects in these new museums, and perhaps create new job possibilities for a portion of the local population. Barry Lord states:

It's really a mass thing, especially in the Middle East, where you have the development of museums, but not any significant number of nationals who know what a museum is let alone what to do in one, where there really is a

great need for that. And what we are developing in Bahrain, in addition to recruitment, is training. We are working with the BTI, Bahrainian Training Institute, to set up a training program. Now, that's not currently operational, but it's something we are working on and trying to put in place (Lord 2008).

Lord Cultural Resources' view is that by standardizing facilities and training nationals in new museums, these museums are going to be able to be stewards of heritage and art works on an international level. As noted in Lordeurp's presentation for the future Latvian Museum of Contemporary Art, "Facility strategies encloses all the aspects of the building—environmental controls, acoustics, air filtration, lighting, security, finishes, ceiling heights and many more features of the building that ensure that it can function as a museum at an *international standard*" (Lordeurop 2009). This view is adopted based on experiences with museum building malfunctions, where humidity levels have perhaps damaged works. The company views its work as custodial; they see themselves as helping to preserve heritage as well as accessibility to it by enforcing these standards.

Standards in museums continually change (see Merritt 2005). These changes are driven by new forms of knowledge and fluctuating societal values, and are achieved through cooperation between different museums, through museum associations and research partnerships (Ibid.), as well as by consultancy advice. A mere ten years ago few museums were utilizing the web at the same rate as they are now; time-based media conservation was undeveloped; new museums or extensions that were being built were rarely ecologically sustainable, while now sustainable design or going green is sought after (see Janes 2008 for an overview of

sustainability's possible place in the museum). The field of museology evolves with new generations of museum professionals who help to instigate changes worldwide that are more reflective of the realities of today. I would like to stress that it is not only consultancies that drive these changes, many of these changes arise within the museum community itself (for example media art conservation initiatives, becoming more sustainable, etc), but consultancies can be an active part in promoting these changes.

In an earlier article Lampel et al. explored some of the organizing practices of cultural industries and stated that their long-term survival “depends heavily on replenishing their creative resources” (2000, 265). Creative resources in the case of Lord Cultural Resources is people or to take the words of Jeremy Rifkin “access to time and mind” (2005, 365), for which Lord's clients pay. Industry changes are propelled by people with ideas, new approaches and innovative solutions. Global consultancies, like Lord, are “part of a system of expertise exchange which includes the international transfer of innovative ideas. As the influence of consultancies grows, this may have wider organizational and social impacts” (Wood 2002, 72). Wood goes on to state that “one of the most significantly innovative features of modern consultancy is the increasingly international level of its experience and intelligence gathering. International (including global) consultancy is thus becoming a distinctive source of new ideas and expertise for many clients, especially those operating at national or regional levels” (78). Bourdieu would state that positions the newcomers, in this case international consultancies in host countries, take “restructure and recreate the relevant sub-field and field” (Hesmondhalgh 2006, 216). Thus the national field

of cultural production becomes affected through the distribution of the cultural capital of the incoming consultancies as they carve out a market position for themselves.

These new positions and interconnected relationships that stem from them affect the future development of the field. It is clear that Lord sees itself as a global leader in the industry and they regard creativity and innovation as catalysts for industry change.

This is the position they are carving out for themselves. In the Lord Cultural Resources' Spring 2009 Newsletter, Ngaire Blankenberg, a senior consultant at Lord, writes:

[I]nnovation and creativity promise to breathe new hope into our beleaguered lives and institutions.... Now that creativity has finally captured the attention of global powerbrokers eager to take the risk of making space for innovative thinking, it is time for us to consider carefully what our role is and could be in the creative economy. Arts and cultural institutions are well positioned to provide the space necessary to catalyze imagination, midwife ideas and experiment with innovation (Lord Cultural Resources 2009).

What follows is a list of suggestions for industry and social change, a list of ten innovations, which are changing the global museumscape, and questions for the cultural industry (including the company itself) to consider. What is clear is that the Lord wants to drive industry change, sees themselves as involved in creating change, and is succeeding at doing so. They are instigating changes through (a) their consulting work and (b) by providing training to future generations both directly, through training and internships and indirectly, through dissemination of their texts.

