

Museums Continue to Partner with Daruma Tech to Enhance Their Visitor Experience, Educational Outreach, and Improve Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities

Daruma Tech Develops Museum Software Solutions to Enhance Visitor Engagement, Educational Experiences, and Accessibility

BOCA RATON, Fla. ([PRWEB](#)) July 17, 2018 -- Three diverse, independent museums have partnered with Boca Raton, Florida-based software developer Daruma Tech to develop innovative technologies to enhance their unique circumstances and needs, upgrade their visitor experience and educational outreach, and improve accessibility for visitors with disabilities.

Daruma Tech, in collaboration with the Museum of Discovery and Science (MODS) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, organized various pre-selected student programming projects into a single container mobile phone app that projected the professional brand and image that MODS is known for. The app was made available for download on iTunes and Google Play.

Daruma Tech's collaboration with MODS, which involved over 120 students and a coalition of academic, commercial, and non-profit partners, was conducted through MODS' APP-titude internship program, in which teams of high school students designed and built over a dozen mobile apps highlighting MODS exhibits. Funded by the United Way of Broward County, the APP-titude internship program introduced students to advanced features such as video and augmented reality while empowering them to enhance the MODS visitor experience. Daruma Tech's innovative design ensures the app has the flexibility to allow easy addition of even more student-developed mini-apps as the internship program continues into future years, according to Susan Erickson of Daruma Tech.

The team at MODS appreciated Daruma Tech's support with the ambitious project. "The management team and staff at Daruma Tech went far above and beyond anything the museum could have expected on this project," said Joe Cytacki, MODS vice president of programs, life sciences, and exhibits. "The work was always excellent, very creative, delivered on-time, on budget, and always exceeded expectations."

Second, The Gumbo Limbo Nature Center in Boca Raton tapped Daruma Tech to create a custom mobile app for visitors to their 2018 Sea Turtle Festival. "With thousands of people attending the festival, we were searching for a way to reduce the amount of paper we produce while providing the enhanced capacities that a digital platform can provide to help visitors enjoy their day," said Michele Kurucz Peel, president of the Friends of Gumbo Limbo.

The app, available for both iPhone and Android phones, includes comprehensive information about the festival, including maps, information on parking, exhibitors, and food options, as well as a schedule of the day's programs and activities. It also included multimedia presentations on sea turtle conservation and rehabilitation and interactive features for children.

Peel said the app was well received by visitors. "Feedback from staff and visitors was overwhelmingly positive, and even our littlest users were delighted with the features and ease of use," she said.

Most importantly for the non-profit nature center, the app was not only educational and engaging, but

affordable to build. “Finding a reasonably priced solution was a key factor in our selection of Daruma Tech for this project,” Peel said. “They exceeded our expectations through great communication and responsiveness throughout the development process.” The Gumbo Limbo Nature Center has been so happy with the results and experience they have also tapped Daruma Tech to work with them moving forward to upgrade their Sea Turtle Festival app to an everyday app with additional functionality.

In addition, Daruma Tech worked with Vizcaya Museum and Gardens in Miami to develop an innovative touchscreen kiosk that allows visitors an intimate virtual view of historically and artistically important sites currently not accessible to the public. The project, funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, will enable Vizcaya Museum and Gardens to attract and engage its visitors in new and innovative ways by bridging established preservation technologies with interpretive digital technologies. Using 3-D interactive technology, Daruma Tech will help Vizcaya transport visitors to spaces and even different time periods to allow them to freely explore the many facets of this century-old National Historic Landmark.

The kiosk, which features detailed, realistic 3-D images based on data collected by the University of Florida via laser scanning and by the University of Miami via photogrammetry, lets visitors explore inaccessible areas such as the swimming pool grotto, which features an ornate ceiling mural by American artist Robert W. Chanler (1872-1930), and the Barge, a boat-shaped decorative breakwater decorated with carvings by Alexander Stirling Calder (1870-1945). To ensure all visitors can share these experiences, the kiosk’s hardware and software are designed to adapt to the needs of users with disabilities.

The type of detailed 3-D documentation employed by this technological solution is critical to Vizcaya’s mission of preservation and public engagement, especially in light of the seaside museum’s vulnerability to rising sea levels and climate change, explained Mark Osterman, Vizcaya’s manager of Adult Learning and Engagement. “3D documentation allows Vizcaya to measure surface loss, predict rates of deterioration, analyze effects of sea level rise, measure objects and structures, enhance engagement, and improve accessibility,” he said.

Osterman added that partnering with Daruma Tech on this ambitious project has been a rewarding experience. “Working with Daruma has been exciting as both the museum and the firm are experimenting with new interpretive technologies that will change the way visitors experience aspects of historic sites,” he said.

Daruma Tech is a privately held software design firm based in the FAU Research Park in Boca Raton, Florida. Its mission is serve businesses across a range of industries with innovative software applications incorporating both cutting-edge technology and designs focused on the unique logistical and human needs of each client.

For more information, contact Rick Griswold at 561-990-1625

**Contact Information**

Rick Griswold

Daruma Tech

<http://www.darumatech.com/>

+1 5619901625

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