Exploring the «Extended Museum» of Venices’ water heritage through digital tours and web platforms

Digital Itineraries and Audioguides to foster and promote «responsible» eco-tourism

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Beyond Museums. Tools for promoting the natural and cultural water heritage
UNESCO Chair «Water, Heritage, and Sustainable Development» - 1st training course 2021
OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENTATION

1. The geo-historical context of Venices’ inland waterways
2. Digital tours as tools to facilitate access to water heritage and promote «responsible tourism»
3. How to create a digital tour
1
The geo-historical context of Venices’ inland waterways
The Venice everyone knows and...

...the silent and ‘forgotten’ Venices
Venices’ «liquid roads»: a waterway system

Riviera del Brenta : Palladio's architectures
Historical map of Venices’ inland waterways
Waterways: a multi-functional system

- Navigation: to transport goods, people & troops
- Water management: control of water levels for drainage and irrigation, and floods mitigation
- Proto-industrial activities (water mills, forges…)
- Important aesthetic and scenic values
Waterways' systems are a unique encapsulation of memories and scenarios resulting from the constant interaction between human activity & natural conditions, to the point that they offer one of the most recurrent iconic themes in both landscape painting and literature.

Simon Schama (Landscape Memory, 1995)
The “making” of Venices’ inland waterways

From the Middle Ages (XII cent. AD), the building of artificial canals linking different rivers fostered the development of inland navigation, fluvial trade, and the expansion of urban centres along waterways, like Padua, Vicenza and Treviso.

A fascinating water heritage made of small river ports, navigation locks, hydraulic artefacts, castles, and villas still exists and is a unique heritage for tourism and leisure.
Small river towns along waterways
The Battaglia Canal (1189-1201)
‘The Stones of Venice’ (John Ruskin)
From the Euganean Hills to the Venice Lagoon
The Venetian “minor” waterways’ system is forgotten and almost abandoned today
A Heritage in Danger of Disappearing?
Traditional knowledge and techniques for making wooden boats are vanishing...
Past and forgotten waterscapes?
The function of memory, emotional values and the ‘sense of place’

Typical ‘boat bridge’ of inland waterways
Intangible heritage: historical regatta and traditional wooden boats in front of the magnificent Villa Pisani
How to redeem Venices’ Inland water heritage?

- PROTECTION
- PUBLIC ACCESS
- PROMOTION

How to make it attractive?
RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

NATURAL & CULTURAL HERITAGE

Outdoors activities on foot, or by byke, canoe, or boat...

NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO REGENERATE LOCAL ECONOMIES
What means ‘sustainable’?

‘Responsible tourism’ versus ‘mass tourism’

30 million visitors/year in the city centre of Venice
Evolution of historical waterways

1. Places of labour
2. Places of abandonment
3. Places of nostalgia (study)
4. Places of leisure & tourism


2

Digital tours as tools to facilitate access to water heritage and promote «responsible tourism»
Non-profit NGO (1996) aimed at building a ‘New Culture of Water’

Mission
Define a more far-sighted management of water, of nature, and landscape by promoting new holistic and inter-disciplinary approaches to face the global water crisis

Project oriented approach
EXPLORING THE VENICE LAGOON

Palazzo Zorzi, May-October 2015

Places and values of the World Heritage Site
EXPLORING THE VENICE LAGOON

Four thematic explorations to know the «extended museum»:
1) Hydraulic artefacts
2) Waterways and wooden boats
3) Cultural waterscapes
4) Responsible eco-tourism
2014-2019 Audioguides & Digital Tours
VENICE’S WATERWAYS
> 100 Digital Tours
> 500 Pol
Why Geo-Spatial Technologies?

The use of digital devices and interactive maps has transformed our knowledge of space and place.

Digitisation multiplies opportunities:
- to access ‘hidden’ heritage
- to engage audiences

The best language to attract young audiences
Tours by bike, boat, horse, canoe, walk
Mapping and inventory of water heritages
Artificial canals & canalised ‘rivers’ crossing small towns
Hydraulic artefacts: mills

XIII cent water mill, Vigenzone canal, Euganean Hills
Villas and aristocratic residencies built on waterways
Farms and vernacular dwellings
Small churches and abbeys
Traditional wooden boats

River navigation museum of Battaglia Terme (Padua)
Lock systems and ‘hydraulic lifts’
Small river ports
The reclamation landscape
Natural or artificial (cultural)?