Summary

Museums are social institutions and are bound to face the same challenges as other industries, including adoption of ICTs, embracing sustainability, developing a brand to spread their product, and international expansion. These changes affect museums in all parts of the world. They often have contradictory concerns in their responses to social and technological change. As Wood notes, “organizational change has been the major area of influence, from global consultancies serving MNCs and national clients” (2002, 82). He has found evidence for the increasing influence of consultancy on innovation. Global consultancies such as Lord Cultural Resources are thus seen as being at the forefront of museum transformations, leading them through a myriad of possible ideas, options, problems and possible solutions. By stating that I do not mean to suggest that the proposed ideas are always correct or always adopted by clients, but I wish to expose a common process by which knowledge exchange is currently occurring in many cultural institutions. Museum clients are always free to seek an alternate route to a consultancy suggestion or completely disregard advice, and that does sometimes happen as Barry Lord told me in our interview (2008; see also Sandstorm 2007). The key to acceptance of ideas is trust in the company or in the cultural and symbolic capital they possess. Having worked on/for the world’s most iconic museums, such as the Louvre in France and the Guggenheim in Bilbao (to name just a couple), spoken at many international industry conferences, and published manuals that have become industry standards, endows the company with cultural capital, which in turn, Bourdieu would state, legitimizes their opinions and suggestions in the eyes of clients.

As a *micro-multinational* Lord has international experience and expertise; this is a sought-after trait by those who wish to put their institution or region on the international map. “An important contribution of consultancies that enables organizations to respond to the learning demands of globalization is the codification of knowledge,” states Wood. “Consultancies primarily review the diversity of technical, managerial and marketing knowledge, through research and experience, and adapt and codify it for other clients” (2002, 78). Having global experience enables a consultancy to offer more concrete examples to their clients of how the information they provide them has been applied in the past, and how it can be applied in their case. They are seen as more prestigious. International firms, as well as international architects, are sought by museums for this reason. Interestingly, this same principle has affected Lord’s work in Canada. The firm is much better known abroad. It has been suggested that large local museums such as the ROM, who wish to be seen as international, do not readily employ local firms for large-scale building projects. Although they have previously worked with Lord on market research, Lord has lost out large contracts such as the one of the museum’s reconstruction a few years ago. I do not mean to single out the ROM, or to state that Lord’s bid was necessarily better than the one picked by the museum, but to showcase that it is international firms that are often sought after for large projects because of their *global status* and not simply their expertise—but the international firm of one client may be found “just down the street” of another. The process of museum transformation is not a direct cause and effect relationship. There are many factors involved, one of which is the influence of global consultancies. The work of the consultant is that of an

intermediary between the institution, its public, and the rest of society. In the conclusion of my research, which follows this chapter, I will draw on Bourdieu, and those who built on his work to present an amended model of the museum's field of cultural production that is more representative of the current state of the field—an international field with multiple influences and intermediaries.

Conclusion

Cultural Intermediaries and the International Field of Cultural Production

The previous two chapters have described the business operations of two companies—Acoustiguide and Lord Cultural Resources—and contextualized these companies within the processes of global museum transformations. Both chapters described the two-way flows of expertise between the companies and the museums they serve. In Chapter 2, museums' need to have control over their production or output, predominantly in the form of intellectual property ownership, coupled with increased in-house technological capabilities is leading some museums away from outsourcing audio and multi-media production to vendors like Acoustiguide. Concurrently, we see Acoustiguide moving toward greater production of audio content vs. content and technology packages, and leveraging their cultural capital, as *creatives* with years of expertise in this area of audio production and content development, to get contracts. In Chapter 3, the role of global cultural consultancies in museums' adoption of certain "corporate" practices is discussed, concurrent with the internationalization of operations for both consultancies and museums (and cultural industries more broadly). The consultancy-client relationship is regarded as an exchange, with both parties contributing to the development of the other. I will now discuss Bourdieu's concept of cultural intermediaries as it applies to the two companies I studied, followed by an analysis of his model of the field of cultural

production, and how it can be adapted to analyze relationships between museums and cultural intermediaries on a global level.

