

Daruma Tech Launches Three Projects to Help Museums Enhance Visitor Engagement with Digital Tools

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BOCA RATON, Fla. ([PRWEB](#)) July 30, 2018 -- Custom software developer Daruma Tech is continuing its expansion into the museum and cultural exhibit space with three new initiatives to equip museums with digital tools to facilitate more meaningful, engaging visitor experiences.

The first of these projects is a joint venture with HW Exhibits, a designer of museum exhibits, to build and develop content for an interactive kiosk for the Parris Island Museum in South Carolina. Located in the historic Parris Island Marine Recruit Depot, the museum highlights the history, traditions, and evolution of the Marine Corps and serves primarily to educate the 19,000 Marine recruits who train at the depot each year, along with visiting families.

For the touch-screen kiosk, Daruma Tech is employing video, written narratives, and quizzes provided by HW Exhibits to create an immersive educational experience. In addition, Daruma Tech is offering guidance on procuring and purchasing appropriate equipment for the kiosk at the optimal specifications. Like the museum's other exhibits, the kiosk—which will highlight the history of Marine recruitment during the Revolutionary War--will serve as a training tool for recruits studying for written exams as well as a means of educating the general public. The kiosk is a pilot project, and if successful, will be followed by additional digital enhancements at Parris Island.

Daruma Tech's other two projects, Daruma Tech Academy and two-day digital design workshops, are educational initiatives for the Museum of Discovery and Science, located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Both projects evolved from Daruma Tech's longstanding partnership with Florida Atlantic University (FAU) and the museum's APP-titude program, in which students learn to create assets for the museum's free mobile app, available for both Android and iPhone platforms. The APP-titude program provides students the opportunity to earn volunteer service hours, one unit of college credit, and a stipend through an immersion experience at the museum and participate in a three-week, dual-enrollment course in the College of Engineering and Computer Science at FAU. Second-year interns mentor the incoming students, continue working on app development, and introduce museum visitors to the apps. This unique internship, now entering its fifth year, is funded by United Way of Broward County and supported by a coalition of academic, commercial, and non-profit partners, including FAU and Daruma Tech.

The free Museum of Discovery and Science app (also available to other museums) allows guests to explore ten exhibit areas in the Museum (Discovery Center, EcoScapes, Go Green, Storm Center, Prehistoric Florida, Otters at Play, Gems and Minerals, To Fly, Powerful You, and Gizmo City) and features an augmented-reality scavenger hunt through the museum that was designed in collaboration with FAU. In addition, the app provides information on the museum's programs and IMAX showings, including a virtual tour.

The first of the two new initiatives, Daruma Tech Academy, was developed in close collaboration with FAU faculty to supplement the APP-titude program. It offers students a deeper dive into the programming and design skills needed to create effective, high-impact digital assets. In the first two daylong modules of the

apprenticeship program, APP-titude students are introduced to the software applications they will eventually use in their FAU coursework and learn about the major topics and issues they will address in their classes. Subsequent modules cover topics including video editing, 3D modeling, and photogrammetry (the creation of 3D models from photo composites).

APP-titude interns also volunteer on the exhibit floor, where they demonstrate their work on interactive displays positioned throughout the museum, educate museum visitors about the museum's mobile app features, and solicit their feedback. This experience not only helps the students develop and promote their programming skills, but trains them in valuable soft skills such as user interface design and effective audience engagement.

For its second initiative at the museum, Daruma Tech is offering APP-titude students a new series of daylong workshops on content creation for digital displays dispersed throughout the exhibit floor. In the workshops, explicitly designed to align with the museum's educational mission and communication goals, students in the APP-titude program work directly with professional interactive media designers from Daruma Tech and learn the design, communication, and technical skills needed to produce effective educational content for the displays. The displays offer visitors information about the museum's collections and programs along with information about the museum's mobile app. The two-day workshops give students hands-on experience in all stages of the professional design process, from brainstorming and creating storyboards and outlines through video editing and updating and maintaining digital content. Among the technical skills students acquire are video production with Adobe After Effects, PowerPoint design, and the use of digital signage software for the final production of the assets.

All three efforts reflect Daruma Tech's commitment to supporting museums and helping them enhance their outreach through smart deployment of digital tools. "Younger museum leaders are beginning to recognize the benefits of digital assets for attracting new audiences," said Susan Erickson of Daruma Tech. "Our goal is to use digital tools to enhance visitor engagement with museum collections, not distract from it. And our educational outreach is a way for us to use our expertise to give back to the community."

Daruma Tech is a privately held software design firm based in the FAU Research Park in Boca Raton, Florida. Its mission is to 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.

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