The Curzon Memories App is a practice-research project that uses mobile technologies to explore the history of the Curzon Community Cinema in Clevedon. The app was developed with Jo Reid using Calvium’s AppFurnace development tool. The original cinema, The Picture House, was built in 1912, expanding to the current building in 1921/2, and the launch of the app on both App Store and Android Market later this year is planned to coincide with the cinema’s centenary.

In the evaluation of the second iteration QR codes were received positively in terms of their ease of use and the level of user-satisfaction of knowing that context-specific media had been activated by scanning the QR code (in contrast to the uncertainties of GPS). Users commented on their sense not only of space, but also of time whilst listening to memories in the places in which they actually happened:

**Projection Hero**

One of the QR codes that visitors encounter is on the screen of a miniature cinema installation that, when scanned, triggers an interface through which you can manipulate the cinema by dimming the lights, opening the curtains and cueing the next reel on the projector. Whilst you try your hand at being a virtual projectionist, you watch films about the lost art of projection in the midst of exhibits from the Curzon Collection of heritage cinema projectors. The iterative design process (Blythe et al 2006 and Reid et al 2011) enables rapid prototyping and ability to respond to real-time testing in the field. Indeed, it is important to emphasise that this is a location-aware experience, through which you can manipulate the architecture of the building. However, given the vacillations and inaccuracy of the GPS, Memories App are the importance of an iterative design process, user evaluation and sensitivity to context in the development of compelling locative heritage experiences.

**Interior localisation**

QR codes are used to trigger memories inside the building. A number of technologies were considered, including motion and pressure sensors and RFID codes, but QR codes were selected due to their user-friendliness, minimal infrastructure and low cost.

**Projection Hero**

The Curzon Memories App is controlled by Arduino circuitry connected via the Internet, designed by Tarun at Media Playgrounds. Projection Hero is integrated into the Curzon Memories App, but it also works as a stand-alone exhibit - the QR code can be scanned with any QR reader or within the app. The intention is to reveal the cinematic apparatus (Rosen 1972) and at the same time get the user to think critically about the mobile phone apparatus and the impact of digital technologies on screen heritage (Kelly 2007).

**Conclusion**

The use of mobile technologies in a heritage context is becoming increasingly prevalent. There are a growing number of heritage apps and digital humanities is a focal point for much UK research funding, as evidenced by the Arts and Humanities Research Council’s Digital Transformations strand and the 2012 AHRC Creative Economy / UWE REACT Hub, Heritage Sandbox theme (www.react-hub.org.uk). The very nature of locative media seems to afford an ideal platform through which to enhance visitors’ experiences of physical heritage sites. However, there is always the danger of mobile technologies detracting from the experience of actually “being there.” The key findings of the Curzon Memories App are the importance of an iterative design process, user evaluation and sensitivity to context in the development of compelling locative heritage experiences.

**Literature cited**


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For further information

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