In his text *Distinction*, Pierre Bourdieu had introduced an occupational category of individuals whose work involves presentation and representation in all institutions providing symbolic goods and services; he called them cultural intermediaries (Bourdieu 1984, 359). Bourdieu's observations about this occupational category and the term he applied to it was expanded upon and used in various studies of individuals involved advertising, graphic design, public relations, film production, and consultancy, referred more broadly to as "those who produce symbolic goods" (see Chapter 1 for a discussion). Interestingly, the industries in which such mediation takes place has been referred to and analyzed as the cultural industries. For example, production companies are part of the cultural industries, a vast category of industries that includes companies and non-profits that produce directly for audiences as well as those who produce for other companies or non-profits. Meanwhile the work individuals of production companies perform can be referred to as the work of cultural intermediaries. To me this presents a disjuncture between the individual employee and the company of which he/she is a part. I see the term cultural intermediary being able to accommodate the work of *companies* like Acoustiguide and Lord Cultural Resources, who produce for other cultural producers/organizations (that are also part of the cultural industries) and whose employees provide an intermediary service for these organizations.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Acoustiguide's primary business⁶ is the production of audio content and technology—both are products. Their position as an intermediary becomes evident when we consider how their product is used by their museum clients, although their position as *intermediaries* differs from Bourdieu's initial conception. The audio product the company produces is a symbolic good, which is commissioned by the museum and becomes part of the museum's rhetoric and thus its symbolic and cultural capital. Museum visitors then consume the product through museum attendance, browsing the museum's website, or downloading the content from another website/distributor such as iTunes. When it comes to the consumption of that audio product, Acoustiguide is the intermediary between the producer-consumer relationship of the museum and its visitor. Similarly, Lord Cultural Resources also mediates between the museum and its visitor, albeit in a different way, through the mediating service of consultancy. Through the consultancy service Lord Cultural Resources provides, the museum can transform the way it looks, the way it is run, the way it acts, the visitor services it provides, the way it markets an exhibition, etc. To return to a previous example, the visible storage area that a visitor can observe in a museum may have come into existence through the advice of consultancies like Lord Cultural Resources. The visitor's visual consumption of this area has thus been mediated through the relationship between the museum and Lord Cultural Resources, even if they are unaware of this.

The latter parts of Chapters 2 and 3 situated Acoustiguide and Lord Cultural Resources within the cultural industries. Chapter 2 discussed the networked approach

⁶ I say *primary* because Acoustiguide does also provide services such as project management and staff training to their clients. Those services, however, are part of the "audio package," and as such are *secondary*, or complimentary, to their main products.

to production and the move towards seeing products as platforms for subsequent service upgrades or value-added services (described by Rifkin 2005), two processes indicative of the cultural industries, and situated Acoustiguide's production within these two processes. The chapter also documented how Acoustiguide's interests, as a company, may be conflicting with those of the museum; these differing interests are at the heart of what is driving changes in the way audio and multi-media content is produced in museums. Chapter 3 looked predominantly at how consultancies contribute to changes or innovations in their clients' operations (Wood 2002), and described the way Lord Cultural Resources has influenced the development of some museums—indicative of the knowledge-driven exchange that occurs within the cultural industries. It is important to note that the knowledge that companies like Lord Cultural Resources pass on to their clients is often initiated by other museums and inter-museum associations and partnerships. Consultancies *codify* this information for specific client scenarios. It is through this codification or collation of specific and current industry practices across national boundaries that consultancies can influence ways of doing things, and it is the reason they are sought out. Such international exchanges are also possible at industry conferences and events; however, these exchanges are often short lived and need to be sustained through continual *sparring* to affect institutional change, a time-consuming task for busy museum professionals. The chapter also described the internationalization of operations by Lord Cultural Resources, and museum globalization, another characteristic of the cultural industries. These differing characteristics of the cultural industries described in Chapters 2 and 3 are not mutually exclusive to the two companies, but were discussed separately in

order to present a more aggregate description and analysis of each. Thus Acoustiguide's networked approach to production is similar to that of Lord Cultural Resources, and although Lord Cultural Resources does not sell platforms for later value-added services, the integrated structure of the company (see discussion in Chapter 3) can be seen as providing a *value-added* service to their museum clients—they can get multiple services, in sequential need, from the same source. Likewise, the discussion of Lord Cultural Resources' internationalization of operations and integration of services can also be applied to Acoustiguide (see pp. 68-9 for clarification). The exchange between Acoustiguide and their museum clients can also affect change in the museums, although perhaps in this case it happens less directly through the freeing up of resources for in-house development of a certain area due to the outsourcing, or perhaps through learning about aspects of audio production through observation, etc (see Wood 2002, 8). A differing characteristic I have observed, however, is that while Acoustiguide, as a company, seems to be driven by profit and positions itself as a vendor in the "audio and multimedia interpretation" industry (the world of economics), Lord Cultural Resources sees itself as part of the museum profession; their values as expressed in their discourse suggest that like other arts professionals (as documented by Bourdieu) they position themselves in opposition to the economic system, with which they are undoubtedly involved, and work from that position.