The «unknown» waterscape
Tangible and intangible heritage

Collection of water stories can foster new imaginaries and perceptions related to water, and connected to «past water worlds»
Rolando Biasion: the *Canìs*, traditional net of canes to trap eels
Toni Frescura: the ‘last fisherman’
Inventory of waterway heritage
Both natural and cultural heritage
Cultural heritage: tangible assets

- Hydraulic artefacts (locks, water pumps, bridges, docks, historic canals, hydraulic factories like water mills, forges, etc)
- Historical architecture with monuments and buildings (farms, vernacular dwellings, villas, castles, rural chapels and small churches, walled riverine towns)
- Waterscapes (natural/built, land reclamation)
Cultural heritage: intangible assets

- Oral history and memories of boatmen, fishermen, etc
- Literary landscape (novels, poetry…)
- Other cultural representations (paintings, photography, postcards, …)
- Traditional knowledge of craftsmen, ferrymen, ‘cariolanti’…
INNOVATION AWARD
Exploring Canals: Venice’s Waterways
Inverness (Scotland), 2016
29th World World Canals Conference
3
How to build a digital route
izi.TRAVEL: + 1 million downloads

An open-source web platform to build digital audio-guides as an alternative tool to Apps.

A powerful tool to promote project results
Goals

> Improve perceptions and awareness on the multifunctionality of waterway heritages
> Foster new eco-tourism and leisure practices
THREATS

- Climate Change
- Pollution
- Loss of biodiversity
- Water management
NEW RESEARCH APPROACH

- Open source web platform (not App)
- Possibility to include oral history with interviews and other media uploaded in the audioguide
- Methods for public participation and involvement of local communities to co-design digital tours
NEW RESEARCH APPROACH

Local communities involvement

Heritage Digitalization

Oral stories

Interviews/tales

Points of interest

Storytelling

Cultural itineraries
How to create a digital tour?

5 different main steps

1. General survey and identification of PoIs
2. Tour Design
3. Production and publication
4. Dissemination
5. Maintenance
1) General survey and identification of main Pols

After a thorough survey of the area, the first step in developing a digital tour is to make a general outline of the trail. This is crucial to identify the main Points of Interest (apprx. 12-20 points for a visit of 2-3 hrs c.)
How to create a digital tour?

2) Tour Design

2.1 Create a digital map & the storyboard
2.2 Select contents and photos and upload the POIs
2.3 Upload the draft tour (export to StoryMaps)
How to create a digital tour?

3) Production & publication
3.1 Enrich all POIs and check further your tour
3.2 Publish (off line) your tour for field monitoring
4) Dissemination

Your target audience will not find your water-heritage tour unless you make a plan for disseminating the itinerary. Marketing and promotion strategies should involve key partners and stakeholders of your region.
How to create a digital tour?

5) Maintenance
5.1 Repeat the field check on a yearly basis to find gaps
5.2 Use izi.TRAVEL statistics to improve your tour
5.3 Consider the feedback from users
Silent waters of the Sile River

https://www.izi.travel/it/1e85-waterways-explorer-placide-acque-del-sile/it
Youth Involvement in the innovative valorization of boat builders’ Craft Tourism

- New routes co-designed with young students
- Dedicated training (4 months) to develop digital itineraries on Venice’s sailing tradition
5 NEW DIGITAL ROUTES

Each digital tour is a combination of:

- Notorious tourist attractions
- Key sites of traditional wooden boat builders
Students were involved to make interviews and find creative ways to build original contents and transmit our “watery past”: cultural practices, values, and attitudes.
Explore Forgotten Venice

www.watermuseumofvenice.com/storie
4 Water Museum of Venice: the web platform of Venices’ «extended museum»
2014-2019

The research conducted to make an inventory of POIs and new digital tours led to the web platform of an «extended museum» on Venice’s hydraulic heritage. 70 water heritage sites (Padua and Po Delta) out of 300 estimated sites in the Tre Venezie.

WWW.WATERMUSEUMOFVENICE.COM
WATER MUSEUM OF VENICE

DIGITAL & EXTENDED MUSEUM, ITALY
GOAL

Represent Venices’ rich and diverse water heritages, and build a repository of visual knowledge to:

1) Commemorate the past
2) Explore the legacy of «liquid assets» with digital trails for responsible tourism
3) Inspire the future by learning from previous sustainable uses of water
70 sites = 400k visitors/year

Educational Activities

Digital routes

Water stories
Network

Castello del Catajo
Palazzo signorile e facciata militare a presidio del commercio sul Conoile. Battaglia

Museo delle Idrovore di Santa Margherita
Unidrovore funzionante dell'Ottocento racconta la storia delle bonifiche e del paesaggio

Porto Fluviale del Portello
L'approdo storico del Burchiello nell'isola potenziato del Convento

Collezione di Limesia
Due chiese monumentali a guardia dei canali navigabili medievali di Padova

