



project update

September 2004

Highlights: Pachyderm 2.0 to use APOLLO framework; new interface undergoes user testing; coding and documentation now underway.

Background

The *Pachyderm 2.0 Project* is a partnership led by NMC: The New Media Consortium and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), and funded by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The project brings software development teams and digital library experts from six NMC universities together with counterparts from five major museums to create a new, open source authoring environment for creators of web-based and multimedia learning experiences. The new tool will be based on Pachyderm, the authoring and publishing tool developed by SFMOMA to author its successful series, *Making Sense of Modern Art*.

Central to the Pachyderm 2.0 Project is the development of an interoperable, robust, easily distributable version of Pachyderm that will be open-source and include a wide range of pedagogical templates. The learning materials created with Pachyderm 2.0 will be optimized for Internet delivery, easily reusable, and conformant with key search, archival, and cataloging standards. The final product will be made available to the field at no charge as an explicit goal of the project.

Recent Work

After an extensive requirements-gathering effort last spring that resulted in a detailed specification for the new software, work teams began to lay the groundwork for development. The user interface team has created mockups of an exciting new authoring interface based on the templates themselves. The programming team has finalized system and database architectures and is in the process of building the first system components.

One of the most interesting developments this summer has been the decision to use an existing system created at the University of Calgary as the base upon which Pachyderm will be built. Academic Publishing for Online Learning with Learning Objects (APOLLO), created by the Learning Commons at the University of Calgary, consists of a framework built on the WebObjects web application server. Pachyderm will be built as an application layered over APOLLO, taking advantage of APOLLO's interface toolkit and its ability to connect with asset management databases, among other useful features. This turn of events has advanced the development process significantly by providing access to functions needed by Pachyderm which are already present in APOLLO.

Current Status

The development team has been working to connect the APOLLO framework to Pachyderm objects for a proof-of-concept prototype, which looks very promising. Meanwhile, the Flash templates are being updated to read XML content, which will allow them to be searchable and will open the door to subsequent non-Flash-based presentation types. The new user interface designs are undergoing user tests prior to being coded to ensure they are as user-friendly and effective as possible.

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Work has also begun on the documentation that will accompany the release. Users who wish to add custom templates or other features to the open-source Pachyderm may look forward to a developer's guide detailing how such additions should be created. Authors will have access not only to a user manual, but also to a special authoring tutorial and a complete workbook to lead them through the process of developing Pachyderm learning objects.

At the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), new modules have been created with Pachyderm 1.0 to showcase recent exhibitions. Of particular interest are the presentations featuring the works of Romare Bearden and Frank Stella, and the single-screen featurette devoted to an interview with the Swiss media artist Pippilotti Rist (see below for URLs).

Next Steps

The proof-of-concept prototype is slated to be completed before the end of September 2004. Further work will be built on the base provided by the prototype, with intensive coding continuing throughout the fall. Internal usability and quality assurance testing will take place in late fall and winter, wrapping up in February 2005, when Pachyderm will be opened for beta testing among NMC member institutions. For more information on the beta tests, please see the Pachyderm Beta Concept Document, available in the Document Archive at the Pachyderm website (<http://www.nmc.org/pachyderm>).

Project Leads

NMC: The New Media Consortium
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

University Partners

California State University
Case Western Reserve University
Northwestern University
University of Arizona
University of British Columbia
University of Calgary

Museum Partners

Berkeley Art Museum
Cleveland Museum of Art
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco
Metropolitan Museum of Art
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

Further Information

Details about Pachyderm 2.0 and current updates can be found on these websites:

The Pachyderm Website <http://www.nmc.org/pachyderm>
The PachyBlog <http://nmc.typepad.com/pachyblog/>

The new SFMOMA features are available at these URLs:

Romare Bearden www.sfmoma.org/bearden/
Frank Stella www.sfmoma.org/stella/
Pippilotti Rist www.sfmoma.org/msoma/artworks/rist.html



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