One of the things that both chapters did not cover directly is the movement of knowledge and media workers between competing companies, museums, or between companies and museums, termed *ethnoscapes* by Appadurai (1996). These flows can

affect innovation and organizational change through the transfer of knowledge and ideas (Wood 2002). For example Nancy Proctor, formally the Head of Research & Communications at Antenna Audio is currently the Head of New Media Initiatives at Smithsonian American Art Museum. The cultural capital she had acquired at Antenna is now serving the museum institution directly, which has likely lead to changes in the way media at the Smithsonian is produced. Similarly, as can be gleaned from the profiles of the Lord Cultural Resources team, many employees have inter-institution, inter-company and interdisciplinary backgrounds. The movement of knowledge workers across and within these industries can affect evolution and innovation, and it is something that should be explored in more depth in a later study. From my study of Acoustiguide and Lord Cultural Resources it can be gleaned that the relational exchanges between such companies and museums is influenced by five global cultural flows, termed as ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes by Appadurai (1996) (see Chapter 1). These flows continually drift between national and international boundaries and fields of production.

In her chapter on Pierre Bourdieu in the text *The Uses of Cultural Studies* Angela McRobbie questions the applicability of Bourdieu's concept of the field, which is national, in the context of globalization, cultural flows, and networked relationships between institutions (2005, 132-33). "The question is," she writes, "can the field, a concept which relies on, and requires, a notion of (albeit permeable/fluid) boundary, engage with the dynamics of change in a 'speeded up' world?" (133). "[W]ould the idea of a global media field be able to account for the seemingly endless capacity for rapid intersection and cross-fertilisation of so many transnational media

and cultural forms?” (132). I believe that the concept of the cultural field of production can still be useful, particularly to help illustrate autonomous yet interconnected relations between national and international institutions, and the cultural flows between them. It does however need to be probed and modified to allow for cultural flows across national boundaries. Bourdieu has stated that social space is constructed, as are the views about ones position in that space (1990). According to him, “there will be different or even antagonistic points of view, since points of view depend on the point from which they are taken, since the vision that every agent has of space depends on his or her position in that space” (ibid. 130). If this is the case, how can companies work on an international level, where spatial positions differ from country to country? How do we account for world-wide changes in museums? In light of this we will be able to take a closer look at how the relationship between multinational companies and museums can be described using Bourdieu’s concept of the field of cultural production.

One of Bourdieu’s traditional field diagrams is presented by him using the example of the literary field of production (Figure 1). In the literary field, the creative process of the individual writer gives way to a system of structural relationships between social agents, which are institutions, groups or individuals (Bourdieu 1993, 29, 37-38). In this example the literary field is national; it is situated in France. It is a field of forces and struggles (ibid., 30). Speaking of possible changes in the literary field Bourdieu states:

