

COMPLEX CLOTH

Exploratory Research

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F22

HISTORY

The UGA School of Social Work is housed in the former Athens Manufacturing Company, a cotton and wood mill that was established in 1832 and fully rebuilt after a fire in 1858. The school of social work is also the ancestral homeland of the Muskogee Creek and Eastern Cherokee Peoples, which was forcibly occupied by white settlers in the late 1700s. Before 1865, this Athens factory owned and also rented enslaved people of African descent who worked there, as well as built and maintained the buildings. Children as young as 7 worked in the mill for long hours rather than going to school, and thus were deprived of a normal childhood. Flash forward to now, the School of Social Work wants to acknowledge their history and provide an informative, interactive method for students and community members to learn from.

OUR CLIENT

Complex Cloth, is an initiative led by Dr. Jane McPherson, associate professor at the School of Social Work and Director of Global Engagement, whose mission is to recognize the history of The School of Social Work building, which once functioned as a mill which used enslaved & free labor, and child labor to weave cotton. Complex Cloth wants to reach students, instructors, and Athenians of the history of oppression at the building now used to educate students who hope to promote social justice.



TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience for Complex Cloth are UGA students, specifically Students in the school of social work, as well as the Athens community. The School of Social Work is where the mill was previously located, and it is important for the students using the building to know its history. The history of slavery, indian removal and child labor are all issues directly related to social work, and students could use this experience that they are directly related to as a learning opportunity. The Athens community is also directly affected by this as it is a prominent part of Athens history that should not be ignored. Many racial injustices in Athens such as Linnentown have not received the acknowledgement they deserve, and in order to grow and learn as a community, Athens and UGA must recognize the injustices of the past.

THE VISION

VISION

Focus of UGA School of Social Work

“addressing power and oppression in society in order to promote social justice by using evidence based practice and advocacy tools and the celebration of diversity”.

"PROSEAD"

Addressing: Power and Oppression

Promoting: Social justice

Using: Evidence-informed practice and Advocacy

Celebrating: Diversity

THE PROBLEM

Currently, Complex Cloth does not have a website or a way to share its information. Most of the educational content is in an eLC course that is only accessible to Masters students at the School of Social Work. Most of this information is inaccessible to the greater Athens community or anyone outside of the School of Social Work. Our client wants a way for this information to be shared with anyone interested in the history of the Complex Cloth.

THE GOAL

Our goal for the Complex Cloth Project is to make the history of the School of Social Work building accessible to the general public and Athens community. We will do this by first creating a website that provides a clutter-free point of access for the Athens Community and University of Georgia students. This website will be continually maintained and updated by the School of Social Work faculty so we want to focus on keeping it easy to edit and build onto through the use of templates and reusable code blocks. We will also implement interactive elements such as AR and virtual museums to best display the artifacts and enrich our user experience.

TECHNOLOGY INSPIRATION

GOOGLE ARTS & CULTURE

This is a non-commercial initiative, which works with artists to digitize and publish art online for people around the world. They create immersive digital exhibitions through the use of video, information excerpts, audio and more.



SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM AND FOUNDATION

This museum's virtual tour has a feature where you can click on any location on the screen and it will automatically zoom in and show the surroundings of the museum from that perspective.



LOUVRE MUSEUM

Louvre Museum's virtual tour has buttons that can either transition you to a different location or provide more detailed information about a specific exhibit in the museum. However, the user can still drag the screen to examine the surroundings of the current location.

THE ALPHA

The website for Complex Cloth was initially inspired by the National Museum of African American History & Culture, and it will be built by using WordPress. WordPress is a content management system that can be utilized for building free professional websites with ease. While WordPress makes it easy for people to create and manage a website without touching a single line of code, it also allows those with some programming knowledge to have more control over the designs and functionalities of the website by being able to edit the HTML, CSS, and PHP code of the webpage. They have the option to also build and customize their website the way they want with plugins that are available in WordPress. One of those plugins that will be used for the Complex Cloth website will be WPVR, which allows them to easily create an amazing virtual tour without any expertise. This WordPress plugin will be used to create a virtual tour for remote or online students to capture the space of the School of Social Work building. The addition of this feature to the website was inspired by all of the virtual tours that were provided by museums from around the world. However, the use of these softwares are subject to change as we work throughout this semester.

The plug-in we have decided to use is WP VR. As mentioned, the plugin will allow us to create interactive virtual tours of the School of Social Work Building. Most of our information and guides for using the plugin will come from the WPVR documentation site. Luckily, there are plenty of guides explaining how to use the plugin and add it to a WordPress site.

The WPVR website recommends using 360 degree panoramic photos. There are multiple ways to take 360 degree photos, including using a smartphone or using a DSLR with a specialized tripod and lens. Using a smartphone is likely the easiest solution and involves using the built in panorama function and the "Google Street View" app (or Apple equivalent). Using a smartphone, however, will not give us the highest quality photos possible.

A DSLR could provide much higher quality images, but is much more expensive and time consuming. If we decide to use a DSLR, we could rent the camera itself from the NMI TACO, but we would need to either purchase or rent the necessary fisheye lens and tripod mount elsewhere.



AN EXAMPLE OF A 360 DEGREE IMAGE TAKEN USING THE STREET VIEW APP.

Our client also asked us if the project could be built on Omeka instead of WordPress. After considering her plans for the website, we decided Complex Cloth would do best on a Wordpress page. WordPress and Omeka are both free-to-use website content management systems, with Omeka being more geared towards digital collections. Wordpress, however, is easier to use without any programming experience, which makes it easy to maintain and update. According to a comparison review by Stefano Morello, WordPress is also better suited for hosting class material in a structured and organized way.

SOURCES

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