

## **Cybermuseum – an E-engagement Platform for Cultural Heritage**

Philip CHUA

Heritage Technology Services, National Heritage Board, Singapore

philip\_chua@nhb.gov.sg

The Cybermuseum Project aims to provide a CAD-like toolset for the curation of digital exhibits using templated virtual showcases, galleries and museums.

The development of such a Cybermuseum application will allow amateurs, curators and private collectors to create their own 3D virtual museums without the need for IT programming skills.

As a productivity and e-learning tool, it will not only help museum designers and curators shorten the time to plan and organize exhibitions, but also allow them to experiment with virtual museum spaces and novel ways of curating virtual exhibitions using rich Interactive Digital Media assets such as avatars, Non-Player Characters (NPCs), animations, audio/video, images, text, etc. For students and casual users, the Cybermuseum will provide an entertaining and engaging platform to learn about arts, culture and heritage in an immersive 3D virtual environment using Web 2.0 social networking tools.

Lastly, as a marketing and Social E-engagement tool, the Cybermuseum will allow museums and commercial art galleries to feature their iconic artefacts and artworks in 3D; users will be able to “handle” these objects or even buy images / collaterals related to the physical exhibition. The Web 2.0 tools will allow them to interact with researchers and visitors, soliciting feedback and comments on both the physical and virtual exhibitions. And where broadband is readily available, communities could use Cybermuseum to reach out to their residents to contribute and share their personal, family or community stories and digitized memorabilia. Hopefully, this would lead people to better understand their own community history and deepen their sense of rootedness.

With the trend towards digitization among museums, archives and heritage institutions, it is hoped that the Cybermuseum concept could achieve rapid adoption, and standards for 3D curation be established to allow co-curation of virtual exhibitions across regional networks of museums.