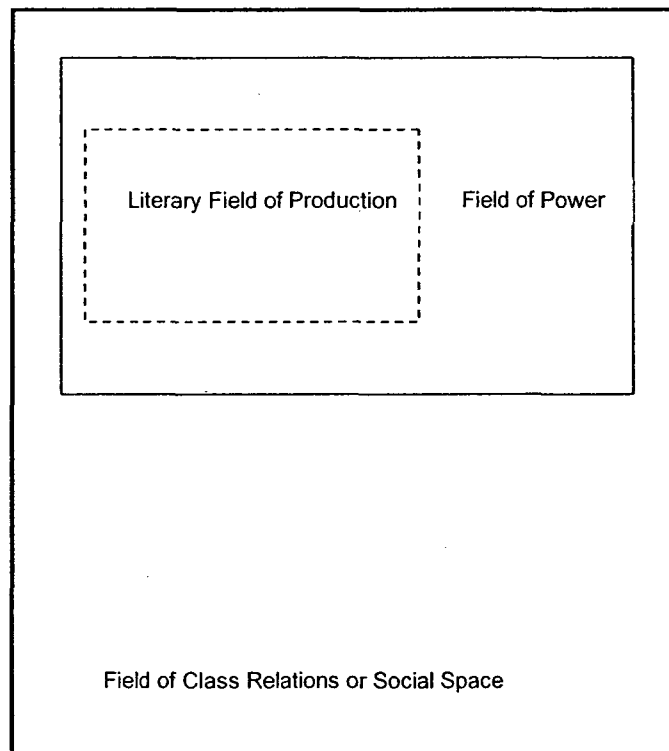


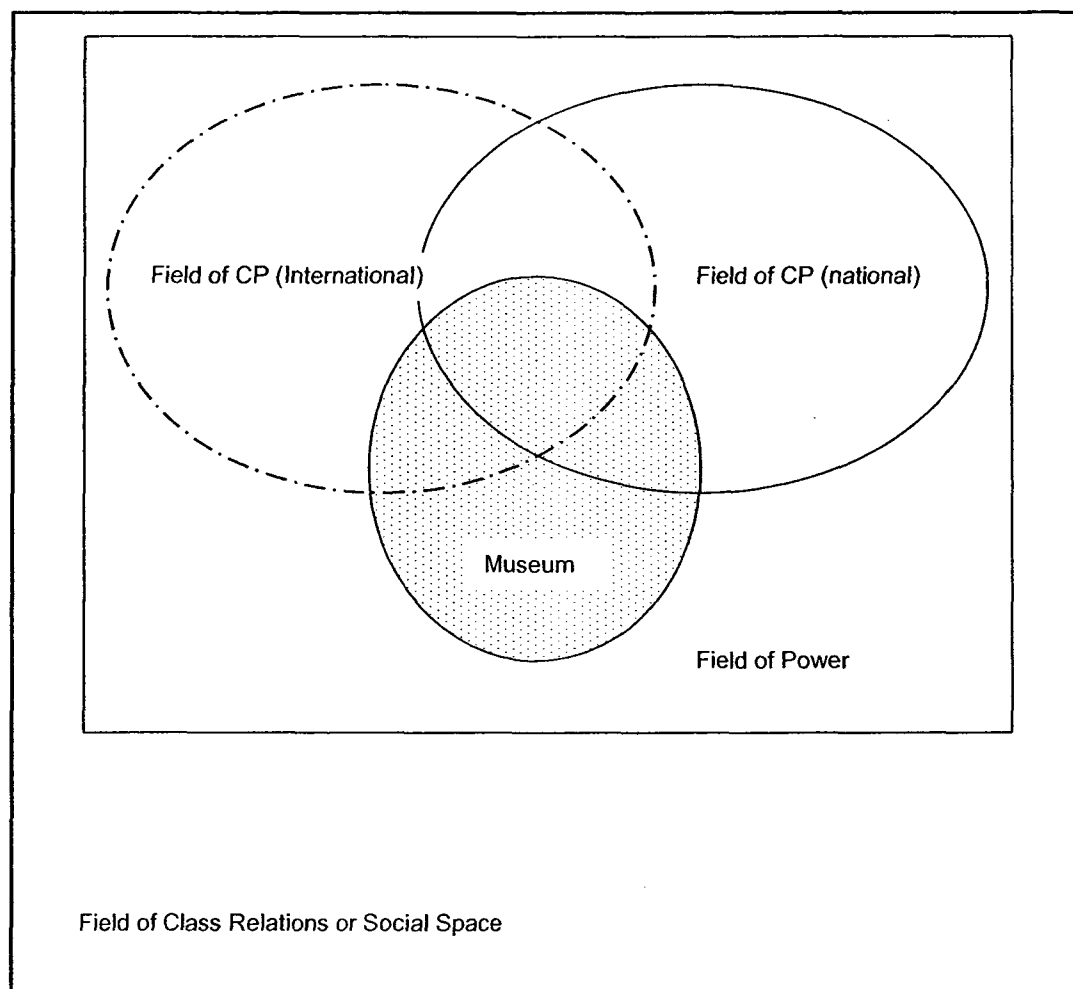
Figure 1 The literary field of production (adapted from Bourdieu 1993, 38).

