Coding the Collection Executive Summary

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Overview. Put this project in context, perhaps including a story or example. What is the problem it is trying to solve? Why does this problem exist?

- The Nasher Art Museum is preparing a temporary exhibit on “Art of the Americas” for next semester. This exhibition will include a variety of objects, including masks, carved shells, and rare sculptures. Given that these art pieces will be presented in a “sterile” museum gallery, the curators of this project realized that there may be significant contextual limitations. For example, a visitor might not recognize the purpose of a ceremonial vase, and it is impossible to physically demonstrate the hinge mechanism of a mummy mask through traditional display methods. As a result, the curators wanted us to devise a technological solution which would help provide more context. The goal of Coding the Collection is to create an interactive web application that could educate visitors about objects on display. This could be run on tablets stationed in the exhibit, and we would provide curators with an easy way to add information to the application.

Target Users. What type of people or area will this project serve?

- After some brainstorming, our project team envisions several different demographic groups
- Visitors to the Nasher
- The K-12 demographic, either as part of a K-12 student group or interested pre-college students visiting from the local RTP area for educational purposes. Previous digital products at the Nasher have targeted this group.
- Researchers either from Duke, or other colleges around the area such as UNC, NCCU, etc. here to research artifacts, art collections/pieces, or in other academic capacities.
- Students from Duke or other nearby colleges interested in viewing and exploring the different exhibits.
- Local Durham/RTP community, with a wide range of ages from children to seniors, visiting the Nasher exhibits for purely entertainment and interest into the collection.
- Curators at the Nasher who are content specialists charged with the museum’s collections and involved with the interpretation of heritage material, as well as in charge of adding new pieces and exhibits to the displays.
Value. What will be improved or changed by this project? What is its value to its target users?

- The purpose of this project is to enhance the upcoming exhibit being prepared, and also the overall museum experience for visitors.
- Currently, our app will help provide historical context on the various exhibition pieces to the user, thus generating a deeper understanding of the exhibition. However, we hope to extend functionality past this.

Functionality. What is this project going to do?

- For visitors: The app will provide an additional layer of information about the pieces on display. This can include detailed renders, additional text information, and links to other related pieces to give context to the viewer.
- For curators: The app will provide a framework where curators can attach additional digital information to pieces in the collection.

Technical Recommendation. What is your rationale for the software and hardware you plan to use?

- For example, consider the following questions: What technology does the client want to use and why (iOS, Android, Web app, etc.)? What technology does the team recommend and why? What expenses might your recommendation incur (especially think about paying for a server, either physically or in the cloud)?
- At the current time, we are unsure what software/hardware would be optimal for our solution while awaiting more clearly defined requirements.