Fonte della Madonna della Salute di Monteortone
Acqua termale minerostrale nel Santuario mariano ai piedi del Colli Euganei

Museo Archeologico del Fiume Bacchiglione
Dal Neolitico al Medioevo, alla scoperta delle culture lungo il fiume

Museo della Navigazione Fluviale
L'opera dei marinai d'acqua dolce e la tradizione delle pratiche nautiche di fama in mondial

Anello Idraulico di Padova
La città del Sacco vista attraverso l'aspettativa delle navaghi urbani

Torneo della Specola
Passeggio urbano dell'acqua nell'antica Tortona del Castello Comunale

Prato della Valle
La piazza simbolo della città di Padova come crociera fra acqua e architettura

Palude di Onara
Acque di insorgenza e passeggio dei paesi stabili sul fiume degli Ezzelini

Corte Beneventana di Correzzola
Sulla via del Bacchiglione, il centro economico e produttivo della bonifica medioevale
Giardino Monumentale di Villa Barbarigo a Valsanzibio

Una meraviglia del barocco, questo parco si presenta ad armonia come risultato di un percorso spirituale e divino. È uno dei monumenti realizzati architettonici della Serenissima. Contiene spazi scenografici che fanno di barocco e francese a unimporre delle testimonianze di tempo, storiche di diversi e statiche dipinti, che danno vita a un'autentico paesaggio.

Il progetto di restauro di Giardino Monumentale di Villa Barbarigo a Valsanzibio è stato realizzato da un consorzio composto da 5 tecnici: Architetto, Ingegnere, Archeologo, Storico dell'Arte e Artisti. La realizzazione del parco è stata completata nel 2008 e comprende la creazione di una serie di spazi espositive e didattici, con la creazione di una mappa didattica e una guida didattica. La museografia del parco è composta da un'ampia varietà di oggetti antichi e arredi, che viaggiano attraverso il tempo e la storia della regione.

In breve, Valsanzibio si trova a circa 5 chilometri dalla stazione ferroviaria.
MUSEUMS CAN STIMULATE SOCIAL INNOVATION & NEW VALUES BRIDGING PAST & PRESENT WATER KNOWLEDGE
A key guide for local development governments, communities, and museums (by ICOM/OECD)
The key role of water museums and water heritage sites to foster water sustainability education, the ecological transition and development of ‘responsible tourism’
THE GLOBAL NETWORK OF WATER MUSEUMS

+ 70 water museums world wide
30 different States
+ 30.000.000 visitors / year
WHY A GLOBAL NETWORK OF WATER MUSEUMS?

Water museums, eco-museums, ‘extended museums’, digital museums, interpretation centres etc ... exhibit an outstanding repository of water heritage (natural & cultural, tangible & intangible) which needs to be re-connected to people to face the global water crisis
TOWARDS A «NEW WATER CULTURE»

We must “reinstate a new relationship between humanity and water: a new ‘sense of civilization’ which can help to reconnect people and water in all its dimensions - including scientific, technical, social, cultural, artistic and spiritual”

(quoted from the Manifesto / Charter of the Global Network of Water Museums)
UNESCO- IHP Resolution n.5-XXIII
June 2018
«The Global Network of Water Museums and UNESCO-IHP in support of water sustainability education and water awareness efforts»
> Flagship initiative of UNESCO-IHP Intergovernmental Council
UNESCO- IHP Resolution n.7-XXIV

June 2021

«The Global Network of Water Museums and UNESCO-IHP in support of water sustainability education and water awareness efforts»

> Worldwide inventory of water museums
YOUTH CONTEST & AWARD
DIGITAL EXHIBITION

THE WATER WE WANT
From Heritage to Future
Youth Prize Contest 1st edition 2020

DRAWINGS
PHOTOS
VIDEOS
PARTNERS

The Youth Prize Contest The Water We Want aims at engaging young people as storytellers of our multifaceted water heritage and narrators of a more
GLOBAL COLLABORATIVE DIGITAL EXHIBITION

I REMEMBER WATER
Deadline for submission November 15th
WATER MUSEUMS AS VECTORS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM?

A PLATFORM OF WORLDWIDE WATERY DESTINATIONS FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM?
UNESCO Chair

Water, Heritage & Sustainable Development

University of Venice Ca’ Foscari
UNESCO Chair located in Ca’ Bottacin
At the Center for Humanities & Social Change
GOALS

Promote new interdisciplinary and holistic research approaches to train the staff of water museums, professionals, academics, students and decision makers

Strengthen the institutional and human capacities of water museums
GOALS

Maximize their impact of water museums to boost local development with new projects aimed at increasing the territorial attractiveness on hydraulic heritages and freshwater ecosystems

Closer cooperation with the UNESCO “water family”