[C]hange in the space of literary or artistic possibles is the result of change in the power relations which constitute the space of positions. When a new literary or artistic group makes its presence felt in the field of literary or artistic production, the whole problem is transformed, since its coming into being, i.e. into difference, modifies and displaces the universe of possible options [of production]; the previously dominant forms of production may, for example, be pushed into outmoded (*déclassé*) or classic works (1993, 32).

Changes in the types of literary production thus happened due to displacements of power and/or additions of producers to the field. Multinational companies doing work

for museums can therefore be seen as additional agents in the museum's field of production. Through their presence, or more pragmatically through museums contracting work out to them, they modify the way symbolic goods are produced by the museum and as such carve out a position in the museum's field of cultural production. Bourdieu placed the field of power within the field of class relations or social space. He stated that cultural producers who occupy a dominant position in the field of cultural production feel solidarity with those who occupy dominant economic and cultural positions in the field of class relations. My study of companies in the cultural industries and museums is predominantly concerned with relational flows of exchange and influence between these two agents in the field of cultural production, and not with social relations. Although it is something that should be explored in subsequent studies, my study is a social-organizational analysis and thus does not delve into the realm of social relations, as Bourdieu would have.

Through my analysis in this thesis I have come to see that museums, as well as the companies they employ, are situated within both national and international fields of production (see Figure 2). This also suggests that the social space they operate in is also both national and international depending on the public to whom they are catering to with a specific symbolic product. The addition of an international field of production is a necessary revision that must be made to Bourdieu's model to make it applicable to an international context. The museum is positioned between the national and international fields of cultural production. The national field of cultural production and the international field of cultural production affect each other through the five global flows. They can be seen as autonomous from each other, yet the latter



Key

- Field of Class Relations or Social Space
- Field of Power
- Field of Cultural Production (CP) (national)
- - - Field of Cultural Production (International)
- Museum

Figure 2 The museum in the national and international fields of cultural production can sometimes act as a sub-field of the former (such as when national governments build cultural institutions with an international audience in mind—thus catering to international standards and perceived needs) and vice versa (when national museums adopt international trends and techniques, but to serve national audiences). Thus

although the museum can be seen as producing within a relatively autonomous national context its production output is also influenced by the international field. The national museum's boundaries can also cut across the national/international divide through the museum's circulation of traveling exhibitions, web presence, and in some cases lending of its brand and/or collection for satellite museums. Similarly, large museums often produce interpretive content in multiple languages for the benefit of international tourists, which is production for an international market situated within the larger international field of production. Meanwhile many cultural firms operate across national boundaries and across the field of power as defined by Bourdieu (Figure 1 and also Figure 2). Such companies, however, can be national or multinational. The two I have focused on in my study are both multinationals. Their work depends on the possession of cultural and symbolic capital, and at times of economic capital (for example to expand their operations to another part of the world). Their clients must recognize the symbolic value of the capital they possess and deem it as legitimate and authoritative in order for these companies to continue to be sought out.

As described by John B. Thomson, the field is "a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or 'capital'" (quoted in Hesmondhalgh 2006, 212). The dominant position in the field of power indicative of the power to influence the production of a symbolic good, is held by the institution that has the most cultural, symbolic and/or economic capital. Thus a consultancy can influence museum organizational changes only if it is taken to have more cultural capital than the

museum in that particular situation; the more cultural capital the consultancy is deemed to have, the more likely their advice will be followed. Similarly, an audio producer's content production becomes accepted by the museum if it is deemed to have more cultural capital than what the museum can produce itself at that moment in time. If the museum comes to possess more cultural capital than the audio producer, it will be in a more dominant position in the field of power, and in that situation it may then (a) choose to produce the audio content themselves or (b) leverage their power to perhaps drop the price of production or secure a better intellectual property agreement for the to-be-produced content, etc.

Russell Keat, as paraphrased by Wright, argues that "cultural goods...have a *transformative* rather than simply a *demand* value" (Wright 2005, 107). Yet this explanation from Bourdieu's perspective might lack "a sense in which this difference is not intrinsic to the goods themselves but a reflection of the process that go into constructing them as special" (Ibid.) Bourdieu (1993) has argued that art has no intrinsic value, that it is made to have economic and/or symbolic value through consecration, which is ultimately a form of interpretation. The ability to interpret *correctly* is possessed by those who are considered to have high forms of capital, cultural capital, economic capital or social capital. The making of things becomes tied to the making of meaning (Wright 2005, 110). Speaking of art as a code that needs to be broken for the general public, Arthur Cohen, of the firm LaPlaca Cohen, has stated, "museums are not always good at communicating the code to the outside world... We're the interpreters. We're not writing the script, but helping articulate the message" (quoted in Vogel 2005). The articulation of the message is the point of

interpretation, where the museums' way of speaking becomes converted to a more popular way of speaking through *correct* interpretation. Similarly a consultancy interprets a variety of information for their clients through codification (see Chapter 3), which then enables the museum to see its position, with regards to a change they wish to make, a policy they wish to adopt, an exhibition they wish to mount, etc., more clearly. An interpretation of an art object, building plan, communications strategy, gathered visitor data, or a project's economic feasibility that is deemed to have legitimacy through the interpreters high cultural capital will be adopted by the institution. It is important to note that a point of view invested with symbolic capital overrides an individual point of view (Bourdieu 1990, 135-6). And this is how firms that have high cultural and symbolic capital carve out a dominant position in the field of power. Consultancies and vendors are contracted by museums because they possess the sought after modes of interpretation required by the museum, where the museum either lacks the needed interpretation skills or simply chooses to outsource due to other reasons (as described in Chapters 2 and 3). I have thus described the power relations between museums and the multinational cultural intermediary companies they employ with regards to cultural production as they occur within national and international spaces. The shifting positions, dispositions and inter-relations between museums and these companies in national and international space affect the way museums, as organizations, continue to evolve.

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I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Adela Reid, Research Ethics and Compliance Officer, Concordia University, at (514) 848-2424 x7481 or by email at areid@alcor.concordia.ca.

Appendix B

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

FOR MUSEUMS

Why would you use a third party solution?

How do you choose one company over another?

What makes a bid for a large project more competitive?

What do successful bids have in your area (media and technology)?

What are the difficulties in using a third party solution vs in-house and vice-versa?

Have you ever worked with the company Lord Cultural Resources/Acoustiguide?

How do you determine audience need?

What are some of the big changes happening at the Tate with regards to adapting new technologies?

Where did the New Media Group come from/when was it established?

Do you prefer to outsource or to do things in-house?

FOR COMPANIES

Can you tell me a little bit about how the company is structured?

Can you tell me more about the creative process of developing in audio tour?

Has the process of acquiring new contracts, clients, or even retaining contracts changed in the last 10-20 years?

What service/services generate the most revenue for Lord Cultural Resources?
What services are most often enlisted by museums?

How did you come up with the slogan "creating cultural capital"?

What are some of the challenges of working in a competitive, global market?

Who are your biggest competitors?

Do you work strictly from RSP's or are there other methods of acquiring clients?

Who generally owns the content that you produce?

What would be some advantages for working with Acoustiguide rather than producing in-house?

How have the services you provide changed over the last decade?

I read that some of your audio guides are able to gather data about the visitors using them, such as which messages were accessed and for how long? How is that information used?

Appendix C

INFORMAL OBSERVATION RESEARCH SITES

MUSEUMS ATTENDED

The Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto, Ontario, Canada)
The Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto, Ontario, Canada)
Musée d'arts contemporains (Montreal, Quebec, Canada)
Musée des beaux-arts de Montreal (Montreal, Quebec, Canada)
National Gallery (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada)
The Tate Modern Museum (London, UK)
The National Gallery (London, UK)
The Victoria and Albert Museum (London, UK)
The Museum of Modern Art (New York, New York).

MUSEUMS WORKED IN

Musée des beaux-arts de Montreal (Montreal, Quebec, Canada)
National Gallery (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada)

CONFERENCES ATTENDED

Museums and the Web 2008, Montreal, QC, April 9-12, 2008
Technology in the Arts, Waterloo, ON, May 9-10, 2008
Fiamp08: Cybermuseology: A Contemporary Practice by Museums, Gatineau,
Quebec, October 16-17, 2008
Canadian Art Gallery Educations 2009 Symposium, Tools for Change: Meeting
Future Challenges, Ottawa, ON, March 28-31, 2009